



Learning for Development, Skill Acquisition and Change Management: A Panacea for Emerging Technologies and Infopreneurship

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Abstract

All over the world, due to rapidly developing technologies, 21st-century organisations and institutions are striving for innovation, cost minimisation, autonomy, and competitive intelligence to stay ahead of their contemporaries. Amongst these institutions, academic libraries are the most pressed to explore all avenues to ensure substantial changes are used to meet the needs of library users and their immediate communities. This paper, therefore, highlights certain skills and competencies that will enhance contemporary practices and trends in academic libraries. This paper aims to guide the significance of learning and development in academic libraries. As a crucial component of academic libraries, the necessity for librarians to practice infopreneurship will also be discussed in this presentation. Additionally, the paper will examine the function of libraries and the arrival of various contemporary technologies in academic libraries. This article seeks to highlight the importance of learning and development opportunities for library staff members' employability, job retention, and digital competency. The recommendations regarding the need to investigate these ideas and insights to promote them to popular information services are supposed to be utilised by librarians and information professionals. Therefore, the paper's conclusion will highlight the necessity for librarians to update their digital literacy skills, develop competence in performing their tasks, and enhance their role in academic institutions.

Keywords: Academic libraries, change management, Digital competencies, Digital Literacy, Emerging technologies, Infopreneurship, Learning and Development (L&D), and Skill Acquisition.

Introduction

Change is essential for growth in all areas of life since it reduces the likelihood of disaster and increases the prospects of sustainability and survival (Shan and Shaheen, 2013). From time to time, changes occur because of alterations in the environment, administration, or processes. Therefore, as instructions and policies come from the management of the institutions, changes occur in the operations, strategies, structures, and directions for growth. In recent times, changes have been made quickly due to modifications in the media landscape and user behaviors. Change, however, is not a simple undertaking because it comprises costs that will impact the entire library workforce and a few library-related factors, including the economic, social, environmental, and technological aspects. Hence, Wandu, (2019) noted that this transition intensifies the need for libraries to share information about change management. The management of libraries and staff have strategies to manage changes (Seeman, 2021 & Waterhouse, 2019).

Therefore, issues in changes, which are due to fast-developing technologies, have resulted in an advanced ICT environment and the proliferation of information. The work of library staff is therefore more tasking, as they are expected to be multi-skilled and multitask, and in addition, possess skills ranging from scholarship to information communication technologies ICTs. However, some research studies highlighted the challenges of libraries to include no commitment from leadership, no established standard practices, policies, or procedures, limited resources, limited skills, and training, no funding, limited collaboration, and antiquated technology, as described for digital collections. Changing management appears to be influenced by three paradigms viz; deeply held unconscious set of assumptions and values, things taken for granted, and expectations. Changing management of libraries has led to the successful transition of the traditional library system to the virtual library system. Some libraries migrated to hybrid and then moved to the deployment of the virtual library system.

Change is commonplace in organizations and the library cannot be exempted (Nakhoda & Tajik, 2017). Academic libraries were the most pressed for many changes, as many have had to change from the traditional to the virtual system consequently, the library staff were faced with the challenge of getting some ICT education and training to maintain their work in these libraries. In addition, with the assistance of IT support staff, some libraries were able to use the server to maintain the automated library system and this has advanced the library staff positions and professions and has led to a success story. Hence, the academic library's primary purpose of providing diverse information to a variety of users (the staff, students, and the library community) has therefore become more significant.

Change Management from the Leadership Perspective.

Many studies asserted that most times leadership are at the forefront of the changes in libraries (Dadzie, & Mensah, 2022; Ifijeh & Yusuf, 2020; Masenya, 2020). Management is all about coping with different complexities while leadership is about coping with change (Kotter n.d.). University librarians encourage changes in the library system and manage changes in the university library staff. The library staff can adopt the use of new technology and functionality, to create an environment where the satisfaction of both the staff and clients could be achieved cost-effectively. Librarians were especially subject to the difficulties presented by the rapid change in technology, hence, the university librarians from time to time, had to encourage the staff to apply for further studies to gain more knowledge, skills, and competence. Through counseling and allocation of a timetable for all staff to benefit from further education, staff had to put in more work on weekdays and weekends to ensure work was ongoing at the library and there were no lapses. Many libraries had to change their corporate model to adapt their services to meet the needs of present and future users (Ahmad & Abawajy, 2014; Tait, Martzoukou & Reid, 2016).

Skill Requirements of the 21st Century Librarian

Libraries have gradually transformed and there are a whole lot of new resources, terms, and spaces that apply to the profession. Library services have advanced to a stage where many libraries are using innovative gadgets to give services to library clients (princh.com, nd). Examples of technologies to watch out for in the library of the future include big data, virtual reality, augmented reality, artificial intelligence, Blockchain technology, Internet of things, library mobile apps, self-service printing, copying, and scanning solutions, 3D printers, robots, drones, digital interface for printed books. All these are terms that are used to introduce novel technology and services in the 21st-century library (princh.com, nd). Associated with these services are some top skills that will make librarians competent, these skills include automation skills, digital library competencies, core and technological, Web 2.0 competencies, computer hardware competencies, institutional repository competencies, library management software skills, web page creations, RFID, e-journal, e-book, e-resources, knowledge management competencies, virtual reference, online metadata schema, database creation, internet competencies, etc. Librarians should therefore attempt to acquire as many skills as possible in this digital age.

Library Staff Opportunities for Change Management

Organisations are setting high stakes for professionals as the demand for certain skills is mandatory; there is a cost for personal development. This, however, brings about changes in relationships among people, changes in the work environment, changes in the work people do, and changes in the services to be provided to users, in the organisation for which people work, and changes in work time. Ajeemsha and Madhusudhan (2012) stated that although well-trained professional librarians are essential resources for creating and maintaining a high-quality library, staff development is a crucial concern in a changing library environment. These changes are positive and progressive because organisations have realised that to excel, change is essential.

New trends have occurred at individual, team, and organisational levels as the nature of the work environment continues to change. The workforce is now more demographically diverse than ever, and older workers represent a substantial subdivision of the working population. Increased technology and the emergent complexity of tasks have given rise to more virtual and interdisciplinary teams in the library as well as in other occupations. Institutions and library staff manuals include policies, procedures, and rules that provide an unambiguous declaration of the need for staff to be motivated, compensated, and rewarded to progress in their career. In addition, many opportunities abound for all categories of staff to improve themselves and progress in their career, especially in this era of information technology (National Academies Press).

Challenges of Academic Librarians' Change Management

The goal of change is to improve the institution by altering how work is carried out. The change of management leadership sometimes redefined the work environment and activities of the libraries. The library staff have to work in teams and shifts, while job rotation in their operations and services as the work requirements change. Librarians need to be ready to serve and work both on weekends and weekdays to ensure there is no interruption on the job, and they have to meet up

with deadlines. Different unit heads, suppliers, partners, library databases, IT staff, and system librarians had to devise means to get the job done. Ropohl (1999) noted that to understand technology in society coherently, one must understand the allocation of performing functions between humans and machines and the socio-technical division of labour. Remember that this is true because, to a considerable extent, technological objects, systems, and human talents are functionally equivalent. A point of note is that there is no single boss, no permanent organizational unit, and no assurance of long-term employment, and managers may find themselves as co-leaders in organizational activities. When a change is introduced to the library, the process, system, organizational structure, and job roles influence all the staff ultimately (Prosci nd; All Things Talent, 2018). Most times when staff need to develop themselves professionally and personally, these are mostly done through self-sponsorship and contributions from the staff's finances and personal time. This supports the assertion by Scoulas (2020) that developing valuable library staff training requires inventive tactics and a substantial investment in time and resources.

Learning and Developing (L&D)

All over the world, now more than ever, Learning and Developing (L&D) must collaborate with the library and the institution's recruitment strategy due to the Great Resignation in 2021 and the growing shortage of competent workers. It can be too late to develop rare skills in-house, and library staff might end up having more expertise than the organization requires. The result of this imbalance could ultimately be lower revenue and employee turnover. The following L&D initiatives can therefore be used by libraries in partnership with the organization to create a strong, varied, and practical skills garden for community members, employees, and patrons. As a result, learning companies retain personnel better. Employees have a clear career path since business goals are tied to learning culture. Institutions and organizations that prioritize learning and development have been found to have greater levels of engagement and staff retention (Udemy Business, n.d.).

Notable instances of how new technologies and artificial intelligence have altered university libraries are examples of the University of Lagos, Covenant University, and Landmark University, which have Robotic and WEBPAC, respectively. The University of Uyo's American sections, among many are additional instances that are too numerous to list.

Dimensions of Change

Drivers: Internal, external. Types: Organisational, technological, cultural

Levels: Incremental, transformational

First Order Change

Other names for this type of change are procedural, developmental, continuous, or incremental. It is described as modifying procedures or systems to preserve and advance a unit or organisation.

Second Order Change

Often referred to as transformational change, it is characterised by drastic changes that radically and irrevocably alter the character of the organisation, unit, or individual.

Emerging Technologies and Infopreneurship

Gaining knowledge about how these new technologies affect library operations and services will broaden the scope of learning and growth in a library setting. Librarians can gain abilities from emerging technology that they can apply to both their professional and personal lives. These abilities will give them a platform to support library patrons and may even enable them to earn more revenue. Phones, iPads, tablets, desktop computers, and laptops are a few of the devices and technologies that can be used to acquire these abilities. Libraries play a critical role in supporting emerging technologies, digital literacy, learning environments, community involvement, and information access. They are essential in making sure people have the tools and chances they need to grow, learn, and adjust to a quickly evolving technological environment. Especially in light of evolving technologies, libraries are essential for promoting learning and development. They act as crucial hubs for community involvement, resource access, and information availability. To carry out these responsibilities, librarians must keep up to speed on their positions and skill sets.

A person who establishes a business with the primary goal of obtaining and disseminating knowledge and skills is known as an infopreneur. Infopreneurs often operate in specialised marketplaces, providing their audience with focused knowledge on a certain subject or sector. Infopreneurs provide a portfolio of work that may be marketed. An expert or enthusiast in their chosen field, most infopreneurs begin their careers as such. They then create material using their knowledge, such as e-books, podcasts, video lessons, and online courses. Information is shared and sold digitally by infopreneurs, who often operate online. On the other hand, offline information sharing—such as mail-order information products—is where infopreneurship originated. Ivwurie and Ocholla (2016) observed that infopreneurship is on the rise in the cities that were part of their sample. Computer science and IT graduates owned more information-oriented businesses than library and information science/studies graduates, and infopreneurship was more similar than different between the two countries, according to the selected respondents. ICT is the primary emphasis of most commercial products and services, such as web design, programming, hardware and software installation, tracking services, troubleshooting, CCTV installation, and online TV. The report suggests that infopreneurship be made more common in the two nations as well as in the fields of computer science, media, and communication.

Conclusion and Suggestions

In conclusion, many academic libraries, with the help of IT support staff, have been able to maintain the automated library system and manage the library server by training the library staff to acquire the latest ICT skills. This has paid off by providing the library staff with the acquisition of digital literacy skills, ICT skills, knowledge, competence, and professional identity. In the field of libraries, significant advancements in digital libraries have enabled cross-regional, object-oriented network query and distribution, enabling anyone, anywhere to find the knowledge they

need and use the network to turn it into reality. Due to this fact, the library's most significant function, the information service, has increased. In the nation, for libraries to improve their webometric ranking, the library staff need to be able to manage the automated library system while acquiring essential IT and digital literacy skills on the job. Librarians have been able to make significant progress in their careers and jobs, whereas some frequent approaches and tools are used to improve libraries and librarianship. All of them eventually lead to an alteration of the libraries and the profession of library staff for upward professional identity and job gratification.

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Learning for Development, Skill Acquisition and Change Management

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