Knowledge acquisition practices among Library and Information Science educators in universities in South-West, Nigeria

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ABSTRACT: The study investigated the knowledge acquisition practices of LIS educators in universities in South-West, Nigeria. It became eminent to investigate the various knowledge acquisition practices, particularly in the current technological era. The study adopted a descriptive survey design and questionnaire was used as instrument for data collection. The population of the study comprised 480 Library and Information Science (LIS) educators in six federal, nine state and thirty private universities in South-West, Nigeria. Total enumeration technique was used to obtain the sample size of 480 LIS educators. Four hundred and eighty copies of the questionnaire were administered and 334 copies were filled and found usable for the study representing a 69.5% response rate. The study showed that LIS educators acquired knowledge mostly through the Internet followed by expert lecturers and senior teachers. The study recommended that universities should improve internet connectivity and provide access to laptops and computers in the various departments of the universities. This will assist educators to acquire information via the Internet.

Keywords: Knowledge acquisition, Internet, LIS educators, practices, universities.

INTRODUCTION

Knowledge acquisition is an input-knowledge process necessitating the use of appropriate technology to obtain necessary knowledge from a variety of sources both in and out of institutions. Academic institutions expect Library and Information Science (LIS) educators to participate in activities connected to knowledge acquisition on a regular basis. They do this through reading knowledge sources and using tools to acquire knowledge. LIS educators get information from a variety of sources and technology to aid in this process. These sources include books, journals, magazines, and newspapers in both print and electronic formats. Knowledge acquisition sources include people, libraries, and information centres, as well as social media and IT-based resources. Individuals who have gained knowledge by reading sources or using technology are expected to perform their job functions optimally.

The acquisition of knowledge is an important part of intellectual development (Liao and Barnes, 2015). Information elicitation, collection, evaluation, modeling, and validation are all part of this process (Mohannak, 2014). In the words of John Locke, an English philosopher, the concept and meaning of knowledge acquisition can be discovered. People are born with no knowledge, according to him; the human mind is a "blank slate or tabula rasa," and knowledge is gained via experience (Evangelista and Mac, 2016). As a result, learning through experience and experimenting might be regarded as knowledge acquisition. Knowledge acquisition, assimilation, adaptation, knowledge conceptualization, explanation, question formulation or interpretation, and problem-solving or reaching conclusions are all part of this process (Patalas-Maliszewska and Śliwa, 2017). Knowledge acquisition is described as the ability to absorb, comprehend, and gain the superfluous information needed for association tasks (Johnson, 2017). It is portrayed as a method that combines information from human specialists, books, journals, sensors, and computer records (Huber, 1991). In a business setting, however, client-provider rivals

and accomplices are essential sources of knowledge (He et al., 2018).

According to Ahmad et al. (2013), knowing something necessitates the representation of a mind with acquired information, and knowledge acquisition begins from birth with the acquisition of tacit knowledge through social interactions, observations, insight, intuition, and hunches. To make this process easier, people use a variety of sources and methods to acquire knowledge. Among the sources are books, journals, periodicals, and newspapers (print and electronic formats). Individuals, libraries and information centres, social media, and IT-based resources can all be used in the same way to acquire knowledge.

A tool is a device or instrument that can be used to accomplish a goal or create something (Kaba and Ramaiah, 2017). As part of knowledge management tools, knowledge workers utilize knowledge acquisition tools to locate, collect, and acquire knowledge. The tools are advanced and practical enough to aid faculty members in their knowledge gain (Gaines and Shaw, 1994). Among them include e-learning, new technology, and artificial intelligence technologies. E-learning technology, such as computer-based training (CBT) and web-based training (WBT) applications, aids in knowledge acquisition (Dalkir and Liebowitz, 2011). Any person, document, or item that can be consulted or used to get information or knowledge is referred to as a source. Consequently, knowledge sources refer to books, journals, conference proceedings, periodicals, and newspapers that faculty members read for information. Reading is a valuable source of knowledge. Reading helps academics develop their knowledge, improve their teaching skills, and contribute successfully to knowledge generation, acquisition, and sharing.

Statement of the problem

There are diverse avenues through which knowledge can be obtained by educators, particularly in the advancement of the technological age. Among these, include artificial intelligence technologies and e-learning technologies, such as computer-based training (CBT) and web-based training (WBT) applications. LIS educators especially those in developing countries may not be aware of some of these tools as knowledge acquisition tools because of the low rate of ICT advancement in developing nations and the dearth of literature on knowledge acquisition practices in higher institutions of learning. It was on this premise that this paper sought to investigate the knowledge acquisition practices among LIS educators in universities in South-West, Nigeria.

Objective

The aim of the study was to investigate the knowledge acquisition practices of LIS educators in universities in South-West, Nigeria.

Research question

The research question of the study is: what are the knowledge acquisition practices of LIS educators in universities in South-West, Nigeria?

Literature Review

Shuva and Taisir (2016) carried out a research to understand Bangladesh's faculty members' awareness, perceptions, and use of open access journals for publication. Online surveys were used for data collection. The results showed that the majority of faculty members use journals for both research and teaching.

Kaba and Said (2012) carried out a study to explore the usage of e-books. It surveyed eighteen government and private institutions who subscribed to e-library databases in the United Arab Emirates. The study discovered that a significant majority of faculty members in the UAE did not use e-books to their full potential, as projected. The authors advised training, workshops, and marketing campaigns to encourage faculty members to use electronic sources.

Abu-Tineh (2011) investigated the acquisition of knowledge by Qatar University faculty members. Survey questionnaire was used to collect data from one hundred respondents. Results showed that faculty members acquired knowledge through individual learning, departmental learning, and university learning.

Tenopir et al. (2004) examined how faculty members located, obtained, read and used scholarly journals to aid their research activities. Data were gathered using questionnaire surveys of university faculty and other researchers since 1977. Electronic articles accounted for the majority of findings though most readings are still printed for final reading. Faculty age did not appear to influence whether they read print or electronic journals. Tenopir (2011) stated that reading for research purposes was held in high respect by faculty members when compared to reading for other purposes.

Patitungkho and Deshpande (2005) investigated the information-seeking behaviour of faculty members of Rajabhat Universities in Bangkok, Thailand. Data were collected using a questionnaire from seven faculties in Rajabhat Universities. Results showed that most of the respondents stated their method of seeking information by consulting a knowledgeable person in the field.

Hussin (2007) study described the knowledge acquisition of academicians at a local public university in Malaysia. A qualitative research method was used in the study and the primary data were collected mainly through interviews using a semi-structured question guide during the in-depth interview with twelve respondents by using purposive and snowballing techniques. Results showed that academicians acquire knowledge through formal, non-formal and informal learning strategies such as conferences, seminar, by academic and industrial

linkages.

Carlock and Anali (2008) study described how Arizona State University Libraries held a focus group of selected faculty to discover their perceptions and use of electronic books (e-books) for teaching and research. The services of the Institute of Social Sciences Research were employed to recruit and moderate the focus group. The focus group revealed that faculty had generally unsatisfactory experiences in using e-books in their research and teaching owing to their unreliability of access, lack of manipulability, and the steep learning curve of the various interfaces.

METHODOLOGY

The study adopted a descriptive survey design, the population comprised 480 Library and Information Science (LIS) educators in six federal, nine state and thirty private universities in South-west, Nigeria. The total population covered the academic librarians and academic staff of Library and Information Science Departments in universities in South-West Nigeria. Library and Information Science Educators refer to lecturers/educators in universities responsible for the training of library personnel and also professionals working in academic libraries responsible for teaching LIS related courses in universities. Total enumeration technique was used to obtain the sample size of 480 LIS educators. The instrument used for data collection was questionnaire. Four hundred and eighty copies of questionnaire were administered and 334 copies were filled and found usable for the study representing 69.5% response rate. Data were analysed using descriptive statistics of frequency counts, percentages, mean and standard deviation.

RESULTS

The results in Table 1 showed that 153 of the respondents (45.8%) were male while 181 respondents (54.2%) were female. This implied that there was a higher proportion of female Library and Information Science Educators than their male counterparts. The age of the respondents showed that 63 (18.9%) were within ages 21-30,102 (30.5%) were within ages 31-40, 103 respondents (30.8%) were within ages 41-50, 58 (17.4%) were within ages 51-60 while 8 (2.4%) were above 61 years of age. One may imply that a high percentage of the active working age made up the majority of the respondents. The table showed the respondents to be 3 (0.9%) Professors, 3 (0.9%) Associate Professors, 23 (6.9%) Senior Lecturers, 14 (4.2%) lecturer I, 22 (6.6%) Lecturer II, 12 (3.6%) Assistant Lecturers, 21 (6.3%) Graduate Assistants, 11 (3.3%) University Librarians, 5 (1.5%) Deputy Librarians, 26 (7.8%) Principal Librarians, 40 (12.0%) Senior Librarians, 43(12.9%) in the position of Librarian I, 33

Table 1. Demographic data of Library and Information Science Educators in Universities in South-West, Nigeria.

Characteristics	Frequency	Percentage (%)
Gender		
Male	153	45.8
Female	181	54.2
Total	334	100.0
Age-range		
21 - 30	63	18.9
31 - 40	102	30.5
41 - 50	103	30.8
51 - 60	58	17.4
61+	8	2.4
Total	334	100.0
Academic position		
Professor	3	0.9
Associate Professor	3	0.9
Senior Lecturer	23	6.9
Lecturer I	14	4.2
Lecturer II	22	6.6
Assistant Lecturer	12	3.6
Graduate Assistant	21	6.3
University Librarian	11	3.3
Deputy University Librarian	5	1.5
Principal Librarian	26	7.8
Senior Librarian	40	12.0
Librarian I	43	12.9
Librarian II	33	9.9
Assistant Librarian	78	23.4
Total	334	100.0

(9.9%) in the position of Librarian II and 78 (23%) Assistant Librarians. One may imply that there exists a higher percentage of educators in academic libraries than their counterparts in library schools. The table showed the academic qualification of the respondents as 60 (18%) Ph.D degree holders, 168 (50%) Masters degree holders, 85(25.4%) degree holders while 21 (6.3%) possessed other degree education qualifications. One may imply that the highest percentage of the respondents possess MLIS degrees, while a lower percentage are Ph.D degree holders. The table showed the number of years working in higher education of the respondents as 96 (28.7%) within the range of 1-5 years, 88 (26.3%) within the range of 6-10 years, 87 (26%) within the range of 11-15 years, 34 (10.2%) within the range of 16-20 years, 18 (5.4%) within the range of 21-25 years and 11(3.3%) above 26 years. This may imply that a higher percentage of respondents are just starting their careers as LIS educators.

These results presented in Table 2 on knowledge acquisition practices of Library and Information Science

Table 2. Knowledge acquisition practices of Library and Information Science educators in South-West Nigeria.

N	Knowledge acquisition practices	SA	A	SD	D	Mean	S. D
1	I use Internet to collect needed information	144(43.1%)	181(54.2%)	7(2.1%)	2(0.6%)	3.40	0.564
2	I collect information from expert lecturers	143(42.8%)	182(54.5%)	6(1.8%)	3(0.9%)	3.39	0.574
3	I get information from the experiences shared by senior teachers	142(42.5%)	183(54.8%)	6(1.8%)	3(0.9%)	3.39	0.573
4	I use internal access network to collect needed information	137(41.0%)	183(54.8%)	9(2.7%)	5(1.5%)	3.35	0.611
5	I get more information from external resources (out of my own school)	130(38.9%)	190(56.9%)	12(3.6%)	2(0.6%)	3.34	0.578
6	I get information from school related policies, agreements, procedures, rules and regulations	127(38.0%)	192(57.5%)	11(3.3%)	4(1.2%)	3.32	0.598

Educators showed that respondents use the Internet to collect needed information with the highest mean of ($\bar{x}$ = 3.40, δ =0.564). Respondents also agreed that they collect information from expert lecturers and get information from the experiences shared by senior teachers which both have the same mean values ($\bar{x}$ = 3.39, δ = 0.574, $\bar{x}$ = 3.39, δ =0.573).

DISCUSSION

The results showed that Library and Information Science Educators acquired knowledge mostly through the Internet because they use the Internet to collect needed information. Shuva and Taisir (2016) reinforced this by stating that the majority of faculty members use open access journals for both research and teaching. Kaba and Said (2012) on the other hand, claimed that a big proportion of faculty members did not use e-books to their full potential. The findings from this study also revealed that respondents obtained information from professional lecturers and learnt from senior teachers' experiences. This is supported by Patitungkho and Deshpande (2005) who discovered that most of the respondents stated their method of seeking information by consulting a knowledgeable person in the field. The work roles of LIS educators are knowledge and information-based. Thus, their job performance places the requirement of acquiring higher degrees to perform optimally. It is not uncommon that apart from superiors and senior colleagues at work, educators also have research supervisors in their academic pursuits.

Conclusion

The study investigated the knowledge acquisition practices of Library and Information Science educators in universities in South-West, Nigeria. The study concluded that LIS educators acquire knowledge mostly through the Internet followed by expert lecturers and senior teachers. These results are not far-fetched, especially in academia

whereby the ranks of educators depict their level of knowledge acquired in their various fields of specialisation. Senior cadres are respected and adjudged to be more experienced and knowledgeable in subject matters.

Recommendations

In the light of the above findings, the following recommendations were put forward;

1. Universities should improve Internet connectivity and provide access to laptops in the various departments in the universities. This will assist educators to acquire information via the Internet.
2. LIS departments in universities should encourage mentee-mentor policy among LIS educators, this will foster relationships that will increase knowledge acquisition practices among LIS educators.
3. Professional associations such as the National Association of Library and Information Science Educators should organize symposia, conferences, workshops and trainings to sensitise educators on the need for mentor-mentee relationships.

CONFLICT OF INTEREST

The authors declare that they have no conflict of interest.

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