AJEMATES
African Journal of Educational Management, Teaching and Entrepreneurship Studies
VOL.11 (2), January-April, 2024 https://ajemates.org

ELECTRONIC RECORDS MANAGEMENT SKILLS REQUIREMENTS BY LIBRARIANS FOR EFFECTIVE JOB PERFORMANCE IN FEDERAL UNIVERSITY LIBRARIES IN SOUTH EAST NIGERIA

Ibeh Oluchi Bridget (CLN)
Department of Library and Information Science
Chukwuemeka Odumegwu Ojukwu University, Igbariam Campus
ob.ibeh@coou.edu.ng
&
Augusta Chioma Ezeabasili (PhD.)
Email: ac.ezeabasili@unizik.edu.ng
Department of Library and Information Science,
Nnamdi Azikiwe University, Awka, Nigeria

ABSTRACT

This study examined electronic records management skills required by librarians for effective job performance in federal universities in South East Nigeria. The study was guided by three research questions. This study adopted correlational survey design. The population of the study comprised 134 librarians in the five federal university libraries in South East Nigeria. Self-structured questionnaire was used for data collection. The data collection from questionnaire was analyzed with Pearson Product-Moment Correlation Coefficient. Similarly, the hypotheses were tested at 0.05 significant level with the use of Pearson Product-Moment Correlation Coefficient. The study found that librarians have enhanced their job performance by effectively managing electronic records through cataloging practices. These librarians organize library resources by attributing titles, authors, and subjects, as well as assigning suitable subject headings and improving cataloging systems. Librarians excel in constructing databases for efficient information storage, ensuring security and reliability while optimizing performance through indexing and query tuning. Their proficiency in information retrieval, utilizing Boolean operators and subject-specific searches with effective keywords, further aids in managing electronic records and enhancing job performance. The study recommended that school management should always ensure librarians undergo on-the-job training so as get used to improved ways of cataloguing using technology. Government should make available ICT facilities available in university libraries so as to improve electronic record management

Keywords: Electronic Records, Management, Information Retrieval, Cataloguing, Job Performance

Introduction

Libraries are incredibly important in today's information world asthey are like treasure chests full of knowledge and information, acting as vital centers for learning, research, and preserving our culture. Even though lots of information can be found online these days, libraries still offer something unique and valuable. They carefully select and provide trustworthy resources that the users might not easily find elsewhere. Libraries are welcoming places that meet the needs of

everyone. The users can access a wide variety of materials like books, magazines, videos, and historical records. They help people of all ages and backgrounds keep learning and improve their reading and thinking skills throughout their lives.

One important aspect of libraries is that libraries goes beyond just thinking about books. They are like big storage places for all sorts of important records, and librarians make sure these records are well taken care of so they stay accurate, easy to get to, and helpful. Records, as explained by John and Lawrence (2023), are basically like an organization's memory—they are the things that the organization creates, processes, sends, uses, saves, finds, keeps, and eventually gets rid of. Ovbiagele and Mgbonyebi (2019) also say that records are documents made or received during business and kept by the organization or person. So, for a company, its records are its valuable assets that go through a whole cycle of creation, use, storage, retrieval, keeping, and disposal.

In today's world, technology like computers and the internet has changed how humans do things in a big way. It affects how people talk to each other, do their jobs, learn new things, and interact with the world around them. This technology, known as Information and Communication Technology (ICT), is now a crucial part of human daily lives, shaping how they live and work.As a result of this technology, humans create a lot of digital information or records. These records are like electronic versions of documents that are made, used, and saved on computers. According to John and Lawrence (2023), electronic records are any data that's created, used, and saved in a way that only computers can understand. Similarly, Saffady (2014) describes electronic records as files with information that are made and stored in digital form using computers and special software. They are stored on different kinds of computer storage devices like hard drives and discs and are made possible by computer programs.Even though electronic records are in a digital format, they are still considered records because they hold important information, regardless of how they are stored.

In libraries, electronic records refer to digital versions of things like academic journals, magazines, and periodicals covering different topics. They also include ebooks, online databases with scholarly articles, research data, and historical materials. Institutional repositories hold research papers, theses, dissertations, and conference papers. Administrative records cover library systems like catalogs, circulation, budgets, and digital preservation processes. Course materials like lectures, syllabi, and multimedia resources are also part of electronic records found in libraries.

According to Audu (2014), records are extremely valuable, especially for universities and colleges. Good record-keeping is crucial for these institutions because it forms the basis for future planning. It helps them learn from past experiences and keep accurate information. Proper records management also ensures that institutions can be accountable to their stakeholders (Ibrahim, 2021). Records need to be complete and accessible when needed. If they are not managed well, they will not provide the necessary support, and important information might get lost, causing more problems for the institution.Additionally, poorly managed or incomplete records can be misleading, making it hard to evaluate

employee performance (Popoola &Fagbola, 2023). In universities, librarians play a key role in organizing, storing, and maintaining these various records. They also ensure that records are managed digitally to preserve their content and make it easy for users to access. Electronic management is crucial because it helps preserve records and makes them readily available to library users.

Allison (2021) explained that records management involves organizing, storing, preserving, tracking, and getting rid of unnecessary records to meet organizational goals. Similarly, Idris (2017) defined electronic records management as the practice of handling records using electronic technology. Franks (2013) described electronic records management as applying records management principles specifically to electronic records. Garland (2019) also talked about it as overseeing electronic files, papers, or records.Because records are historically, crucially, and significantly important, librarians are expected to have a central role in managing electronic records. This includes handling digital documents, databases, multimedia resources, and institutional repositories.

Librarians are expected to handle these records using advanced technologies and software to store, organize, and retrieve electronic information efficiently. They make sure users can access information from anywhere and on different devices. Librarians also have to put strong data management practices in place to protect electronic records from cyber threats, data loss, and becoming outdated. They use methods like encryption, backup systems, and version control to keep data safe and reliable. According to Idris (2017), an organization's records, like those of a university, are like its collective memory and help in planning and decision-making. That's why having accurate records and good record-keeping is crucial for future planning in universities, which provide a range of services like research, teaching, and community engagement.

According to Idris (2017), libraries in Nigerian federal universities are supposed to handle their electronic records following international standards for e-records management. This means applying specific principles for managing electronic records effectively. To do this, universities first need to identify all the electronic records they create or receive in their daily operations. Then, these identified records must be evaluated to understand their value in terms of information, history, culture, education, economy, and politics.The International Records Management Trust [IRMT] (2012) emphasized the importance of developing policies and guidelines for appraising, retaining, and disposing of records. This is because, as mentioned by Idris (2017), proper records management is crucial for preserving records in the long term and ensuring their authenticity. For librarians to succeed in following these electronic records management practices, they must have the necessary skills in records management. Therefore, having record management skills is essential for librarians, regardless of their background.

Skill is something you learn through training and practice that helps you do a specific task and reach a particular goal (Daniel, 2011). In simple terms, it's the expertise you gain over time from training and experience, leading to high-level performance in your profession (Olatunde, 2022). When it comes to being a librarian handling electronic records, skills

refer to the different abilities, attitudes, and values that allow a librarian to work effectively as a digital information professional or a digital knowledge worker, managing electronic records efficiently. The National Archives of Australia (2008) highlighted that electronic records management skills are essential for supporting the creation, use, and maintenance of records, improving an organization's workflow. Some of the skills needed by librarians to manage electronic records well include cataloging, database management, and information retrieval skills.

Cataloging skills involve organizing information materials with similar characteristics so that all users of the library can access relevant materials quickly and efficiently (Obiozor& Nwosu, 2021). Nampeya (2009) found that cataloging and classification practices in university libraries require various applications, techniques, new skills, knowledge, enthusiasm, and the right attitudes from cataloguers to improve information services. On the other hand, database management skills allow librarians to use systems that ensure smooth operations in university libraries, allowing multiple people to access information simultaneously from anywhere (Emezaivwakpor & Asifor, 2022). This skill helps librarians perform effectively by using network database management programs. These programs, like Web Dewey, OPAC, Library of Congress Online Catalogue, Machine Readable Catalogue 21, Library of Congress Classification Web, and Z39.50, enable libraries to share information globally via the internet.

More so, having information retrieval skills is crucial when it comes to managing electronic records. According to Ekenna and Mabawonku (2013), these skills are important for accessing information in today's digital age, where most research relies on electronic sources. However, librarians may struggle to fully utilize electronic resources if they lack these skills. Therefore, it's essential for librarians to have the ability to selectively retrieve accurate, relevant, and current information from documents instead of getting overwhelmed with irrelevant data that doesn't serve their needs or the needs of library users.

Acquiring these skills is crucial for effectively using electronic resources because librarians can only make use of electronic information if they know how to retrieve the specific information required by library users. This skill allows librarians to perform functions like navigating information sources, selecting the right information, evaluating its quality, and reusing it as needed (Gui, 2007). Librarians who possess information retrieval skills can effectively manage the changing content of computer and information sources and know where to find the resources needed.

Improving the skills needed to manage electronic records can significantly enhance the job performance of librarians. Job performance is crucial and plays a vital role in the success of any organization, as it involves achieving specific outcomes through appropriate actions while following office policies and procedures (Vichita & Jintawee, 2007).In the context of university libraries, librarian job performance is evaluated based on competencies, practical skills, and cognitive abilities demonstrated while carrying out their duties (Fabunmi, Ikonne, &Madukoma, 2023). This performance is measured by the quality and quantity of work expected from librarians.

Job quality refers to providing services that meet specific needs or requirements as per the roles assigned to library personnel, while quantity is measured by the amount of work completed within a given timeframe, such as per day, week, or month (Adekunle, Ikegune, & Ajayi, 2022).

Unfortunately, from the researcher's observations, many librarians in Nigeria, especially in the South East region, are afraid of using ICT facilities because they fear damaging these expensive resources. Additionally, some librarians lack the necessary skills, which affects their job performance to deliver effective library information services. It is crucial for librarians in Nigeria, particularly in the South East, to embrace the acquisition of electronic management skills to improve their job performance. This is because without these skills, they may struggle to keep up with the advancements in technology and information service delivery in today's digital age. It is on this note that this study sought to determine the electronic records management skills required by librarians for effective job performance in federal universities in South East Nigeria.

Statement of the Problem

Every day, technology keeps advancing, introducing various information and communication devices that help with daily tasks. This is also true for university libraries, where many digital devices have become essential tools. However, based on the researcher's observations, many librarians are hesitant to use these technological devices. This hesitancy could be due to a lack of experience or fear of damaging the devices and incurring repair costs. As a result, the use of computer software and other ICT resources in libraries, particularly in South East Nigeria, has led to many library services becoming outdated, especially in electronic records management. Despite this, many librarians still hold positions in their offices. Unfortunately, relying on manual record management isn't a viable option, as Boniphace (2022) highlighted that it is costly, time-consuming, lacks backup options, increases record insecurity, leads to duplications, and can result in document misplacement, which can deny individuals their rights, hinder decision-making, lead to legal issues, and slow down librarian and library performance. As there are ongoing campaigns to shift to electronic records management and improve the job performance of librarians, this study was initiated against this background to determine the electronic records management skills required by librarians for effective job performance in federal universities in South East Nigeria.

Objectives

1. Examine the relationship between cataloguing skills and librarians effective job performance in federal university libraries in South East Nigeria.
2. Determine the relationship between database management skills and librarians effective job performance in federal university libraries in South East Nigeria.
3. Ascertain the relationship between information retrieval skills and librarians effective job performance in federal university libraries in South East Nigeria.

Hypotheses

$H_0$1: There is no significant relationship between cataloguing skills and librarians effective job performance in

federal university libraries in South East Nigeria.

$H_0$2: There is no significant relationship between database management skills and librarians effective job performance in federal university libraries in South East Nigeria.

$H_0$3: There is no significant relationship between information retrieval skills and librarians effective job performance in federal university libraries in South East Nigeria.

Research Method

This study adopted correlational survey design. The population of the study comprised 134 librarians in the five federal university libraries in South East Nigeria. These university libraries include Nnamdi Azikiwe University, Alex Ekwueme Federal Universities, Ndufu-Alike Library, Ebonyi State, University of Nigeria, Nsukka, Michael Okapara University of Agriculture, Umudike, Abia State and Federal University of Technology, Owerri, Imo State. The entire population was used as the sample size because it is small and manageable. Self-structured questionnaire was used for data collection. The questionnaire has two sections such as Sections A and B. Section A sought for information on the demographic variables of the respondents while Section B has four Clusters such as Clusters, I, II, III and IV respectively. Cluster I sought for information on cataloguing skills; Cluster II sought for information on database management skills; Cluster III sought for information on information retriever skills; and Cluster IV sought for information on job performance. The questionnaire was structured in a 4-point scale such as Strongly Agree (SA-4), Agree (A-3), Disagree (D-2) and Strongly Disagree (SD-1) with 30 items. The questionnaire was validated by three research experts. The questionnaire was subjected to test retest using 10 librarians from federal universities in South-South Nigeria. Cronbach Alpha coefficient was used to determine the reliability of the instrument. The questionnaire had an average coefficient reliability score of 0.81 where Cluster A had 0.81, Cluster B had 0.83 and Cluster C had 0.79. The research used direct method of data collection. At the end of the exercise of data collection, the return rate was 96.3% which is 129 respondents. The data collection from questionnaire was analyzed with Pearson Product-Moment Correlation Coefficient. Similarly, the hypotheses were tested at 0.05 significant level with the use of Pearson Product-Moment Correlation Coefficient with the aid of SPSS (Version 25).

Presentation of Results

Table 1: The relationship between cataloguing skills and librarians effective job performance in federal university libraries in South East Nigeria

Variables	N	Organizational Commitment	Cataloguing Skills	Remarks
Organizational Commitment	129	1	.883**	Relationship
Cataloguing Skills	129	.883**	1	

The findings in research question one showed that the r-value was 0.883. This signifies that there is a positive relationship be cataloguing skills and librarians effective job performance in federal university libraries in South East Nigeria.

Table 2: The relationship between database management skills and librarians effective job performance in federal university libraries in South East Nigeria

Variables	N	Organizational Commitment	Database Management Skills	Remarks
Organizational Commitment	129	1	.826**	Relationship
Database Management Skills	129	.826**	1	

The results in table 2 presented the relationship between database management skills and librarians effective job performance in federal university libraries in South East Nigeria. The results indicated that r-value was 0.826 which indicated that database management skills has a positive relationship with librarians' effective job performance

Table 2: The relationship between information retrieval skills and librarians effective job performance in federal university libraries in South East Nigeria

Variables	N	Organizational Commitment	Database Management Skills	Remarks
Organizational Commitment	129	1	.797**	Relationship
Information Retrieval Skills	129	.797**	1	

Table 3 showed that information retrieval skills has a positive relation with librarians' effective job performance in federal university libraries in South East Nigeria. This is because the r-value was 0.797 which signifies a positive relationship.

Test of Hypotheses

$H_0$1: There is no significant relationship between cataloguing skills and librarians effective job performance in federal university libraries in South East Nigeria.

Correlations

		Job Performance	Cataloguing Skills
Job Performance	Pearson Correlation	1	.847**
	Sig. (2-tailed)		.000
	N	258	258
Cataloguing Skills	Pearson Correlation	.847**	1
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.000	
	N	258	258

The results of test of hypothesis one revealed that the r-value of the results was 0.847 and p-value was 0.847 which is above 0.05 significant level. This means, the null hypothesis was not retained while the alternative hypothesis was retained. This shows that there is significant positive relationship between cataloguing skills and librarians effective job performance in

federal university libraries in South East Nigeria.

$H_0$2: There is no significant relationship between database management skills and librarians effective job performance in federal university libraries in South East Nigeria.

Correlations

		Job Performance	Database Management Skills
Job Performance	Pearson Correlation	1	.878**
	Sig. (2-tailed)		.000
	N	258	258
Database Management Skills	Pearson Correlation	.878**	1
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.000	
	N	258	258

The results of test of hypothesis two revealed that the r-value of the results was 0.878 and p-value. The r-value, 0.878 was above 0.05 significant level. This implies that the null hypothesis was not retained while the alternative hypothesis was retained. This shows that there is significant positive relationship between database management skills and librarians effective job performance in federal university libraries in South East Nigeria.

$H_0$3: There is no significant relationship between information retrieval skills and librarians effective job performance in federal university libraries in South East Nigeria.

Correlations

		Job Performance	Information Retrieval Skills
Job Performance	Pearson Correlation	1	.888**
	Sig. (2-tailed)		.000
	N	258	258
Information Retrieval Skills	Pearson Correlation	.888**	1
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.000	
	N	258	258

The results of test of hypothesis three revealed that the r-value of the results was 0.847 and p-value. The r-value, 0.888 was above 0.05 significant level. This implies that the null hypothesis was not retained while the alternative hypothesis was retained. This shows that there is significant positive relationship between information retrieval skills and librarians effective job performance in federal university libraries in South East Nigeria.

Discussions of the Findings

The research findings indicate a significant positive relationship between cataloguing skills and the effective job performance of librarians in federal university libraries in South East Nigeria. This means that having strong cataloguing skills is linked to better job performance among librarians. This aligns with the findings of Akalawu, Adetoro, and Bamidele (2023), who also found no significant difference between cataloguers' competence and their job performance in universities in the South East region. Cataloguing competencies are crucial for improving job performance, as highlighted by Pan and Hovde (2010), who identified competencies essential for effective performance in cataloguing.

Librarians with cataloguing skills are responsible for assigning titles, authors, and subjects to library resources, ensuring appropriate subject headings, updating catalogues, and assigning access points to books following AACR2 guidelines. They also catalog materials in different languages and handle digital resources like e-books and electronic journals. This ties in with record management practices, as John-Okeke (2018) noted that cataloguers' job performance is evaluated based on their adherence to cataloguing codes or rules to organize bibliographic information according to international standards and assign subjects using standard subject heading lists.

The findings from research question two and hypothesis two indicate a strong positive connection between database management skills and the effective job performance of librarians in federal university libraries in South East Nigeria. This confirms what John-Okeke and Anas (2017) emphasized, highlighting that librarians need proper knowledge of rules, schemes, subject headings, and ICT technologies to achieve a desirable level of job performance in libraries. Librarians with database management skills can create efficient databases for storing information, organize databases for easy retrieval of information, develop data models, ensure the reliability of database systems, optimize database queries for better performance, clean data to remove errors, monitor database performance metrics like CPU usage and memory utilization, integrate databases with other systems, and implement quality control measures for cataloging records. George, Okwu, and Ogunbodede (2022) also found a significant relationship between skills and the job performance of librarians in their study, suggesting that acquiring these skills can positively impact job performance and increase library user patronage.

The results from research question three and hypothesis three demonstrated a significant positive correlation between information retrieval skills and the effective job performance of librarians in federal university libraries in South East Nigeria. According to Onah, Adayi, Okonkwo, and Onyebuch (2020), there is a clear connection between the information retrieval skills librarians possess and how frequently they use library information resources. Librarians with strong information retrieval skills can pinpoint specific information needs, use Boolean operators like AND, OR, and NOT, perform subject-specific searches to find resources, choose appropriate keywords for better search results, utilize OPAC for specific library resource searches, conduct citation searches proficiently, and understand interlibrary loan services. These findings are supported by Obat (2019), who also found a strong positive relationship between information retrieval skills and the utilization of electronic information resources. In simpler terms, librarians who are skilled at retrieving information are more likely to effectively use library resources and electronic information, ultimately enhancing their job performance.

Conclusion

Librarians with cataloging skills have been able to improve their job performance by efficiently managing electronic records. With this they were able to organize library resources by assigning titles, authors, and subjects, as well as selecting appropriate subject headings and enhancing cataloging systems. They follow guidelines to maintain consistency and accuracy, dealing with materials in various languages, including

digital resources such as e-books and electronic journals. Also, librarians that are skilled in creating databases are effective in information storage, ensuring security and reliability, and optimizing performance by using indexing and query tuning methods. Additionally, their expertise in information retrieval, utilizing Boolean operators and conducting subject-specific searches with relevant keywords, plays a significant role in managing electronic records and enhancing job performance.

Recommendations

Based on the findings, the following recommendations were made:

1. School management should always ensure librarians undergo on-the-job training so as get used to improved ways of cataloguing using technology
2. Government should make ICT facilities available in university libraries so as to improve electronic record management
3. There should be mentorship programme that will help teach those librarians that do not know much about database management as this will improve electronic record management
4. Librarians should always make themselves available whenever there is opportunity of learning the use of technology in carrying information retrieval for electronic records management

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