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INFORMATION LITERACY AND RESEARCH SKILLS OF LIBRARIANS IN RELATION TO THE PROVISION OF INFORMATION RESOURCES AND SERVICES IN UNIVERSITY LIBRARIES IN SOUTH-EAST NIGERIA

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Abstract

This study examined the information literacy and research skills of librarians in relation to the provision of information resources and services in university libraries in South-East Nigeria. The study was guided by four research questions and employed a correlational research design. The population consisted of 134 professional librarians from five state university libraries in the South-East geopolitical zone of Nigeria. Data were collected using a researcher-made rating scale titled "Information Literacy Skills and Provision of Information Resources and Services" (ILSPRAS), which yielded a reliability coefficient of 0.76 using Cronbach Alpha statistics. Data analysis was conducted using Pearson Product Moment Correlation Coefficient (PPMCC) and t-test statistics at 0.05 level of significance. The findings revealed very high and significant positive relationships between librarians' information literacy skills and provision of information resources and services ($r = 0.889$, $p < 0.001$), research skills and service provision ($r = 0.969$, $p < 0.001$), communication skills and service provision ($r = 0.910$, $p < 0.001$), and computer/digital skills and service provision ($r = 0.856$, $p < 0.010$). The study concluded that librarian competencies are critical determinants of service quality in university libraries. Based on these findings, the study recommended continuous professional development programs, establishment of digital skills prerequisites for employment, routine communication skills assessments, and adequate resource allocation for information technology facilities. The study contributes to the understanding of how librarian competencies influence service delivery in academic library settings and provides evidence-based recommendations for improving library service quality in Nigerian state universities.

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1. INTRODUCTION

This study examined the information literacy and research skills of librarians in relation to the provision of information resources and services in university libraries in South-East Nigeria. The study was guided by four research questions and employed a correlational research design. The population consisted of 134 professional librarians from five state university libraries in the South-East geopolitical zone of Nigeria. Data were collected using a researcher-made rating scale titled "Information Literacy Skills and Provision of Information Resources and Services" (ILSPRAS), which yielded a reliability coefficient of 0.76 using Cronbach Alpha statistics. Data analysis was conducted using Pearson Product Moment Correlation Coefficient (PPMCC) and t-test statistics at 0.05 level of significance. The findings revealed very high and significant positive relationships between librarians' information literacy skills and provision of information resources and services ($r = 0.889$, $p < 0.001$), research skills and service provision ($r = 0.969$, $p < 0.001$), communication skills and service provision ($r = 0.910$, $p < 0.001$), and computer/digital skills and service provision ($r = 0.856$, $p < 0.010$). The study concluded that librarian competencies are critical determinants of service quality in university libraries. Based on these findings, the study recommended continuous professional development programs, establishment of digital skills prerequisites for employment, routine communication skills assessments, and adequate resource allocation for information technology facilities. The study contributes to the understanding of how librarian competencies influence service delivery in academic library settings and provides evidence-based recommendations for improving library service quality in Nigerian state universities.

In Nigeria, information literacy is increasingly gaining importance in the contemporary environment of rapid technological change and proliferating information resources (Odede & Zawedde, 2018). The emergence of the World Wide Web has added new dimensions to information creation and delivery, triggering digitization programs across academic institutions. University libraries in Nigeria, particularly those in the South-East geopolitical zone, face the challenge of adapting to these changes while maintaining quality service provision to their user communities. As Orakpor (2020) noted in her examination of librarians' perceptions in the region, the restructuring of library services in South-East Nigeria requires deliberate attention to professional competencies amidst evolving information landscapes. The South-East zone of Nigeria comprises five states: Abia, Anambra, Ebonyi, Enugu, and Imo. This region is characterized by a high literacy rate and numerous tertiary institutions, making it a significant hub for academic activities in Nigeria (Uchendu, 2005). Further contextualizing this environment, Orakpor and Omoruyi (2022) demonstrated that information professionals in Anambra State academic libraries adapted their service models during the COVID-19 pandemic by leveraging online platforms, underscoring the necessity of digital competencies for contemporary library practice. The state university libraries in this zone serve diverse user populations including students, faculty members, and researchers who require access to quality information resources and services. However, the effectiveness of these libraries in meeting user needs depends largely on the information literacy competencies of their professional staff.

Information literacy encompasses the ability to recognize when information is needed and to locate, evaluate, and use that information effectively (American Library Association [ALA], 2000). For librarians, these skills extend beyond personal information management to encompass the capacity to teach, guide, and facilitate information access for library users. The American Library Association, as quoted by Hisle and Webb (2017), defines information literacy as a set of abilities empowering individuals to recognize when information is needed and to be able to locate it, evaluate it, and use it effectively. This definition underscores the multifaceted nature of information literacy in contemporary library settings. The concept of information literacy first appeared in print in a 1974 report by Paul G. Zurkowski, who used this phrase to describe the "techniques and skills" known as information literacy for utilizing the wide range of information tools as well as primary sources in molding information solutions to problems (Naik & Padmini, 2014). Since then, the concept has evolved to incorporate various dimensions including research skills, communication skills, computer/digital skills, and media skills, all of which are essential for effective library service delivery.

In Nigeria, information literacy is increasingly gaining importance in the contemporary environment of rapid technological change and proliferating information resources (Odede & Zawedde, 2018). The emergence of the World Wide Web has added new dimensions to information creation and delivery, triggering digitization programs across academic institutions. University libraries in Nigeria, particularly those in the South-East geopolitical zone, face the challenge of adapting to these changes while maintaining quality service provision to their user communities. The South-East zone of Nigeria comprises five states: Abia, Anambra, Ebonyi, Enugu, and Imo. This region is characterized by a high literacy rate and numerous tertiary institutions, making it a significant hub for academic activities in Nigeria (Uchendu, 2005). The state university libraries in this zone serve diverse user populations including students, faculty members, and researchers who require access to quality information resources and services. However, the effectiveness of these libraries in meeting user needs depends largely on the information literacy competencies of their professional staff.

Research skills constitute a critical component of information literacy for librarians. According to Onwuegbuzie (2003), research skill or self-efficacy is believed to influence individuals' choices of behavior, effort invested, persistence, and consequently task success. For librarians, research skills enable them to support the research endeavors of their institutions by assisting users in identifying appropriate databases, formulating search strategies, and locating relevant information sources. Several studies have pointed to the importance of research self-efficacy in the development of independent researchers and the provision of quality information services (Niehaus et al., 2018).

The relationship between librarian competencies and service quality has been documented in various contexts.

Okorie (2016) affirmed that libraries offer a wide range of useful information sources, expertise, and technologies which help in accessing and using resources to satisfactory ends. However, the extent to which librarians possess and utilize information literacy and research skills in providing these services remains a critical area of investigation, particularly in the context of Nigerian state university libraries. This study examines the information literacy and research skills of librarians in relation to the provision of information resources and services in university libraries in South-East Nigeria. By investigating these relationships, the study aims to contribute to the understanding of how librarian competencies influence service quality and user satisfaction in academic library settings.

2. STATEMENT OF THE PROBLEM

The paradigm shift from traditional ways of providing information resources and services has brought about an information-rich society that has fundamentally affected how academic libraries operate. University libraries are now faced with increasingly diverse and abundant information choices that require sophisticated information skills to navigate and provide adequate resources to library users (Bruce, 2003). These information resources and services need continuous updating to meet the evolving needs of library users in the digital age.

It has been observed that university libraries in South-East Nigeria experience low patronage despite the varied information resources and services available in these institutions. This state of affairs raises fundamental questions about the effectiveness of library service delivery and the competencies of library staff in facilitating information access. The problem prompts investigation into whether universities adequately equip their libraries with information resources and services, whether librarians possess the technical know-how and competencies to provide these services effectively, and whether library staff have adequate information literacy skills, research skills, communication skills, computer/digital skills, and media skills to provide required resources and services to users.

The proliferation of electronic information resources and the complexity of modern information environments require librarians to possess advanced skills in information retrieval, evaluation, and dissemination. However, there appears to be a gap between the skills possessed by librarians and the demands of contemporary information service provision. This gap may contribute to the observed low patronage of university libraries, as users may not be receiving the quality of assistance they need to navigate complex information landscapes.

Furthermore, while several studies have examined information literacy skills among various user populations including students, academic staff, and banking personnel, limited attention has been given to the specific competencies of librarians in state university libraries and how these competencies relate to their service delivery capabilities. Most existing studies have focused on federal universities or other geopolitical zones, leaving a significant knowledge gap regarding the situation in South-East Nigerian state universities.

The problem is compounded by the rapid evolution of information technologies and the changing nature of scholarly communication. Librarians must continuously update their skills to remain effective in their roles, yet the extent to which professional development opportunities are available and utilized in state university libraries remains unclear. Without adequate information literacy and research skills, librarians may struggle to provide the guidance and support needed by users to effectively utilize the rich information resources available in university libraries.

This study seeks to examine the relationships between the information literacy skills of librarians, with particular emphasis on research skills, and the provision of information resources and services in state university libraries in the South-East zone of Nigeria. By investigating these relationships, the study aims to identify areas where librarian competencies may need strengthening and to provide evidence-based recommendations for improving library service delivery.

3. OBJECTIVES OF THE STUDY

The main purpose of this study was to ascertain the information literacy skills of librarians as a correlate to the provision of information resources and services in university libraries of South-East zone of Nigeria. The specific objectives were to:

Determine the extent of information literacy skills of librarians and provision of information resources and services in university libraries of South-East zone of Nigeria.

Ascertain the relationship between librarian research skills and the provision of information resources and services in university libraries in South-East, Nigeria.

Ascertain the relationship between librarian communication skills and the provision of information resources and services in university libraries in South-East, Nigeria.

Ascertain the relationship between librarian computer/digital skills and the provision of information resources and services in university libraries in South-East, Nigeria.

3.1 RESEARCH QUESTIONS

The following research questions guided this study:

- i. What is the extent of librarians' information literacy skills and the provision of information resources and services in university libraries of South-East zone of Nigeria?
- ii. What is the relationship between librarian research skills and the provision of information resources and services in university libraries in South-East, Nigeria?
- iii. What is the relationship between librarian communication skills and the provision of information resources and services in university libraries in South-East, Nigeria?
- iv. What is the relationship between librarian computer/digital skills and the provision of information resources and services in university libraries in South-East, Nigeria?

4. LITERATURE REVIEW

4.1 INFORMATION LITERACY SKILLS

Information literacy skill is an art, the capability or the capacity of an individual to find, evaluate, arrange, utilize, and communicate information in all its various media, especially in situations that require decision making, problem solving, deductive reasoning, acquisition, and provision of information resources and services (Okiki, 2013). Information literacy skills deal with the combination of research skills, critical thinking skills, computer technology skills, information technology skills, and communication skills. The academic environment requires multi-skilled librarians who are able to think critically, pose and solve problems, and become independent learners so as to be able to filter, access, and retrieve quality information for library users (Anyaoaku et al., 2015). In a practical application of this conceptual framework, Orakpor, Agbanu, and Muokebe (2025) found that library skills and value orientation significantly influenced the information-seeking behaviors of medical students at Chukwuemeka Odumegwu Ojukwu University, thereby reinforcing the premise that librarians equipped with robust information literacy competencies are better positioned to facilitate user-centered instruction. Furthermore, Orakpor and Ezekwibe (2025) demonstrated that information literacy skills, particularly search strategy formulation, directly address the information needs of postgraduate students, a finding that extends to librarians themselves who must model these competencies in their professional practice. The American Library Association (2000) defines information literacy as a set of abilities requiring individuals to recognize when information is needed and have the ability to locate, evaluate, and use effectively the needed information.

5. COMPUTER/DIGITAL SKILLS

Digital literacy has to do with the ability to understand information and perform tasks digitally in a digital environment. It includes skills and knowledge crucial to daily life within multiple industries, professions, and careers in this 21st century, such as using a computer to find, manipulate, and communicate information; being able to identify information in different types of formats and media; critically evaluating information and media sources for accuracy, reliability, and credibility; and using digital tools and information ethically and safely (Ukachi, 2010). Ibeh, Muokebe, Agwuna, and Orakpor (2025) provided empirical evidence that computer literacy competencies are not merely supplementary but imperative for contemporary academic librarianship, asserting that proficiency in digital tools directly enhances service delivery outcomes in the digital age. Their study specifically identified core competencies including operating systems navigation, database management, and digital communication platforms as essential prerequisites for effective library practice. Anyaoaku (2012) affirmed that information and communication technologies have transformed services in most libraries in the world. Currently, technology adoption by libraries has moved from the early stage of automating selected library operations to the stage where ICT has permeated almost all spheres of library services and routines. However, as Agwuna et al. (2024) observed, the adoption of digital technologies in Nigerian public library services is fraught with challenges including inadequate infrastructure, erratic power supply, and insufficient training, constraints that similarly affect state university libraries in the South-East region. This development entails that a large part of the librarian's responsibility in the 21st century involves working with computers, leading to additional skills requirements. Orakpor, Muokebe, Ibeh, Agwuna, and Ugheru (2025) further reinforced this position by documenting that students' effective utilization of electronic information resources is contingent upon both their own digital literacy and the supportive role of technologically proficient library staff. Librarians are now required to have skills in ICT use in addition to traditional information and library science skills.

6. COMMUNICATION SKILLS

Communication skills are critical tools for success in library service provision. They are important for survival in real-world environments and critical for propagation of knowledge and development so as to manage change and conflicts effectively (McDowell, 2015). Communication skills occupy a vital position in students' lives and that of practicing professionals. It is a basic skill for survival at university, higher learning, and improved job performance. According to Etebu (2010), communication among the staff of the library has an effect on the way the library is managed. Communication must flow upward and horizontally across the organization just as much as it flows downward. Extending this organizational perspective, Ibeh, Muokebe, Agwuna, and Orakpor (2025) examined the organizational culture of librarians in Eastern Nigeria and found that collaborative communication patterns and shared professional values significantly influence service innovation and user satisfaction. Their study highlighted that libraries with open communication channels and a culture of knowledge sharing were more adept at

responding to emerging user needs. The library users are the customers of the library, and they need communication to achieve desired information-seeking goals. In the context of contemporary digital engagement, Orakpor and Igwilo (2024) investigated university library staff perceptions of community engagement through social media and discovered that effective online communication strategies extended the library's reach beyond physical boundaries, thereby enhancing service visibility and user interaction. Communication is an exchange of information; it takes two or more to exchange information.

7. RESEARCH SKILLS

Research skills are very important abilities for doing research and for effective provision of information resources and services to library clientele. According to Onwuegbuzie (2003), research skill or self-efficacy is believed to influence individuals' choices of behavior, effort invested, persistence, and consequently task success. Several studies have highlighted the importance of research self-efficacy in the development of independent researchers (Niehaus et al., 2018). Evans (2011) noted the importance of internal perceptions like self-efficacy in the attitudinal development of researchers. Likewise, Akerlind (2008) noted the importance of developing confidence as one way of understanding researcher development. Supporting this theoretical foundation, Orakpor and Ezeibe (2025) examined librarians' perceptions of library databases as tools for information preservation and found that librarians with advanced research skills—including sophisticated search strategies, Boolean logic application, and database navigation—were more confident in both their own research endeavors and their capacity to assist patrons. Research skills enable librarians to support the research endeavors of their institutions effectively. Leiss and Lockhart (2015) stated that general knowledge of research processes and policies is important and lays the foundation for more specific training programs.

8. METHODOLOGY

This study adopted a correlational research design to determine the relationships between information literacy skills, research skills, and the provision of information resources and services. According to Nwankwo (2010) and Nworgu (2015), a correlational study intends to find out whether or not there is any relationship between variables studied as well as the extent of such relationship. This design is most appropriate for this study because it allows two variables to show if they have a positive or negative relationship.

The study was conducted in the South-East zone of Nigeria, which comprises five states: Abia, Anambra, Ebonyi, Enugu, and Imo. The specific institutions studied were Abia State University Library, Uturu; Chukwuemeka Odimegwu Ojukwu University Library, Uli; Ebonyi State University Library, Abakiliki; Enugu State University of Science and Technology Library, Enugu; and Imo State University Library, Owerri. These state university libraries were selected based on having been established for more than ten years. The population of the study consisted of 134 professional librarians in the five state university libraries. The researcher adopted the census enumeration sampling technique, using the entire population because it was finite and small enough to allow for comprehensive data collection without sampling.

The instrument used for data collection was a researcher-made rating scale titled "Information Literacy Skills and Provision of Information Resources and Services" (ILSPRAS). The rating scale was divided into three sections: demographic variables of respondents, sixteen items addressing information resources and services, and five clusters addressing information literacy skills (research skills, communication skills, computer/digital skills, media skills, and general information literacy skills). Responses were rated on a four-point scale: Strongly Agree (4 points), Agree (3 points), Disagree (2 points), and Strongly Disagree (1 point).

To ensure face validity, the rating scales were given to five experts—three from the Department of Library and Information Science and two from Measurement and Evaluation Department—who examined the instruments and made proper corrections. For reliability, 30 copies of the instrument were administered to librarians at Rivers State University of Science and Technology (not among the studied universities) for trial testing. Cronbach Alpha statistics yielded a reliability coefficient of 0.76, indicating that the instrument was reliable for the study. Data were collected by the researcher with the assistance of five research assistants, one in each selected state university library. The research assistants were trained for two weeks on questionnaire administration, while distribution and collection of instruments lasted three weeks. Data were analyzed using Pearson Product Moment Correlation Coefficient (PPMCC) for research questions and t-test statistics for hypotheses at 0.05 level of significance. The decision rule for correlation coefficients was: 0.00–0.20 = very low relationship; 0.21–0.40 = low relationship; 0.41–0.60 = moderate/fair relationship; 0.61–0.80 = high relationship; and 0.81–1.00 = very high relationship.

9. DATA ANALYSIS AND RESULTS

Analysis for Objective One: Extent of Information Literacy Skills and Provision of Information Resources and Services

TABLE 1
CORRELATION COEFFICIENT AND T-TEST OF SIGNIFICANCE FOR THE RELATIONSHIP BETWEEN INFORMATION LITERACY SKILLS AND PROVISION OF INFORMATION RESOURCES AND SERVICES

Variable	n	M	R	p-value	t-statistic	Decision
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Information Literacy Skills	134	62.20	0.889	0.001	30.657	Reject H ₀
Information Resources & Services	134	51.23				

Note. M = Mean. R = Correlation coefficient. H₀ = null hypothesis.

Table 1 shows that the responses on information literacy skills of librarians have a mean value of 62.20, while information resources and services have a mean value of 51.23. The correlation coefficient between the extent of information literacy skills and information resources was 0.889, which indicates a "very high relationship" according to the decision rule. The p-value of 0.001 is less than the 0.05 critical value, leading to rejection of the null hypothesis. Therefore, there is a very high and significant relationship between information literacy skills of librarians and provision of information resources and services in state universities in South-East zone of Nigeria.

Analysis for Objective Two: Relationship Between Research Skills and Provision of Information Resources and Services

TABLE 2
CORRELATION COEFFICIENT AND T-TEST OF SIGNIFICANCE FOR THE RELATIONSHIP BETWEEN RESEARCH SKILLS AND PROVISION OF INFORMATION RESOURCES AND SERVICES

Variable	N	M	R	p-value	t-statistic	Decision
Research Skills	134	65.15	0.969	0.000	63.231	Reject H ₀
Information Resources & Services	134	51.23				

Note. M = Mean. R = Correlation coefficient. H₀ = null hypothesis.

Table 2 presents the results for research skills. The responses on research skills of librarians have a mean value of 65.15, while information resources and services maintain a mean of 51.23. The correlation coefficient between research skills and information resources was 0.969, indicating a "very high relationship." The p-value of 0.000 is significant at less than 0.05, leading to rejection of the null hypothesis. Thus, there is a very high and significant relationship between research skills of librarians and provision of information resources and services in state universities in South-East zone of Nigeria.

Analysis for Research Question Three: Relationship Between Communication Skills and Provision of Information Resources and Services

TABLE 3
CORRELATION COEFFICIENT AND T-TEST OF SIGNIFICANCE FOR THE RELATIONSHIP BETWEEN COMMUNICATION SKILLS AND PROVISION OF INFORMATION RESOURCES AND SERVICES

Variable	N	M	R	p-value	t-statistic	Decision
Communication Skills	134	71.40	0.910	0.001	34.850	Reject H ₀
Information Resources & Services	134	51.23				

Note. M = Mean. R = Correlation coefficient. H₀ = null hypothesis.

Table 3 shows that communication skills have a mean value of 71.40. The correlation coefficient between communication skills and information resources was 0.910, indicating a "very high relationship." With a p-value of 0.001, which is less than 0.05, the null hypothesis is rejected. There is a very high and significant relationship between communication skills of librarians and provision of information resources and services in state universities in South-East zone of Nigeria.

Analysis for Research Question Four: Relationship Between Computer/Digital Skills and Provision of Information Resources and Services

TABLE 4
CORRELATION COEFFICIENT AND T-TEST OF SIGNIFICANCE FOR THE RELATIONSHIP BETWEEN COMPUTER/DIGITAL SKILLS AND PROVISION OF INFORMATION RESOURCES AND SERVICES

Variable	n	M	R	p-value	t-statistic	Decision
Computer/Digital Skills	134	64.29	0.856	0.010	25.917	Reject H ₀
Information Resources & Services	134	51.23				

Note. M = Mean. R = Correlation coefficient. H₀ = null hypothesis.

Table 4 indicates that computer/digital skills have a mean value of 64.29. The correlation coefficient between computer/digital skills and information resources was 0.856, representing a "very high relationship." The p-value of

0.010 is significant at less than 0.05, resulting in rejection of the null hypothesis. Therefore, there is a very high and significant relationship between computer/digital skills of librarians and provision of information resources and services in state universities in South-East zone of Nigeria.

10. DISCUSSION OF FINDINGS

The findings of this study reveal significant relationships between various dimensions of librarians' information literacy skills and their provision of information resources and services in university libraries in South-East Nigeria. These results have important implications for library practice, professional development, and policy formulation.

Information Literacy Skills and Service Provision

The study found a very high and significant positive relationship ($r = 0.889$, $p < 0.001$) between information literacy skills of librarians and the provision of information resources and services. This finding aligns with Amusa et al. (2016), who found that bankers with high information literacy skill levels showed significant relationships between information literacy and information use. Similarly, Durodolu and Adekanye (2017) established that librarians and library officers at the University of Lagos possessed advanced levels of perception regarding the need for information literacy.

This result suggests that librarians who possess strong information literacy competencies are better equipped to provide quality information resources and services to their users. The very high correlation coefficient indicates that as librarians' information literacy skills increase, the quality of information resources and services they provide also increases substantially. This finding supports the theoretical proposition of the Job Performance Theory that declarative and procedural knowledge, combined with motivation, lead to improved task performance and outcomes.

However, this finding does not fully agree with Anyaoku et al. (2015), who found that while librarians in Colleges of Education had positive views of their roles in information literacy services, they rated their skills lowest on abilities such as carrying out searches using Boolean operators and using appropriate presentation software. This discrepancy may be attributed to differences in institutional contexts, with state university librarians in South-East Nigeria possibly having better access to training and professional development opportunities than their counterparts in Colleges of Education.

11. RESEARCH SKILLS AND INFORMATION PROVISION

The study revealed the strongest relationship between research skills and provision of information resources and services ($r = 0.969$, $p < 0.001$), indicating a very high positive correlation. This finding emphasizes the critical importance of research skills for effective library service delivery. Librarians with strong research competencies can better assist users in formulating research questions, selecting appropriate search strategies, locating relevant and credible sources, and managing information effectively.

This result contrasts with the findings of Udem and Anaehobi (2020), who found a negative relationship between information literacy skills and research self-efficacy among LIS postgraduate students. The difference in findings may be explained by the different populations studied—professional librarians versus postgraduate students—and their varying levels of practical experience. Professional librarians in state universities likely have more opportunities to apply and refine their research skills in practical contexts, leading to stronger positive relationships with service provision.

The finding supports the work of Rod (2023), who found that experience conducting original research is perceived as important for data-related librarianship roles. It also aligns with Ali et al. (2022), who established a strong positive correlation ($r = 0.80$) between university librarians' information literacy skills and their research support services. The implication is that librarians' research skills are fundamental to their ability to support the research endeavors of their institutions effectively.

12. COMMUNICATION SKILLS AND SERVICE QUALITY

The very high positive relationship between communication skills and provision of information resources and services ($r = 0.910$, $p < 0.001$) underscores the importance of effective communication in library practice. This finding suggests that librarians who possess strong communication abilities are better able to convey information about available resources, understand user needs, provide clear guidance on information access and use, and generally facilitate positive user experiences.

This result is not in consonance with the study by Afkhami et al. (2019), who found that the level of librarians' communication skills in Iranian public libraries was undesirable. The difference may be attributed to contextual factors, including training emphasis and cultural differences in communication expectations. However, the finding supports Agunsoye (2023), who found that academic library personnel in Kogi State, Nigeria, possess interpersonal communication skills to a great extent and that these skills are effective in reference and information service delivery.

The strong relationship between communication skills and service provision highlights the need for library administrators to prioritize communication skills in staff development programs. Effective communication serves as the foundation for all other information literacy competencies, enabling librarians to translate their technical knowledge into meaningful assistance for users.

13. COMPUTER/DIGITAL SKILLS IN CONTEMPORARY LIBRARIES

The very high positive relationship between computer/digital skills and provision of information resources and services ($r = 0.856$, $p < 0.010$) reflects the centrality of technology in modern library operations. This finding indicates that librarians who are proficient in using computers and digital technologies are better positioned to provide effective information services in the contemporary information environment.

This result aligns with several previous studies. Obasuyi and Otabor (2012) discovered that students at the University of Benin were computer and internet literate, possessing most of the required skills. Okeji et al. (2020) found that academic librarians in private universities in Anambra State possess digital literacy skills. Emiri (2015) showed that electronic mailing, social networking, use of personal digital assistants, mobile phones, and internet surfing are major digital literacy skills among librarians.

The finding emphasizes that in the current digital age, computer and digital skills are no longer optional competencies but essential requirements for effective library service delivery. Librarians must be able to navigate digital environments, use electronic resources, assist users with technology-related queries, and leverage digital tools for information organization and dissemination.

14. CONCLUSION AND RECOMMENDATIONS

This study examined the information literacy and research skills of librarians in relation to the provision of information resources and services in university libraries in South-East Nigeria. The findings demonstrate that there are very high and significant positive relationships between librarians' information literacy skills, research skills, communication skills, and computer/digital skills and their provision of information resources and services.

The correlation coefficients of 0.889 for information literacy skills, 0.969 for research skills, 0.910 for communication skills, and 0.856 for computer/digital skills all indicate very high positive relationships with service provision. These results confirm that librarian competencies are critical determinants of service quality in university libraries. The study validates the theoretical propositions of the Job Performance Theory and the Big Six Information Skills model, demonstrating that knowledge, skills, and motivation combine to produce effective job performance in library settings. The findings also reveal that state university librarians in South-East Nigeria possess relatively high levels of these competencies, as evidenced by the mean scores: 62.20 for information literacy skills, 65.15 for research skills, 71.40 for communication skills, and 64.29 for computer/digital skills. These levels suggest that these librarians are reasonably well-equipped to meet the information needs of their user communities, though continuous professional development remains essential given the rapidly evolving information landscape.

15. RECOMMENDATIONS

Based on the findings of this study, the following recommendations are made:

- i. University management should implement and maintain comprehensive staff development programs focused on enhancing information literacy skills among librarians. These programs should cover all dimensions of information literacy including research skills, communication skills, and digital competencies.
- ii. Given the very high correlation between research skills and service provision ($r = 0.969$), policies guiding staff development programs should specifically emphasize research skills training. Librarians should be encouraged and supported to engage in research activities, attend research methodology workshops, and stay current with developments in scholarly communication.
- iii. In the current dispensation of information technology, computer and digital skills should be established as prerequisites for employment in university libraries. Recruitment processes should include assessments of digital competencies, and current staff should be provided with ongoing training to keep pace with technological advancements.
- iv. Library administrators should conduct routine assessments of librarians' communication skills to ensure sustained quality in service delivery. Communication training should be integrated into professional development programs, with emphasis on interpersonal skills, user engagement, and effective information dissemination.
- v. University management should allocate adequate resources for the procurement of information technology facilities and electronic resources to support librarians in their service delivery roles. Improved infrastructure will enable librarians to fully utilize their skills in providing quality information services.
- vi. Libraries should establish collaborative training initiatives with academic departments, professional associations, and other institutions to provide diverse learning opportunities for librarians. Such collaborations can facilitate knowledge exchange and exposure to best practices in information service provision.

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