Professional Competence, Institutional Support and Documentation of Indigenous Knowledge Resources in Libraries in Lagos State, Nigeria

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Abstract

This study investigated how professional competence and institutional support influence the documentation of existing indigenous knowledge in libraries in Lagos State, Nigeria. The research adopted a survey research design. A total of 245 librarians and paraprofessionals in academic, National Library of Nigeria (NLN) and Lagos State Library Board (LSLB) libraries in Lagos State constituted the sample of the study. The population included the management staff and directors of public and academic libraries. Data were collected through questionnaire while descriptive and inferential statistics were employed respectively in analysis of the data obtained. Findings revealed that processes of documentation of IK are acquisition, codification, organization, storage and preservation. Professional competences for documentation of IK are educational qualification, understanding the source of IK, ability to locate IK resources, possession of knowledge of ICT skills. Major institutional support for documentation of IK in libraries in Lagos State is adequate funding, motivation, facilitative policy and staff training. From the result of the study, it was recommended, among others, that library management should make more provision for regular training and retraining of librarians.

Keywords: Documentation, Indigenous knowledge, Professional competence, Institutional support, Nigeria

Introduction

Library is a treasure-house of knowledge. It offers new knowledge, technological benefits, and professional competence for every dimension of human affairs. Knowledge has been affirmed as power which brings development in every human endeavor that is useful for decision making. The future of library will be as a knowledge center that is dynamic, where not only the librarian, the "books" (whether real or virtual), and the users engage in an interchange of ideas but a place where knowledge and ideas can flourish, live, grow and be protected (Leheman, 2011). Knowledge systems evolve through human interactions among themselves as well as with nature. It is very important for man to preserve and maintain the valuable knowledge and information contained in the books and documents because we want to preserve our knowledge and wisdom for the coming generations. By preserving the documents in a library, this knowledge can

be made available to others so that they can benefit from it (Adeyemo & Adebayo (2017)

The central mission of a library is to collect, organize, preserve, document and provide access to knowledge and information. In fulfilling this mission, libraries preserve and document a valuable record of culture that can be passed down to succeeding generations, thus, indigenous knowledge (IK). IK is home-grown and cultural knowledge of a specific society. Hence, the term Indigenous Knowledge has different synonyms such as, traditional knowledge, local knowledge, community knowledge, rural peoples' knowledge, farmers' knowledge (Mahalik & Mahapara, 2010). This is in line with Nnadozie (2013) who also identified several terms that are often used to refer to indigenous knowledge such as Local Knowledge (LK), Indigenous Technical Knowledge (ITK), Traditional Knowledge (TK), Indigenous Skill (IS) and People's Knowledge (PK). Other terms are: Folk Knowledge (FK), Rural People's Knowledge (RPK), Ethno-Science (ES), Oral Tradition (OT) and Cultural Science (CS).

Mahalik and Mahapara (2010) asserted that when a knowledgeable or old person dies, a whole library disappears. This in other words illustrates the magnitude and importance of indigenous knowledge that the older generation have. It promotes the use of in-situ and ex-situ documentation methods, the process that implicates the preservation, documentation and management of both tacit and non-tacit IK. Stevens (2008) further acknowledges that, in the knowledge management arena, tangible and intangible knowledge can complement each other. Anyira, Onoriode and Nwabueze (2010) noted that documentation of IK like any social practice, belongs to a specific cultural universe and is guided by beliefs, codes and values that are not necessarily shared by communities whose heritage it portrays. Documentation of IK makes it easy to share and is one way to preserve IK. Sithole (2006) described documentation of IK as a way to protecting it from exploitation by actors other than its true originators. That is to say that documentation of IK, apart from serving the purpose of preservation, makes indigenous knowledge easily available to professionals within the development sector. In other words, it not only protects from exploitation but also makes it available to those with good intentions and also preserves it from

extinction. Traditionally, librarians give little or no attention to IK documentation; though libraries and information professionals can play an important role in assisting indigenous communities with the documentation and preservation of traditional knowledge through the provision of resources and expertise in collection, organization, storage and retrieval (Adeyemo &Adebayo, 2017).

Morris (2010) purported that IK is linked to humans who consciously and unconsciously interact with their environment and with each other through the use of language and symbols. According to Sarkhel (2016), IK for documentation in the libraries include: information on trees and plants that show the soil salinity or that are known to flower at the beginning of the rains; information on practices and technologies such as seed treatment and storage methods, bone-setting methods and disease treatments; resources on beliefs, myths, legends and taboos such as religious festivals and ceremonies. Documentation of IK cannot be achieved without involving professional competence of librarians in academic libraries because they have definite role to play in understanding, locating, collecting, interpreting,

disseminating and preserving indigenous knowledge. Indigenous knowledge provides the basis for problem-solving for local communities and especially for indigenous people. It is also a primary source of information that is useful in the developmental process. It has been observed that library and information professionals who see knowledge as an asset to be kept, retained, and sustained for the future seem not to be encouraging documentation of IK in the library and this may hinder the desired IK research (Adeyemo & Adebayo, 2017). The tendency among library and information professionals has been to emphasize recorded knowledge at the expense of unrecorded indigenous knowledge (Ngulube, 2002). This may be as a result of incompetence of the professional librarians probably in terms of their educational qualification, understanding the source of IK, experience of IK documentation and Information and Communication Technology skill. It could also be as a result of insufficient institutional support such as funding, motivation, facilitative policy and staff development for proper documentation of IK in the library and information centers.

Professional competence means behaving in an ethical manner while

assuming and fulfilling one's rightful responsibilities in every situation every time, without fail. It can also be seen as conducting affairs in such a way as to engender trust and confidence in every aspect of work. Chio and Rasmussen (2006) opined that professional competence should be required to have more breadth and depth of knowledge, and skills across the dimensions of professional training on management skills through practical experience. It is the responsibility of an individual to demonstrate competence and professionalism to its clients in an organization or institution. The concept of competence is probably as old as humankind. Okoye (2013) defined competence as a cluster of related abilities, commitments, knowledge and skills that enable a person or an organization to act effectively in a job or situation. In other words, it is interplay of knowledge, understanding, skills and attitudes required to do a job effectively from the point of view of both the performer and the observer. According to Karhumaki (2015) competence consists of education, gained information, skills and experience. Competence is different from knowledge in sense of practical know how and skills. Personal

attitudes and motivation have an effect on how different persons, even with the exact same education, see and experience competence. Competence has become a remarkable factor for guaranteeing library and information professional success. This research therefore investigates how professional competence and institutional support influence the documentation of the existing indigenous knowledge in the libraries in Lagos State, Nigeria.

Objectives of the study

The main objective of this research was to investigate how professional competence and institutional support influence documentation of indigenous knowledge in libraries in Lagos State, Nigeria. The specific objectives were to:

1. identify the processes of documentation of indigenous knowledge in the libraries in Lagos State;

2. find out the professional competence for documentation of indigenous knowledge in the libraries in Lagos State;

3. identify the institutional support for the documentation of indigenous knowledge in the libraries in Lagos State and

Methodology

The research adopted a survey research design. Survey research design is used when

the researcher is interested in eliciting information about a population of interest based on the responses of a selected sample drawn from the same population. The target population of this study comprised all librarians and paraprofessionals in the seven (7) academic libraries in Lagos State, National Library of Nigeria (NLN) Lagos, and Lagos State Library Board (LSLB) with its twelve division in various Local Government Area in Lagos State. There are a total of 245 librarians and paraprofessionals in Lagos State (NLA, Lagos Chapter, 2018; Lagos State Library Board, 2018). The population included the management staff and directors of public and academic libraries. The entire population was used as sample for the study. Data were collected through questionnaire while descriptive and inferential statistics were employed in analyzing the data. The descriptive statistics of frequency and percentage were used in analyzing the demographic variables, while percentage, mean and standard deviation were used in analyzing the data collected.

Result and discussion

Table 1: Frequency distribution of respondents by years of experience

Years of Experience	Freq.	(%)
1 to 5years	26	10.6
6 to 10 years	44	18.0
11 to 15years	54	22.0
16 to 20years	73	29.8
21 years and above	48	19.6
Total	**245**	**100.0%**

Table 1 reveals that majority of the respondents are within the age bracket of 16-20 years , followed by 21 years and above.

Table 2: Frequency distribution of respondents by gender

Gender	Freq.	(%)
Male	97	39.6
Female	148	60.4
Total	**245**	**100.0**

There are more female respondents than male as shown in table 2 above.

Table 3: Frequency distribution of respondents by libraries in Lagos

Libraries in Lagos	Freq.	(%)
National Library	22	9.0
Public Library	89	36.3
Academic Library	134	54.7
Total	**245**	**100.0**

Data from table 3 shows that respondents from academic library are more

Table 4: Frequency distribution of respondents by highest academic qualification

Highest Academic Qualification	Frequency	Percentage (%)
National Diploma	35	14.3
Highest National Diploma	22	9.0
B.Sc./BLIS	33	13.5
MLIS/MLS	130	53.1
Ph.D.	25	10.2
Total	**245**	**100.0**

Respondents with postgraduate degrees are more than other categories of respondents as revealed in table 4.

Table 5: Processes of documentation of IK in libraries in Lagos State

SN	Processes of documentation of indigenous knowledge resources	Strongly Disagree + Disagree (%)		Agree + Strongly Agree (%)		Mean	SD
	Acquisition						
1	We acquire IK through storytelling from the elders of the community.	0(0.0%)	42 (17.1%)	121(49.4%)	82(33.5%)	3.45	0.51
2	We acquire IK in form of descriptive texts such as reports	0(0.0%)	46 18.8%)	89(36.3)	110(44.9%	3.32	0.42
3	We acquire IK by organizing talk shows with traditional rulers and elderly people	27(11.0%)	53(21.6%)	90(36.7%)	75(30.6%)	3.21	0.47
	Grand Mean					**3.33**	
	Codification						

4	We codify IK by recording interview of resource person.	0(0.0%)	28(11.4%)	106(43.3%)	111(45.3%)	3.51	0.54
5	We codify IK by typing into computer system.	0(0.0%)	14(5.7%)	172(70.2%)	59(24.1%)	3.27	0.49
6	We codify IK by printing out on paper.	0(0.0%)	48(9.6%)	111(45.3%)	86(35.1%)	3.02	0.51
	Grand Mean					**3.27**	
	Organization						
7	We edit IK collected during talk shows by using software	0(0.0%)	14 (5.7%)	125(51.0%)	106(43.3%)	3.69	0.54
8	We organize IK through accessioning.	0(0.0%)	16(6.5%)	104(42.4%)	125(51.0%)	3.65	0.59
9	We organize IK by indexing.	0(0.0%)	21(8.6%)	183(74.7%)	41(16.7%)	3.57	0.57
	Grand Mean					**3.67**	
	Storage						
10	IK collected is made available in videos/CDs or DVD	0(0.0%)	9(3.7%)	121(49.4%)	115(46.9%)	3.61	0.61
11	We store IK using archival software.	11(4.5%)	29(11.8%)	117(47.8%)	88(35.9%)	3.51	0.57
12	IK collected are kept in display shelve.	0(0.0%)	70(28.6%)	96(39.2%)	79(32.2%)	3.48	0.55
	Grand Mean					**3.53**	
	Preservation						
13	We preserve documented IK by printing them on archival paper	0(0.0%)	23(9.4%)	123(50.2%)	99(40.4%)	3.79	0.54
14	IK collected is preserved in boxes.	0(0.0%)	34(13.9%)	108(44.1%)	103(42.0%)	3.63	0.57
	Grand Mean					**3.67**	
	Overall grand mean					**3.49**	

Source: Field Survey Result, 2019

Table 5 presents result on the processes of documentation of IK resources in libraries in Lagos State. On the processes of documentation of IK resources, result shows that respondents agree that they acquire IK through storytelling from the elders of the community (203, 82.9%; $\bar{x}$ = 3.45, SD= 0.51). This finding supports the view of Christopher (2015) who found that librarians documenting IK by recording into audio-tapes and publishing it into books or journals can facilitate preservation of IK and increased accessibility. On codification of

documentation of IK, result shows that respondents agree that they codify IK by recording interview of resource person (231, 94.3%; $\bar{x}$ =3.27, SD= 0.49). This finding supports Abioye, Zaid and Egberongbe's, (2011) study which reported that IK resources could be stored in local communities, databases, card catalogues, books, journals and other written documents, audiovisuals and museums; as well as Ngulube., Dube, and Mhlongo's (2015) that reported codification of IK into print and electronic formats of both audio

and video as processes of documenting IK resources to make it widely accessible through the global information infrastructure. On organization of documentation of IK, result shows that respondents agree that they edit IK collected during talk shows by using software (231, 94.3%; $\bar{x}$ =3.69, SD= 0.54). This finding

corroborated with that of Onyango (2014) which reported that IK that has been collected, recorded or documented must be properly organized for easy retrieval and use. Hence, codification, acquisition, organization, storage and preservation were established as processes of documentation of IK in libraries in Lagos State.

Table 6: Professional competence in the documentation of IK in the libraries

S/N	Professional competence for documentation of IK	Strongly Disagree + Disagree (%)		Agree + Strongly Agree (%)		Mean	SD
1	I have the ability to index indigenous knowledge	0(0.0)	4(1.6)	47(19.2)	194(79.2)	3.78	0.45
2	I can accession indigenous knowledge materials.	0(0.0)	4(1.6)	58(23.7)	183(74.7)	3.73	0.48
3	My educational qualification supports effective collation of IK	0(0.0)	1(0.4)	65(26.5)	179(73.1)	3.73	0.45
4	I can locate the original sources of indigenous knowledge.	0(0.0)	2(0.8)	74(30.2)	169(69.0)	3.68	0.48
5	I am able to source for IK from the local communities.	0(0.0)	11(4.5)	71(29.0)	163(66.5)	3.62	0.57
6	My understanding of IK enhances my ability to edit/interpretation indigenous knowledge data.	0(0.0)	5(2.0)	86(35.1)	154(62.9)	3.61	0.52
7	I have the skill to organize documented indigenous knowledge for easy retrieval.	0(0.0)	1(0.4)	110(44.9)	134(54.7)	3.54	0.50
8	My mastery of ICTs enhances codification of IK.	0(0.0)	5(2.0)	106(43.3)	134(54.7)	3.53	0.54
9	My knowledge of ICT facilitates preservation of IK in digital format.	0(0.0)	5(2.0)	104(42.4)	136(55.5)	3.53	0.53
	Grand Mean					**3.62**	

Source: Field Survey Result, 2019

Table 6 shows the results of the professional competence for documentation of IK in the libraries. The result reveals that respondents agree that they have the ability to index

indigenous knowledge, (241, 98.4%; $\bar{x} = 3.78$, SD= 0.45) meaning that their educational qualification is being considered as an important contributor towards effective

indexing of IK. The finding is also in line with Brauer and Dymitrow's (2014) opinion that educational qualification ensures better literacy rate, skills which is in other word intellectual functioning and knowledge that are not easily acquired and not widely held. Findings revealed that respondents agree that they can accession indigenous knowledge materials (241, 98.4%; $\bar{x}$ = 3.73, SD= 0.48). Result shows that respondents agree that their educational qualification support effective collation of IK (244, 99.6%; $\bar{x}$ = 3.73, 0.45). This implies that educational qualification ensures successful accomplishment in terms of collation of IK documentation. This finding corroborates the result from David, Johnson, Ehrlinger and Kruger's (2013) study which reported that the librarians' professional competence should include educational qualification, understanding the source of IK, possession of knowledge of IK documentation and Information and Communication Technology (ICT) skills. The result also revealed that the respondents agree that they can locate the original sources of indigenous knowledge (243, 99.2%; $\bar{x}$ = 3.68, SD= 0.48). The finding is also in line with Abotalebi and Biglu's (2017) opinion which states that the capacity to the progressed professional competencies is taken from training and education. The implication to be drawn from this interpretation is that professional competence for proper documentation of indigenous knowledge in the libraries in Lagos State includes educational qualification, understanding the source and types of IK, possession of knowledge of IK by the librarians and adequate knowledge and skills of ICT.

Table 7: The institutional supports for the documentation of IK in the Libraries

S/N	Institutional Support	Strongly Disagree + Disagree (%)		Agree + Strongly Agree (%)		Mean	SD
1	My institution disburses fund for documentation of IK	0(0.0)	5(2.0)	86(35.1)	154(62.9)	3.61	0.52
2	My institution provides adequate resources for documentation of IK	0(0.0)	1(0.4)	110(44.9)	134(54.7)	3.54	0.50
3	My institution provides an endowment for documentation of IK	0(0.0)	5(2.0)	106(43.3)	134(54.7)	3.53	0.54
4	My Institution encourages librarians through incentive measures for IK documentation.	0(0.0)	11(4.5)	71(29.0)	163(66.5)	3.62	0.57

5	Supports received by parent institution contribute to degree of my commitment in documentation of IK.	0(0.0)	2(0.8)	74(30.2)	169(69.0)	3.68	0.48
6	My institution includes the library management in formulation of institutional policy	0(0.0)	3(2.0)	104(42.4)	104(53.5)	3.49	0.57
7	There is policy on library collection that supports acquisition of IK.	0(0.0)	5(2.0)	104(42.4)	136(55.5)	3.53	0.53
8	Training/ development exists for IK documentation in my institution	0(0.0)	4(1.6)	58(23.7)	183(74.7)	3.73	0.48
9	Institutions' Staff training/development is a crucial element in documentation of IK	0(0.0)	4(1.6)	47(19.2)	194(79.2)	3.78	0.45
10	Information Technology (IT) training from my institution enhances my skill of documentation of IK.	0(0.0)	1(0.4)	65(26.5)	179(73.1)	3.73	0.48
	Grand Mean					**3.62**	

Source: Field Survey Result, 2019

Table 7 presented results on the institutional support for documentation of IK in the libraries. The result shows that respondents agree that their institution disburses fund for documentation of IK (240, 97.0%; $\bar{x}$=3.61, SD= 0.52). Result also shows that respondents agree that their institution provides adequate resources for documentation of IK (244, 99.6%; $\bar{x}$ = 3.54, SD= 0.50). The result reveals that respondents agree that their institution provides an endowment for documentation of IK (240, 98.0%; $\bar{x}$ = 3.53, SD= 0.54). Result shows that respondents agree that their Institution encourage librarians through incentive measures for IK documentation (234, 95.5%; $\bar{x}$ = 3.62, SD= 0.57). Findings revealed that respondents agree that supports received by their parent institution contributes to degree of their commitment in documentation of IK. (238, 99.2%; $\bar{x}$ = 3.62, SD= 0.48). The result of the finding agree with the opinion of Nwibere's (2014) that motivation is a human psychological characteristic that contributes to a person's degree of commitment to work. The finding also corroborates the report of Ahmed and Nwalo (2013) who recognizes that adequacy of fund is needed for provision of qualitative and quantitative information materials, staff

and other facilities to enhance the sustainability of departmental/faculty libraries in Nigerian Universities. The finding shows that librarians agree that training/ development exists for IK documentation in their institution, Information Technology (IT) training from the parent institution enhances my skill of documentation of IK. This finding is in consonance with the study of Urban's (2013) which emphasized that the excellence of academic library and other types of libraries depends on the quality of its institutional support in terms of library personnel, motivation and staff development. The implication to be drawn from this result is that institutional supports for documentation of indigenous knowledge in the libraries surveyed across Lagos State were funding, motivation, facilitative policy, staff development/training.

Conclusion

Documentation of indigenous knowledge is essential in promoting nature and it is meaningful for library users and society because it reveals the usefulness of IK resources. The documentation of IK depends on the professional competence of the librarians in terms of educational qualification, understanding the source and type of IK, possession of knowledge of IK,

knowledge of ICT skills, among others while the institutional support is basically on funding, motivation, facilitating policy and staff development. Furthermore, professional competence and institutional support provides template for better understanding of IK which have influence on documentation of IK.

Recommendations

Based on the findings from the study, the following recommendations are offered:

1. Professional competence had been identified as a potent factor that influences proper documentation of IK in libraries in Lagos State, library management should make more provision for regular training and retraining of librarians to improve the current achievements recorded in documentation of IK;

2. Adequate institutional support in terms of capacity building on ICT infrastructure, motivation of staff, adequate funding of the library and staff development/training should be improved upon and given more attention by both the parent institution and library management;

3. Technology has been revolutionizing every sector of human endeavor including libraries by bringing in efficiency and effectiveness into their operations and activities, hence, the existing technologies for adequate and proper documentation of IK should receive more attention by the management of libraries in Lagos State, Nigeria; and

4. The current developments in documentation of IK have been as a result of the existing facilitative policy which is hereby recommended for improvement to include other librarians apart from the library management in formulation of institutional policy.

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