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DIGITAL LITERACY INTERVENTION FOR LIBRARY STAFF OF ABDULLAHI MAHADI LIBRARY, GOMBE STATE UNIVERSITY, NIGERIA

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ABSTRACT

As libraries transition into the digital age, staff must acquire the necessary digital skills to effectively manage and provide information services. This study examines the impact of a digital literacy intervention programme conducted for the staff of Abdullahi Mahadi Library, Gombe State University, Nigeria. The research was driven by the growing need for digital competency among library staff, many of whom face challenges such as a lack of training, outdated skills, and limited access to digital tools. The study aimed to assess the digital literacy needs of the staff, evaluate their skill levels after the intervention, determine the effectiveness of the training programme, and identify challenges in acquiring digital literacy. Pre-intervention assessments revealed key training needs in areas such as Internet navigation, online communication, word processing, database management, website evaluation, Boolean logic, and research analysis. Following an eight-week training intervention, post-assessment findings showed marked improvements in digital proficiency. Staff reported increased confidence in using various software, conducting research, providing virtual reference services, and applying critical thinking skills in digital environments. The training significantly enhanced their digital capabilities, contributing to better service delivery and user satisfaction. However, challenges such as difficulty in adapting to new technologies, erratic power supply, high costs of digital tools, and limited funding for ongoing training were identified. The study recommends continuous professional development, increased institutional support, and the integration of digital skills training into staff development policies to sustain digital literacy among library personnel.

Keywords: Digital literacy, Library staff, Information management, Training intervention

Background of Study

The digital revolution has transformed various aspects of society, including the field of education. Libraries, as integral components of academic institutions, are also experiencing the impact of this digital transformation. The exponential growth in the amount of information available in different sources and formats coupled with the rise in the human desire to solve his or her information problem independently, has brought about much emphasis on the patterns and systems of information creation, organisation, dissemination, preservation and conservation (Carl & Worsfold, 2021). This has increased the need for individuals, especially the information services providers, such as the library staff, to acquire competencies and skills for effective and efficient searching, locating, retrieval, and utilisation of the right information at the right time and from the right place. It is very clear that because of the escalating complexity of today's environment, several individuals are faced with diverse and abundant information choices. This information choice surfaces in their academic studies, workplaces, and personal lives.

In Nigeria, as in many other countries, the role of libraries in higher education is evolving to meet the changing needs of students and faculty in the digital age. Libraries, traditionally repositories of knowledge, have evolved into dynamic hubs of digital information. In Nigeria, as in many parts of the world, libraries face the challenge of adapting to this digital paradigm shift. Library staff members, often the custodians and facilitators of information access, require adequate digital literacy skills to navigate and utilise digital resources effectively (Chukwueke & Idris, 2023).

In the contemporary digital era, libraries are evolving to meet the changing needs of users by embracing technology and digital resources. However, to effectively utilise these digital tools and resources, library staff require robust digital literacy skills. Recognizing this need, a digital literacy intervention programmeme was implemented for library staff at a university in Nigeria. This intervention aimed to enhance the digital literacy skills of library staff, evaluate its effectiveness, explore its impact on library services and user experience, and identify challenges faced in acquiring and applying digital literacy skills in the library. Therefore, research on digital literacy intervention for library staff of universities in Nigeria is pertinent to address the evolving landscape of library services in the digital age. By focusing on digital literacy interventions, the studyaims to improve the effectiveness of library staff in utilising digital resources, thereby enhancing the quality of library services and user experience.

Statement of the Problem

For libraries to effectively leverage digital resources and technologies, library staff must possess adequate digital literacy skills; many of whom may lack adequate skills to navigate digital resources effectively, hindering their ability to provide optimal services to users (Ibrahim & Yahaya, 2022). Moreover, despite the increasing importance of digital literacy in library management, there may be a gap in the digital literacy skills among library staff in university libraries. This gap could hinder the ability of library staff to effectively utilise digital resources, provide quality services, and meet the evolving needs of library users in the digital age. There is also a dearth of comprehensive interventions tailored specifically for library staff in Nigerian universities. This knowledge gap hampers the ability of library staff to deliver optimal services in the digital age, potentially hindering the academic and research pursuits of students and faculty members.

This assessment of the digital literacy intervention for library staff of Abdullahi Mahadi Library, Gombe, encompasses a comprehensive investigation into the efficacy of training interventions organised, which are aimed at enhancing digital information literacy among library staff. Through a multifaceted longitudinal approach involving pre- and post-intervention assessments, as well as qualitative exploration of perceived impacts and challenges, the study aims to shed light on the current state of digital literacy within the university library under study and provide actionable insights for improving digital competence among library personnel by organising an in-house training intervention.

Objectives of the Study

This study sets out to:

i. assess the digital literacy intervention needs of the library staff in Abdullahi Mahadi Library;
ii. ascertain the level of digital literacy among library staff after the digital literacy intervention;

iii. evaluate the effectiveness of the training intervention in improving digital information literacy among library staff; and
iv. identify the challenges militating against acquiring digital literacy skills.

Research Questions

The study seeks to provide answers to the following questions:

i. What are the digital Literacy intervention Needs of the Library staff in Abdullahi Mahadi Library?
ii. What is the Level of digital literacy among library staff after the digital literacy intervention?
iii. How effective is the training intervention in improving digital literacy among library staff?
iv. What are the challenges militating against acquiring digital literacy skills?

Significance of the Study

This study holds significance on several fronts. Firstly, it addresses a critical gap in the literature regarding digital literacy interventions specifically tailored for library staff in Nigerian universities. Secondly, the findings will provide insights into the effectiveness of such interventions and their implications for library services and user experience enhancement. Additionally, the identification of challenges faced by library staff can inform the development of targeted strategies to overcome barriers to digital literacy acquisition and application in library management.

Review of Related Literature

First, the meaning of 'digital literacy' (or 'literacies') is important. There has been much discussion on defining this multi-faceted terminology through the literature (Webber & Johnston, 2017). The multiple meanings depend on who is making that meaning, and what their context is. According to Fakunle *et. al*. (2022) and Johnston (2020), a digitally literate person is someone with the ability to identify, access, manage, integrate, evaluate, analyse, and synthesize digital resources. This encompasses critical thinking skills, information, and communication technology skills in the areas of having the ability to read and interpret the meaning of digital text, symbols, and graphs.

Digital literacy is defined by Chukwueke and Idris (2023) and Martzoukou (2021) as the ability to understand and use information and communication tools in multiple formats. Digital literacy can be regarded as an umbrella framework of skills, knowledge, and ethics (Okeji *et al*., 2020). These levels include digital competence, digital usage, and digital transformation (Breen, Waters, & O'Shea, 2023). Digital literacy encompasses the knowledge and skills required to access, evaluate, use, and create digital content using various digital tools and platforms (Breen, Waters, & O'Shea, 2023). Library staff, as information service providers, require these competencies to facilitate access to digital resources and ensure efficient library services (Chukwueke & Idris, 2023). Studies by Adewale and Nwachukwu (2024) observed that many Nigerian library personnel lack foundational digital skills, particularly in database management, virtual reference tools, and Boolean logic. This gap necessitates targeted interventions to align library staff competencies with global digital practices.

Similarly, Fakunle, Bakare, and Adeyeye (2022) emphasized that digital literacy needs assessment is the first step in identifying skill gaps and customizing relevant training. A similar observation by Yusuf *et al*. (2023) in university libraries across Northern Nigeria indicated a significant demand for training in software applications, digital communication, and web evaluation among library personnel. To this end, the capability and skills of individuals to use technology to create, navigate, disseminate, evaluate, and store information are described as digital literacy. Digital literacy has to do with skills, knowledge, and behaviors that involve effective and efficient use of digital devices like smartphones, tablets, iPhones, laptops, iPads, and desktop PCs for purposes of collaboration, communication, expression, advocacy, and even decision-making. This has become a highly sought-after skill for information managers such as librarians and other library staff. As digitisation has impacted the information world, it has equally impacted the role and skills of the information professional (Cox & Corrall, 2023).

On the level of digital literacy post-intervention, the success of digital literacy programmes is reflected in the improvement of post-intervention digital skills. In a recent case study, Breen *et al*. (2023)

documented significant post-training improvement in staff confidence using tools like Microsoft Excel, Word, Teams, and online safety applications. Comparable results were recorded in a Nigerian university study by Ibrahim and Yahaya (2022), which noted substantial growth in staff's digital navigation and information retrieval competencies after structured ICT workshops. A longitudinal study by Okon and Bello (2024) found that digital upskilling interventions led to measurable improvement in the ability of librarians to conduct digital reference interviews, manage e-resources, and evaluate websites critically. This reinforces the effectiveness of digital training initiatives tailored to job-specific tasks.

Effective digital literacy training must align with adult learning principles and practical job requirements. Carl and Worsfold (2021) argued for curriculum-integrated digital skills programmes that reflect the daily tasks of library professionals. Similarly, a 2024 evaluation by Musa and Obot revealed that when training includes hands-on workshops and continuous feedback, there is a notable increase in knowledge retention and skill application. Studies further show that training effectiveness is enhanced when it includes context-specific software and tools used in academic libraries, as observed in the co-curricular digital academy model reported by Breen *et al*. (2023). Participants in such models demonstrated higher engagement, confidence, and skill application in their work environments.

On the other hand, literature is on the challenges of acquiring digital literacy. Several barriers limit the acquisition of digital literacy skills among library staff in Nigeria. According to Okeji *et al*. (2020), key challenges include unreliable electricity supply, inadequate ICT infrastructure, and limited funding for training. This was corroborated by Devi (2022), who highlighted the high cost of digital tools and difficulty in adapting to rapidly changing technologies as major obstacles. Recent findings by Yusuf and Lawan (2025) further revealed that even when training is available, older library staff often face difficulty adopting new technologies due to cognitive resistance and limited digital exposure. Additionally, the institutional neglect of digital policy frameworks contributes to poor sustainability of training outcomes (Aminu & Gambo, 2023).

Methodology

Correlational design was adopted for this study, utilising a census sampling technique, while surveys and interviews with library staff were conducted to gather data on their digital literacy skills and experiences. A total population of 66 staff, which comprises librarians, paraprofessionals, library assistants, library officers, secretariat staff, and auxiliary staff. A questionnaire was used for data collection in this study. The intervention programme was designed as a structured training initiative incorporating practical exercises and hands-on workshops tailored to the specific needs and roles of library staff. Pre-intervention assessments were conducted to gauge baseline digital literacy levels and training needs. The intervention was then implemented over a period of eight weeks (2 months), followed by post-intervention assessments to measure improvements in the digital competence of the staff. Feedback mechanisms, such as surveys and focus group discussions, interviews, and observations, were utilised to gather insights into the effectiveness of the intervention, its impact on library services, and the challenges encountered. The data collected for this study were analysed using descriptive statistics. Using frequencies, simple percentages, mean scores, and standard deviation.

Results

Table 1: Demographic Distribution of the Respondents

Demographic Variables	Category	Frequency (F)	Percentage (%)
Gender	Male	54	81.8
	Female	12	18.2
Qualification	Ph.D.	2	3.0
	M.Sc./MLIS	11	16.7
	B.Sc./BLIS	7	10.6
	HND	4	6.1
	ND	24	38.4
	SSCE	15	22.7
	Primary Education	3	4.5
	Total	**66**	**100.0**

Field Survey, 2024

Table 1 presents a summary of the demographic characteristics of the respondents from Abdullahi Mahadi Library, Gombe State University. Regarding gender, a total of 54 respondents were male while 12 were female, showing that male staff dominate the library workforce. In terms of educational qualification, 24 respondents held a National Diploma (ND), followed by 15 with Senior Secondary School Certificates (SSCE), and 3 with only primary education. Additionally, 11 respondents had obtained a Master degree (MLIS or equivalent), 7 had a Bachelor degree (B.Sc./BLIS), 4 held Higher National Diplomas (HND), and 2 had attained a Ph.D.

This distribution reveals a workforce comprising individuals with varying levels of academic and professional preparation. It reflects the composition of both professional librarians and support staff within the institution. The relatively small number of staff with advanced degrees further underscores the importance of ongoing training programmes, such as the digital literacy intervention, in bridging skill gaps and ensuring all staff are adequately equipped for digital service delivery. The presence of staff with lower academic qualifications also highlights the need for training approaches that are inclusive and responsive to different educational backgrounds.

Table 2: Distribution of the Respondents on Digital Literacy Intervention Needs

S/N	Statements	Yes		No		Mean	St. Dev.
		F	%	F	%		
1	I want to upgrade my ability to use the Internet.	51	77.3	15	22.7	1.22	0.42
2	I want to be proficient in communicating information online.	51	77.3	15	22.7	1.22	0.42
3	I want to be proficient in using computer systems to perform word processing, excel, presentation and graphic design.	51	77.3	15	22.7	1.22	0.42
4	I want to acquire adequate skills in conducting website evaluation.	66	100	0	0	1.00	0.00
5	I want to understand how to use Boolean logic and apply it effectively.	55	83.3	11	16.7	1.12	0.40
6	I want to increase my ability to navigate databases.	66	100	0	0	1.00	0.00
7	I want to know how to deliver virtual reference services effectively.	60	90.9	6	9.1	1.09	0.29
8	I want to possess critical thinking skills necessary for digital literacy.	66	100	0	0	1.00	0.00
9	I want to be capable of conducting data analysis.	52	78.8	14	21.2	1.21	0.41
10	I want to be proficient in using different software.	66	100	0	0	1.00	0.00

Field Survey, 2024

Table 2 presents the responses of library staff regarding their perceived digital literacy needs prior to the intervention. The data indicates a strong desire among the staff to enhance their capabilities in various digital skills. Respondents expressed interest in upgrading their Internet usage abilities, improving online communication skills, and becoming proficient in using computer systems for tasks such as word processing, presentations, and graphic design. All staff indicated a need for training in website evaluation, database navigation, critical thinking for digital literacy, and proficiency in using different software. These areas are essential for effective information retrieval, evaluation, and digital content management in modern library environments. Additionally, many staff members identified gaps in their understanding of Boolean logic and data analysis, which are crucial for advanced information searching and decision-making. The responses collectively highlight the urgent need for targeted digital literacy interventions to equip staff with the necessary competencies for digital service delivery.

Table 3: Respondents' Distribution on Level of Digital Literacy after the Intervention

S/N	Statements	Yes		No		Mean	St. Dev.
		F	%	F	%		
1	I am confident in my ability to navigate databases.	64	97.0	2	3.0	1.03	0.17
2	I can deliver virtual reference services effectively.	64	97.0	2	3.0	1.03	0.17
3	I possess critical thinking skills necessary for digital literacy.	64	97.0	2	3.0	1.03	0.17
4	I can conduct a website evaluation.	64	97.0	2	3.0	1.03	0.17
5	I am proficient in using different software.	64	97.0	2	3.0	1.03	0.17
6	I am confident in my ability to use the Internet.	64	97.0	2	3.0	1.03	0.17
7	I feel comfortable communicating information online.	64	97.0	2	3.0	1.03	0.17
8	I am proficient in using computer systems to perform word processing, Excel, presentation, and graphic design.	64	97.0	2	3.0	1.03	0.17
9	I have adequate skills in conducting research analysis.	64	97.0	2	3.0	1.03	0.17
10	I understand how to use Boolean logic and apply it effectively.	64	97.0	2	3.0	1.03	0.17

Field Survey, 2024

Table 3 shows respondents' self-assessed digital literacy levels following the intervention. The analysis reveals that the training programme had a positive impact on the staff's digital competencies. Most of the respondents reported increased confidence and ability in navigating databases, delivering virtual reference services, evaluating websites, and using various software applications. The staff also indicated improved skills in online communication, word processing, and using digital tools for data analysis and presentations. Notably, the intervention appeared to have enhanced critical thinking and application of Boolean logic, suggesting the effectiveness of the training in addressing core digital literacy components. These improvements demonstrate the success of the intervention in boosting staff capacity to meet digital information demands within the academic library

Table 4: Respondents' Distribution on Effectiveness of the Training Intervention

S/N	Statements	Yes		No		Mean	St. Dev.
		F	%	F	%		
1	The training intervention effectively improved my digital information literacy.	64	97.0	2	3.0	1.03	0.17
2	I feel more confident in applying digital literacy skills in my work tasks.	64	97.0	2	3.0	1.03	0.17
3	The training helped me understand the role of digital information literacy in enhancing library services.	64	97.0	2	3.0	1.03	0.17
4	I can identify challenges faced in acquiring and applying digital literacy skills, thanks to the training.	64	97.0	2	3.0	1.03	0.17

5	The training intervention was beneficial for enhancing my overall digital literacy.	64	97.0	2	3.0	1.03	0.17

Field Survey, 2024

Table 4 presents responses on the effectiveness of the training programme in enhancing digital literacy. The data shows a strong consensus among respondents that the intervention effectively improved their digital information literacy. They reported greater confidence in applying digital skills to their work responsibilities and recognisedd the relevance of digital literacy in enhancing library services. The responses also show that the training helped participants better understand the role of digital tools in modern library functions and enabled them to identify existing challenges in acquiring and applying these

skills. The overall perception was that the training programme was beneficial and directly applicable to their daily professional tasks.

Table 5: Respondents' Distribution on Challenges with Acquiring Digital Literacy Skills

S/N	Statements	SA		A		D		SD	
		F	%	F	%	F	%	F	%
1	Difficulty in adapting to new software/tools	51	77.3	0	0	15	22.7	0	0
2	Difficulty in keeping up with emerging digital technologies	61	92.4	0	0	5	7.6	0	0
3	Erratic power supply	66	100	0	0	0	0	0	0
4	High cost of personal computers and software	59	89.4	0	0	7	10.6	0	0
5	Funding more digital intervention programmes	63	95.5	0	0	3	4.5	0	0

Field Survey, 2024

Table 5 highlights the major challenges faced by library staff in acquiring digital literacy. A key issue identified was the difficulty in adapting to new digital tools andtechnologies, particularly among staff with limited prior exposure. Other challenges included the rapid pace of technological change, which some staff found difficult to keep up with. Respondents also reported infrastructural issues such as frequent power outages, which hindered consistent access to digital tools. Financial limitations, including the high cost of acquiring computers and software, and a lack of funding for further training programmes, were also noted as significant barriers. These findings underline the importance of institutional support, sustainable funding, and inclusive training policies to overcome the obstacles limiting digital literacy acquisition among library personnel.

Discussion of the Findings

This study was conducted to evaluate the impact of a digital literacy intervention programme on the staff of Abdullahi Mahadi Library, Gombe State University. The findings are discussed in line with the four research objectives. The results from the pre-intervention assessment revealed significant digital skill gaps among library staff. Participants indicated a strong need to improve their competencies in areas such as Internet use, online communication, word processing, database navigation, Boolean logic, research analysis, and website evaluation. This aligns with the findings of Fakunle *et al*. (2022), who emphasized that digital literacy involves a broad range of cognitive and technical skills necessary for effective information access and dissemination. Similarly, Adewale and Nwachukwu (2024) found that library personnel in Nigerian academic institutions commonly lack adequate proficiency in core digital areas, underscoring the relevance of a tailored intervention programme like the one undertaken in this study. The expressed need for critical thinking and research skills also echoes Breen, Waters, and O'Shea (2023), who identified that modern librarianship now demands analytical capabilities, not just basic ICT usage. These results support the assertion by Chukwueke and Idris (2023) that library staff must develop advanced digital competencies to meet the increasing demand for digital service delivery and research

support in higher institutions.

Following the eight-week intervention programme, the post-assessment showed marked improvements in digital literacy among participants. Nearly all respondents reported increased confidence in using a variety of digital tools and performing information-related tasks. Notably, improvements were seen in Internet navigation, word processing, virtual reference services, website evaluation, and the use of digital platforms for communication and research. These findings are consistent with the study by Breen *et al*. (2023), which reported significant post-training gains in staff digital competency at the University of Limerick following a targeted digital upskilling initiative. Similarly, Ibrahim and Yahaya (2022) reported improvements in digital navigation and research support skills after structured ICT workshops for librarians in Nigerian universities. The study by Okon and Bello (2024) also provides support for these results, showing that digital interventions can improve not only competence but also staff engagement and confidence in service delivery. Moreover, the observed increase in critical thinking and research analysis skills validates the emphasis placed on holisticdigital literacy by Carl and Worsfold (2021), who argue for the integration of digital literacy into everyday library workflows and responsibilities.

Similarly, findings on the effectiveness of the training intervention found that the intervention was highly effective in improving staff's practical and conceptual understanding of digital tools. Participants reported that the training not only enhanced their skills but also increased their ability to integrate digital tools into their daily responsibilities. This result supports the findings of Musa and Obot (2024), who emphasized that the success of any digital literacy initiative depends on its relevance to the participants' roles and the degree of experiential learning involved. The alignment of this study's results with those of Breen *et al*. (2023) affirms the importance of structured, hands-on training over theoretical instruction. Participants in both studies acknowledged the value of being trained by facilitators familiar with the work context and the actual tools used in libraries. The effectiveness of this intervention further validates Carl and Worsfold's (2021) recommendation that digital literacy training should be embedded into library practice rather than treated as an external or standalone endeavor.

Despite the success of the intervention, the study identified several persistent challenges. These include difficulty adapting to new digital tools and technologies, irregular power supply, high costs of digital tools, and inadequate funding for further training programmes. These findings align with those of Okeji *et al*. (2020), who found that power outages and poor ICT infrastructure significantly hinder digital skills acquisition among librarians in Nigeria. Devi (2022) also reported similar constraints in her study of digital literacy challenges, noting that technological change outpaces institutional readiness, particularly in under-resourced settings. Yusuf and Lawan (2025) further observed that generational gaps contribute to slower adoption of digital skills among older staff, a trend reflected in the difficulty some staff in this study experienced in adjusting to new software and platforms.

Aminu and Gambo (2023) attributed these persistent challenges to the lack of institutional digital policy frameworks and inadequate prioritization of library staff development. The results of this study therefore reinforce the argument that beyond individual capacity, institutional commitment and systemic support are essential to sustaining digital literacy in academic libraries. The study's findings clearly demonstrate that structured digital literacy interventions can significantly improve staff competence, confidence, and service delivery in university libraries. However, for such gains to be sustainable, institutional policies must address both human and infrastructural gaps. This aligns with the literature's consensus that digital transformation in academic libraries is not just a technological upgrade, but a strategic and cultural shift requiring long-term investment and planning.

Conclusion

The digital literacy training programme effectively enhanced the digital skills of library staff at the Abdullahi Mahadi Library, Gombe, improving their ability to use digital resources, conducting online research, and supporting library users. It alsopositively impacted library services by improving access to digital materials and enhancing user satisfaction.

Recommendations

i. Library authorities should promote the understanding and application of digital literacy skills among staff.
ii. University management should prioritise digital literacy training by providing funding, scholarships, and workshops.
iii. Library management should make digital literacy a key requirement for library staff recruitment.
iv. The library management should entrench a culture of continuous training and retraining among the staff so as to keep them updated on digital literacy skills.
v. The library should invest in current software and emerging digital technologies to enhance staff competence in digital services.

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