Full Length Research

Competency Development as Correlates of Academic Librarians' Education in Public University Libraries in Southern-Nigeria

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Education has been observed as a tool for competency development. This study therefore examined the influence of education on the competency development of academic librarians in public universities in Southern Nigeria. The descriptive research design was employed on a population of 497 academic librarians in public university libraries in Southern-Nigeria, using stratified random sampling technique. Questionnaire was administered to the selected sample, while rate of return was 78% (386). Collected data through this process were analyzed through the use of statistical mean, standard deviation, simple correlation and regression statistics via SPSS version 20.15. Findings revealed that positive significant relationship exists between education and competency development of academic librarians in public university libraries in Southern-Nigeria. The result also revealed that education was a predictor of competency development of academic librarians in public university libraries in Southern-Nigeria. This confirms that academic librarians' level of education significantly influences their competency development in public university libraries in Southern-Nigeria. The study therefore concluded that there exists positive significant relationship between education and competency development of academic librarians; and that education has significant positive effect or influence on competency development of academic librarians in public university libraries in Southern-Nigeria. Thus, the study recommends that public university management should establish a more robust, appropriate and relevant education and competency development policies that will suit the unique characteristics of individual academic librarians in public university libraries in Southern-Nigeria towards improving and sustaining librarians' education and competency development for more effective and efficient information service delivery attainment in Nigeria.

Keywords: Academic Librarians, Competency development, Education, Public universities, Nigeria.

INTRODUCTION

Generally, there is a symbiotic relationship between education and competency development. This is due to the fact that education is an aspect of competency development. It is competency development that impacts education making the individual fully equipped to effectively handle changes in life as frequently observed in our modern day technologically driven world. Competency development has become imperative in librarianship as a profession. This is resulting from the fact that librarianship is prone to frequent changes and the need to update knowledge so as to be effective and efficient in meeting the dynamics of clienteles' information needs especially with the present shift in information service demand of the 21st century information users occasioned by the emergence of ICT innovations. Hence, Adombent and Hoffmann (2013) defines competencies as purposeful inculcation accumulated knowledge in an individual aimed at helping the individual to be creative and efficient in handling changes in life voluntarily. It empowers an individual such as the academic librarian in not only coping and effectively adjusting to the dynamics of the present day information age requisites, but to efficiently accommodate the shifting demands of the 21st century library users.

Competency development is regarded as a total nomenclature that provides different means available for capable work force development internally and externally (Ellstrom & Kock, 2008). Conversely, competency development connotes organizational requisites in form of abilities necessary for an individual to be gainfully employed or promoted in an organization; and by extension influences the planning process of someone's professional career growth and development within and outside the workplace environment. Competency development helps in facilitating solutions to issues arising from organizational workforce education and training needed for organizational advancement especially in areas of job switch or switching of jobs and duties in work places through different kinds of measures such as work rotation and teamwork necessary for job enrichment beyond the formal education and work environment. The essence of competency development is to provide capable workforce by making available a platform for taking learning experiences beyond the formal work setting.

Interestingly, competency development also gives rise to education which could be in form of formal, informal and non-formal education respectively. Enueme & Sule (2008) defined education as an instrument established to convey expertise, outlook or comportments which are perceived as vital to prevailing civilization and of huge value to the beneficiaries. It is further described as the transition of the standards and knowledge of civilization that has been learned over elongated period of time. In principle, education is not a stagnant process, it is active, continuously progressive and hence has to be transferred to every ensuing generation as civilization advances. They also view education as the attainment of developmental features in the capacities of expertise, outlooks, principles, perceptions, aptitude to reason logically, understanding and other qualities which will aid individuals to regulate and interact well with other persons in the broader civilization setting. Hence, education is seen from three perceptions. Firstly, as a procedure by which a mechanism, plan or scheme is established by civilization through which principles or culture are conserved, communicated and perpetuated. Secondly, it is perceived as a creation by which the worth and amount of knowledge is gained or assimilated by an individual. Individual's social features, interactions with other people, extent of reasoning, can simply determine someone's manner of life or mannerism. These elements or qualities listed above define to a great extent, the level at which a person can be said to be educated. Finally, education is regarded as a discipline in the logic that it is a methodical, orderly or well-arranged form of knowledge or learning capabilities which can be learned in a recognized school structure.

The university is a formal and advanced learning centre, a pool of universal knowledge hub, where people who quest for knowledge go to for the purpose of acquiring advanced idea or knowledge in diverse fields for the betterment of the human society. Universities arm, prepare and imbue people with skills in learning, studying, investigating and autonomous reasoning as well as thinking that motivate them to seek for means to discover their potentials or creative ability, deep knowledge and analytical skills (Arem, 2005). A university is the apex of formal learning environment saddled with the responsibility of producing and disseminating advanced knowledge and research outcome for national development through its empowerment to engage in scholarly activities and awarding related degrees in different fields of study. Its primary objective is to use available resources to create in-depth knowledge for the improvement of national wealth wherein the library and its professionals such as the academic librarian play indispensable roles in facilitating learning and research activities of the university system for the benefit of the learners and society.

Libraries in universities such as those in the public sector are usually manned by library professionals wherein the academic librarian play significant roles in providing information resources and services necessary for effective execution of the university programmes' curricula and prospectus. Thus, academic librarians' education and competence is key and vital to the full actualization of the mission and vision of universities especially those in Southern-Nigeria. It is on this basis that this study investigates competency development as correlates of academic librarians' education in public universities in Southern-Nigeria.

Statement of the Problem

It has been generally observed that the level of competency development of academic librarians correlates to their educational attainment especially when related to their job performance in the 21st century work environment. Many studies previously had focused on job performance of workers in other organizations and few in academic libraries but not on academic librarians. The emphasis of some of these studies were on issues like library use, collection development and service delivery but not much studies were directed towards competency development and how this is influenced by educational attainment. Also, many librarians have feelings of not being given adequate access to appropriate competency development and educational enhancement opportunities by the university management. They consider their case as an afterthought unlike their counterparts, the lecturers whom the authorities regard as the core academic staff of the university system. This ugly trend has adversely affected librarians' level of competency development and education with its subsequent adverse effect on their job performance and service delivery in these public university libraries. Thus, it is envisaged that effective implementation of robust and relevant competency development and continuous education policy statements for academic librarians in public university work setting, which should run consistently on a continuous and sustainable basis, may help to address these challenges. Hence, this study investigates the influence of competency development on the education of academic librarians in public universities in Southern-Nigeria.

Research Questions

I.   What impart does academic librarians' level of education has on their job performance in public universities in Southern Nigeria?
II. What impart does academic librarians' level of competency development has on their job performance in public universities in Southern Nigeria?

Null Hypothesis

The competency development does not correlate with the education of academic librarians in public universities in Southern-Nigeria.

Literature Review

The review of related literature is carried out under the following sub-headings.

Education

Education is an imperative for survival in life and a means of attaining success and making progress in every profession. It is equally a component of human resource capacity building which is used to develop one of the most vital asset in any organization (organizational personnel). Education could be formal, informal and non-formal often geared towards the improvement of the personnel in organizations and librarians in this particular context. Formal education according to Rao (2010, p57) is the hierarchically prearranged, chronologically ordered education structure; sequentially from primary school through the tertiary institution in addition to wide-ranging educational trainings and variety of definite programmes and establishments for full-time practical and specialized training. Informal education on the other hand is used to define the truly lifetime processes whereby each person attains attitudes, standards, expertise and knowledge from commonplace participation and the educative influences on his or her surroundings- from domestic or neighbours, from work and play, from the market place, the library and the mass media (Rao, 2010, p58). While the non- formal education has to do with any structural activity external to the recognized official scheme whether functioning distinctly or a key feature of some margin activity- that is envisioned to help recognizable learning patrons for knowledge purposes (Rao, 2010, p58).

Competency Development

Competency development on the other hand, is a sine qua non for progress and improved productivity in any

organisation and the profession of librarianship in particular. Competency is a viable competitive asset to both the individual and the organization. Indeed, competency development give rise to additional quality service dispense to organizational customers such as library patrons or users. Luomala (2016) stated that competencies has to do with the ability to carry out the duties within a professional area to the degree of performance that is required in an employment. He emphasized that there exists four different levels or degrees of reasoning through which organizations could manage and develop workers' experiences, competencies, knowledge and education as enumerated in an ascending order as follows: "know-what, know-how, know-why and care-why". According to him, institutions that motivate personnel in the direction of the ultimate care- why degree of personally towards motivated creativeness are in a best position to compete above their counterparts. The author defined competence in this regard as the characteristics and capabilities that directly lead to quality job performance. He further divided competencies into categories separately to include, core competencies, distinctive competencies, organizational competencies, supportive competencies and dynamic competency. However, he asserted that the major issue in competency development process is the ability to ascertain how to care for, manage and develop organizational human asset. It helps to spur quality service delivery among organizational personnel for the purpose of gaining competitive market advantage through judicious use of organizational resources via appropriate competency development practices. Competency development, was further defined by Luomala (2016) as a process of tilting more in the direction of competency strengthening, developing learning climate and removing barriers. He acknowledged that the major task of personnel competency development in organizations is to revitalize personnel capabilities via appropriate competencies schedules on the job and ability to manage resultant risks involved in competency development processes. He noted that the degree of competencies attained could be validly catered for or measured through various competency inventory programmes in organizations. They include but not limited to: personal development processes beginning from the recruitment stage, job planning and rotation mechanism, personnel career progression planning and judicious use of personnel holidays 'substitution, allocation of appropriate duties and work load as well as the ultimate use of such programmes as basis for rewarding organizational personnel. Other methods for competency development include:"personnel orientation, peer learning reviewing, excursions, coaching, mentoring, tutoring, job control, training, study groups, project works, substituting, work modelling, action learning, self-assessment via e-learning, assignments abroad, benchmarking, conferences, seminars, fairs, field trips, and simulations" among others.

United States Department of Labour, Employment and Training Administration (ETA, 2015) described competency as capabilities to relate or usage of a group of pertinent information, abilities, and skills obligatory needed to positively perform essential job roles and responsibilities in a stated work environment. The institution iterated that the word "competency is used to describe a behaviour, which deals with the behaviour people display at work; and that it does not designate level of job performance, but frequently used as the foundation for criteria that point to the level of separate individuals understanding, abilities, and skills obligatory to achieve accomplishment at work places in addition to the criteria for potential measurement of assessing competency attainment". Moreover, it was emphasized that certain elements exist as utilized in the enumeration of components of the term 'personal effectiveness competences' which includes: "relational abilities, honesty, competence, inventiveness, reliability, dependability, flexibility and enduring education all of which are generally required for success in the work place. Components of work place competences on the other hand, are composed of the following: team work, flexibility/suppleness, client emphasis, preparation and organizing, original intelligence, resolving problems via choice making, functioning with implements and know-how, scheduling and coordinating, examining and recording, industry rudiments and sustainable practices; health and safety; all of which are used to indicate the abilities and capacities that permit an individual employee to function effectively" especially in an organizational work environment.

Vos, Hauw and Willemse (2011) focus of study was to close the gap by sorting out the procedures of capability improvement in administrations. Their investigation provided the first-step in the process of bridging the current gap in available literature with respect to 'competency development 'issues in institutions or establishments. The very important role of competency development in the improvement of individual workers in organizations through effective personnel management programmes have drawn the responsiveness of experts, which has ultimately led to the establishment of competency development units in organizations as dominant and essential organs in personnel resource management practices. The competences that organizational employees require to improve productivity and guarantee actual or higher job performance in their present and upcoming jobs are identified in the following three areas: 'functional competences' often seen as understandings and abilities essential for employees to positively perform their job tasks. These competencies are dependent upon personnel' responsibilities and preferences that also vary across industries' functions.

The second pertains to the learning competencies, often referred to as the individual employee' ability that allows him or her to cultivate novel and useful capabilities. Learning competencies according to Vos, Hauw and Willemse (2011) is increasingly gaining importance in the job setting ever since the upsurge of the knowledge economy and the rising requirement for flexibility in work scheduling and work performance. This trend has made it imperative for employers to

unceasingly participate in improving the education capabilities of their employees or workers. Lastly, is the 'career competencies' which has to do with separate individual employee ability that allows him/her to guide his/her practical and knowledge capabilities in a correct and acceptable way. Therefore, career competencies according to Vos and Hauw (2010), are used to explain the employees' creation of a professional distinctiveness through having sufficient understanding and knowledge (through education) into his or her own potentials/opportunities and intensions as well as the employees' skill to proactively convert these visions into real activities that could direct his/her profession.

Competency Development and Education of Academic Librarians

There should be a connection between competency development and education of academic librarians. Competency development has been described as a competitive strength which gives rise to added quality service to the customer or patron (Luomala, 2016). Education, whether formal, informal and non - formal   according to Rao (2010) gives added value to one of the most valued asset in any organization especially the academic librarians in this context. Thus, he stated that competencies has to do with the ability to carry out duties within a professional area to the degree of performance that is required in an employment for organizational growth and development. The acquisition of professional qualification in librarianship through education and the enhancement of their abilities through competency development to the extent of being able to perform as an employee in the work environment confirms the synergy between competency development and education. The inculcation of competency development and the acquisition of education by academic librarians is likely to translate to quality service delivery to library clienteles. The four degrees of managing and developing the workers' knowledge and competencies are re-presented or described in ascending order as: "know- what, know- how, know- why and care- why". Competency development and education with regards to the four degrees enumerated above gives employees the confidence and competitive edge to perform creditably in the present day globalized world.

The ability to relate or the usage of pertinent information for survival in someone's career and life generally could be tied to the competency development and the education of the individual personality. Competency development and education of academic librarians complement each other. Thus, Vos, Hauw and Willemse (2011) viewed "competency development" as "significant features of competency management which is made up of all undertakings accepted by the organization and the worker to uphold or develop the workers' practical knowledge and professional capabilities". The complementary role between competency development and education can be traced to the fact that survival in life generally and in professions such as librarianship in particular can be enhanced and achieved through competency development and education of academic librarians. Competency development and education are dynamic and therefore, accommodates all the vagaries of the present knowledge economy and information age upon which the role of librarians are essential especially at the university level or setting as investigated in this current study.

METHODOLOGY

The survey research design was adopted for this study. The population generally was 609 academic librarians in 38 public universities in Southern Nigeria. Stratified proportionate random sampling was used to select librarians from the existing 38 universities in the region under study (Nigerian National Universities Commission, 2015). The researchers randomly selected the institutions sample size from the three geopolitical regions, seven (7) from South East, nine (9) from South-South and eleven (11) from the South-Western region that made up the Southern Nigeria; representing 70% and bringing the total to 27 public university libraries with 497 academic librarians chosen out of the grand total of 38 universities with the initial 609 academic librarians. Self-Structured questionnaire titled: Competency Development as a Correlate of Education of Academic Librarians in Public Universities in Southern-Nigeria (CDACEALPU) was used in data collection. Complete data eventually collected from 386 respondents representing 78% response rate were analysed using descriptive statistics such as frequency distribution, percentages, mean and standard deviation and inferential statistics like simple correlation and regression analysis to arrive at the study main findings.

RESULTS

The results of the analysed data using descriptive and inferential statistics are presented and discussed below.

Table 1. Job Impart of Academic Librarians' Level of Education

S/N	Academic Librarians' Education Job Impart	SD (%)	D (%)	A (%)	SA (%)	NR (%)
A	**Education**			**82.66 (15.57)**		
i.	I have acquired education that has given me the right skills and attitudes towards my job performance.	3 (0.8)	10 (2.6)	178 (46.1)	194 (50.3)	1 (0.3)
ii	I have acquired education that has equipped me with the right knowledge and ability to effectively and efficiently perform my job.	3 (0.8)	10 (2.6)	158 (40.9)	215 (55.7)	-
iii	The education I have acquired helps me to relate very well with Library users and professional colleagues	3 (0.8)	13 (3.4)	157 (40.7)	211 (54.7)	2 (0.5)
iv	The education I have acquired has equipped me to reason rationally and to manage both human and material resources for effective and efficient library services delivery	1 (0.3)	13 (3.4)	160 (41.5)	212 (54.9)	-
v	The education that I have acquired has prepared me to avail myself of the opportunity for self-actualization and at the same time fulfil the main objective of the library as an organization	8 (2.1)	13 (3.4)	178 (46.1)	186 (48.2)	1 (0.3)
	Overall Mean and Sd. = 82.66 (15.57)					

Fieldwork, 2019

Table: 1 showed that academic librarians in Southern Nigeria strongly agree that education had influenced their relationship with library users at an overall mean and standard deviation of 82.66 (sd = 15.57). Specifically, librarians strongly agreed that education had equipped them to relate very well with library users and professional colleagues; while they reinstated that the education they had acquired had equipped them with the right knowledge and ability in their job performance; and more so that the education they had acquired equipped them to reason rationally and to manage both human and material resources for effective and efficient library service delivery. They are also of the opinion that they had acquired education that has given them the right skills and attitudes towards their job performance; and that the education they had acquired had prepared them to avail themselves of opportunity for self- actualization and at the same time fulfil the main objectives of library as service organization in the university work environment.

The affirmation of the acquisition of these qualities by librarians through education aspect of human resource capacity building was captured and confirmed by (Rao, 2010) who stated that education is consciously planned to purposely create situations that are conducive for the process of learning; and that formal education is chronologically graded running from primary through university and including a variety of specialized programmes and institutions for full-time technical and professional training. He reinstated that informal education on the other hand, is lifelong processes whereby individuals acquire attitudes, values, skills and knowledge from daily experience and the educative influences and resources in their environment. Thus, education is essentially meant to prepare individuals to get along in life by first managing one's self and the available resources. The possession of education by librarians has therefore helped them to relate well with users, professional colleagues, to reason rationally, and to manage both human and material resources, for self - actualization and the fulfilling of the objectives of the library as a service organization in the university work environment.

Table 2. Competency Development of Academic Librarians' Job Impart

S/N	Job Impart of Competency Development of Academic Librarians	SD (%)	D (%)	A (%)	SA (%)	NR (%)
B	**Competency Development**			74.14 (17.38)		
I	My university has through capacity building enhanced my competency which gives me the opportunity to utilize knowledge, skills, attitudes and abilities for job performance and research productivity.	9 (2.3)	33 (8.5)	20.7 (53.6)	137 (35.5)	-
ii	Competency acquired enables me to imbibe teamwork spirit, adaptability, flexibility, creative thinking, problem solving and decision making ability in job performance.	4 (1.0)	28 (7.3)	229 (59.3)	125 (32.4)	-
iii	Competency development impacted on me by my university helps me to be able to work with tools and technology in job performance in the present dynamic information society	6 (1.6)	32 (8.3)	223 (57.8)	123 (31.90	2 (0.5)
iv	Competency acquired enables me to be clientele - focused, remain relevance and being sustained in my career **Overall Mean and Sd. = 74.14 (17.38)**	6 (1.6)	21 (5.4)	232 (60.1)	126 (32.6)	1 (0.3)

Table: 2 shows the job impart of academic librarians' competency development. It specially showed that academic librarians in Southern Nigeria strongly agree that competency development had influenced their relationship with library users at an overall mean and standard deviation of 74.14 (17.38).

The findings specifically revealed that competency development is relevant or ranked high in the aspect of human resource capacity building utilized in libraries in public universities in Southern Nigeria. Findings further showed that competency acquired enabled librarians to imbibe team work spirit, adaptability, flexibility, creative thinking, problem solving and decision making abilities in job performance, and that competency acquired enabled them to be clientele focused, remain relevant and being sustained in their career; and that competency development impacted on them by their universities helped them to be able to work with tools and technology in increasing their job performance level in the present dynamic information society. They also agreed that their university had through human resource capacity building enhanced their competency which gave them the opportunity to utilize acquired knowledge, skills, attitudes and abilities for effective job performance. Thus, competency development for librarians is appropriate and beneficial because it enhances their capacity to work with tools and technology, be clientele focused, and remain relevant in the profession of librarianship in the present knowledge driven environment where they operate as reflective of the study outcome of Ajegbomogun and Diyaolu (2018), and in line with the United States Department of Labour, Employment and Training Administration (ETA, 2015) that confirmed components of work place competences to include some of the valuable attributes acquired by librarians through their human resource capacity building from their various universities to include team work spirit, flexibility, clientele focus, preparation, original intelligent, problem solving and decision making, functioning with implements and technological know-how, setting up and organizing, examination, investigative and recording, industry rudiments, sustainable practices, and health and safety, which are all pointers to the abilities and capacities that allow the employee to function effectively and efficiently in job settings.

Table 3. Correlation coefficient between Education and Competency development of Academic Librarians

Variables	Mean	Std. Deviation	N	R	P	Remark
Competency development (%)	74.14	17.38	386	0.419	<0.001	Sig.
Education (%)	82.66	15.57				

Table 3 showed that there was a positive significant relationship between education and competency development of academic librarians in public universities in southern Nigeria (r = 0.419, n = 386, p < 0.05). Therefore, the null hypothesis is rejected. This means that as education increases, the competency development of academic librarians increases significantly and vice versa at (p < 0.05). The implication is that increasing education will increase competency development of academic librarians in public universities in southern Nigeria.

Table 4. The Linear Relationship between Education and Competency Development of Academic Librarians

Variables	B	Std. Error	T	P	R^2	$F_{1,384}$ (p)
(Constant)	35.518	4.352	8.162	<0.001	0.175	81.578
Education (%)	0.467	.052	9.032	<0.001		(<0.001)

The results in the table 4 showed that education had significant influence on competency development of academic librarians in the public universities in southern, Nigeria (0.467, p < 0.05). Furthermore, the results revealed that education contributed 17.5% to the total variance in competency development (R^2 = 0.175). This implied that the more the level of education, the more improved the competency development of academic librarians in public universities in southern, Nigeria. The table also shows that the analysis of the variance for regression yielded F- ratio of 81.578 (p < 0.05). Therefore, the null hypothesis is rejected. This further implies that education has a significant effect on competency development of academic librarians in public universities in Southern-Nigeria.

CONCLUSION

The study concluded that there is a positive significant relationship between education and competency development of academic librarians in relation to their job impart judging from its findings. It was directed towards librarians' welfare and personal issues such as human resource capacity building (competency development) and job performance. The study had established that education had influence on the competency development of academic librarians in public universities in Southern-Nigeria.

Besides, the study also confirmed that education and competency development aspects were strongly utilized by academic librarians.The study further established that the linear relationship between education and competency development of academic librarians in universities in Southern-Nigeria was positive and significant.

RECOMMENDATIONS

On the bases of the study findings above, the following recommendations can be validly put forward:

Public university library management should continue to promote values of quality education, and competency development which are all aspects of human-resource-capacity-building to further increase job performance of librarians since it has been established that education had significant influence on competency development of academic librarians in public universities in Southern-Nigeria.

Moreover, university management in collaboration with university library management should ensure that a need assessment of every education and competency development programme to be embarked upon should be carried out. This would make the programme much more relevant to the unique characteristics of the individual employee and also be result oriented. University and library management should as a matter of standing policy ensure that a consistent and continuous education and competency development programmes are being executed to ensure sustainability, librarians' effectiveness and effective service delivery. Therefore, the public universities management should take the issues of education and competency development of academic librarians seriously through adequate funding and financing of infrastructural facilities, education and competency development programmes, accompanied by evaluation and monitoring should be on going to ensure transparency, policy execution and sustainability in the university system.

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