

Cataloguing and Classification Tools and Competencies in Selected Academic Libraries in Adamawa State

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Abstract

Due to the fact that rules and guidelines for cataloguing and classification are changing to accommodate online resources, librarians need to adapt with these changes. The study adopted a survey research design. This study sought to find out cataloguing tools and competencies available in selected academic libraries in Adamawa State, Nigeria. Three research objectives guided the study, which were to identify the existing cataloguing and classification tools, establish the competency level of cataloguing and classification staff, and to identify challenges in cataloguing and classification. The population of the study was 31 cataloguing and classification staff including professionals and paraprofessionals. A Questionnaire was used as an instrument for data collection. Out of 31 copies of questionnaires distributed, only 20 (65%) copies were completed and returned. Data collated were analysed using descriptive statistics of frequency count and mean. The mean was used to answer the research questions. The criterion mean that was used was 2.50. Values above that were termed positive and those below that were termed negative. It was found that cataloguers and classifiers are competent, some of the recent cataloguing tools like RDA and MARC were not in use and the most prominent problems bedeviling the libraries are lack of training opportunities and shortage of professional staff. Hence the study recommended that the staff be trained especially on RDA, adequate and updated versions of tools be provided among others.

Keywords: Cataloguing, Classification, Library, Metadata, MARC

Introduction

Cataloguing and classification is the technical term used in referring to information organization in library and information centers. The task of cataloguing and classification is very central to any library because it is the function that ensures easy and fast organization and retrieval of books and other forms of information resources for use by clients. Book materials constitute the bulk of information resources found in the library (Angbade & Udofot, 2020). There is massive production of human knowledge in all facets of human endeavour therefore; the increased need for librarians and particularly cataloguers to organize this knowledge for fast and easy retrieval. It has become more and easier to print since the recent past, this means massive volumes of books are being printed on daily basis. This development implies much work load for cataloguers and classifiers which call for accurate and adequate cataloguing and classification of resources.

Cataloguing is the bibliographic description of information resources for easy identification whereas classification is the appropriate placement of an information resource with the view of making available, accessible in a specific location among other information resources (Esse, 2013). It is worthy of note that many classification schemes have been invented all with the view of organizing the entire human knowledge. Prominent among them are the Library of Congress classification, Colon classification, Dewey Decimal classification, Bliss, Moys and Colon classification schemes. The principles of cataloguing and classification remain the same across the globe but what differs is the details and extent of correctness, orderliness, neatness with regards to localization to suit local need of a library.

At inception, Ejiroghene (2020) argued that cataloguing and classification were not very demanding because there was nothing like information explosion experienced then, like in recent times. Then, books were categorized and organized according to their shape, size colour and length. In this century, there is so much in print format and so much published both electronically and physically therefore, the need to understand how cataloguers go about doing their work. The reality of massive publications because of the proliferation of the printing technology has only added to the workload of librarians and cataloguers in particular. These days, cataloguers have so much to catalogue and classify that the work is overwhelmingly much and therefore are prone to error, skip some steps or observe those steps with less precision. Ejiroghene (2020) noted that manual cataloguing and classification involves a lot of brain work and

labour hence, cataloguers are likely to do their work with less details and excellence.

A Study of cataloguing and classification tools and competencies is of paramount importance because by it, it would be known how appropriate, effective and efficient cataloguing and classification work is carried out. This study will indicate whether resources are placed incorrectly, and the competencies of the cataloguers will be ascertained. It is expected to reveal whether cataloguing and classification work is done according to best practices and conventions. According to Denton (2007), the importance of efficient cataloguing and classification has great benefit both to the library user and the librarian.

Cataloguing and classification tools are of principal importance for the purpose of organizing information resources. Therefore, this study is significant to identify the tools used and the competencies possessed by cataloguers for the proper organization of information resources.

Statement of the Problem

In the technical section of every library, the organisation of human knowledge relies heavily on the employment of cataloguing and classification technologies. Given the importance of organising human knowledge in an academic setting, it is necessary to reevaluate the tools and abilities of cataloguers in the light of contemporary developments. According to one of the laws of librarianship which is ensuring user's time is conserved, it is necessary to determine whether the cataloguer's efforts in the selected research area would save library user's time. Although the traditional methods of cataloguing have been disrupted by the introduction of Information and Communication Technologies (ICTs) into field of libraries and information science, it is still imperative to reevaluate tools and competencies because users' needs are becoming more complex and much work needs to be done to satisfy them. The researchers fear that the user's time may not be conserved by cataloguing and classification if the cataloguing tools and skills of catalogers are not regularly checked. Based on the foregoing, the researchers in this study are identifying the tools in the technical services sections and assessing the competencies of cataloguers.

Objectives

The overall objective of this study is to identify the tools and competencies for cataloguing and classification in the selected tertiary institution libraries. The specific objectives are:

- i. To identify the existing cataloguing and classification tools

- ii. To establish the competency level of cataloguing and classification staff
- iii. To identify challenges in cataloguing and classification.

Research Question

The following research questions are posed to guide the study:

- i. What are the existing cataloging and classification tools?
- ii. What is the competency level of cataloguing and classification staff?
- iii. What are the challenges in cataloguing and classification?

Review of Related Literature

Cataloguing and Classification Tools

Cataloguing and classification cannot be carried out without tools. The classification tools are numerous and all depend on what type of library is using them. Some tools are used across all libraries while others are used in some specific libraries. Ogunniyi, Olubiyo and Okedele (2023) posit that descriptive cataloguing requires Anglo American Cataloguing Rules II (AACR2) and Resource Description and Access (RDA), while Sears List of Subject Headings (SLSH) and Library of Congress Subject Headings (LCSH) are the tools used in classification. They added that general classification tools include Bliss, Dewey Decimal, Colon, Universal Decimal, and Library of Congress classification schemes etc. and that Moys, Library of Medicine, and Oxford classifications are specialized subject-based classification schemes. AACR2 and RDA specify rules and instructions for bibliographic description of resources while SLSH and LCSH give subject term describing the content treatment of the information resource. Cutter Table is another tool for classification. It contributes to providing identification of information resource amidst others. It forms part of the mixed notation that make up the call mark. Chollom and Daniel (2013) corroborated that cutter table is an alpha-numeric device that substitute words and numbers by using one or more letters followed by one or more Arabic numerals decimally. They provide distinctive identification for information materials. Thesaurus and dictionary are also tools used when cataloguing and classification. They are used to help cataloguers grasp the meaning of a term. It helps the cataloguers to establish the “aboutness” of the information resource in question before searching the subject heading.

Cataloguing and Classification Competencies of Cataloguers

In their study on expected competencies for effective provision of Online Public Access Catalogue (OPAC) in Nigerian universities, Mesagan, Ibrahim, Mole and Ihekwoaba (2021) showed that OPAC data storage creation, working knowledge of cataloguing tools, competencies in information literacy and technical knowledge of the catalogue are the competencies required of cataloguers. However, their study lacks concentration on the various cataloguing tools. Mavume (2013) conducted a study on new roles and skills of cataloguers in managing knowledge in an academic library, with special reference to Walter Sisulu University Libraries, Eastern Cape, South Africa. The author noted that continually seeking out new technology challenges and opportunities for the improvement of information analysis in new online cataloguing and classification tools, enthusiasm to learn new developments and adopting new and emerging standards such as metadata schemes (Dublin Core), Electronic Thesis and Dissertation (ETD), metadata standards, Resource Description and Access (RDA) and thirdly, ability to understand the cataloguing change processes and how they impact daily activities are forefront among the competencies required by cataloguers. The study area is a university in south Africa and it excluded competency in the array of some cataloguing and classifying tools which this work seeks to uncover.

Manual Cataloguing and Classification in the Library

In cataloguing and classification, everything started manually. Before automated cataloguing which involves the Machine-Readable Catalogue (MARC21) standards, Cataloguing calculator, the classification web and other recent technologies, there had been the manual cataloguing. According to Ajani, Amzat, James and Sulyman (2022) the process of manual cataloguing is as thus:

The cataloguer makes use of either the Library of Congress subject heading or the Sears list subject heading, classification schemes and the schedules. Upon the completion of preparing the catalogue, it is then typed on a stencil using typewriter, and duplicated into multiple cards. The cards are later filled manually in a wooden card catalogue drawer, either word by word or letter by letter. The catalogue box is divided into a subject catalogue, title catalogue and author's catalogue. This process is a bit tedious for cataloguers because it takes a longer time to catalogue

one book. The whole operation is quite monotonous and hectic, both for the library staff and users (p.6).

Ejiroghene (2020) noted that the first step in cataloguing is to describe the bibliographic details of the books on the cataloguing slips. Before doing original cataloguing on any book, the cataloging slips are crosschecked with the already existing author/title and subject cards. The purpose is to find out if any of the books already exist in the library. Any title found in the catalogues does not undergo original cataloguing; rather, the call number is copied from the already existing author/title cards. The titles not found in the catalogues are then catalogued and classified originally. Manual classification demands a lot of time, personnel, and energy to carry out such tasks as a bibliographic description of materials, crosschecking of catalogue cards, updating of the shelflist and filing and interfiling of cards. Since manual cataloguing and classification is tedious, hectic and monotonous, there is need to identify the tools and competencies of cataloguers for the purpose of accuracy, effectiveness, and efficiency otherwise gross and fatal errors are inevitable.

Esse (2013) study on current trends in cataloguing and the challenges of cataloguer in the digital age corroborated that the ever-expanding growth of information and information technology, increasing volumes and multiple formats of information, changing user expectations and behaviour brought about even higher levels of challenges for cataloguers. This underscores the need to identify the tools and competencies of cataloguers. Akidi and Omekwu, (2019) in their assessment of cataloguing and classification practices of the National Library of Nigeria (NLN) in the digital age: a bibliographic control perspective noted that researches in the area of assessment of cataloguing and classification practices appear to be rare in Nigeria. Their submission constitutes the need to study the cataloguing and classification tools and competencies in libraries especially academic libraries since they acquire larger information resources in their collection in a continual basis. Ajani et al., (2022) carried out a study on cataloguing and classification as predictor of library use among the library users of public universities in Nigeria. Their findings show that 69.1% of library users consult the catalogue before they proceed to find what they need. However, their study excluded the tools used for the cataloguing and classification of the consulted information resources. This is the more reason the cataloguing and classification tools and practices need to be examined so as to avoid errors that is capable of misleading users.

Computer and internet have greatly changed the way we think and carry our tasks. Everything is happening so fast that librarians need to adapt with changing time. Librarians as information and service-oriented professionals need to live in the future before the future happens. It is because of this that Esse (2013) asserted that the modern cataloguer has to be multi-skilled, computer literate, able to operate different in-house library systems, able to use the online packages such as MARC21 standards online, Web Dewey, Web LC, and search interfaces. Cataloguers have to be in tune with changing times and environment, managing materials in new formats, able to manipulate different metadata schemes, and be able to catalogue for diverse audience and environment.

Challenges of Cataloguing and Classification

The professional tasks of cataloguing and classification of books and other forms of record are without challenges. Istifanus, Amiel, Yusuf and Ibrahim (2023) in their study “Cataloguing and classification practices and the challenges of cataloguing in digital age: the case of public libraries in Northeast zone, Nigeria” found out that some challenges bedeviling cataloguing and classification are inadequate tools and technologies required for bibliographic control practices, and lack of implementation of Resource Description and Access (RDA).

In another study, Muhammad, Baffa and Garba (2018) noted that unavailability of Cataloguing in Publication (C.I.P.) is one of the challenges facing cataloguers and classifiers. Ajani et al., (2022) in their study on cataloguing and classification for quality service delivery by library professionals in Kwara State found that determining the subject content of material at hand was one of the difficulties classifiers are facing. This is a serious challenge because if the subject content of any material is not determined properly the material is as good as lost.

Methodology

The survey research design was adopted for the study. Three research objectives guided the study, which were to identify the existing cataloguing and classification tools, establish the competency level of cataloguing and classification staff, and to identify challenges in cataloguing and classification. The population of the study comprised 31 professional and paraprofessional staff members of the technical section of the libraries of the Adamawa State University (ADSU), Modibbo Adama University, Yola (MAUY), Federal Polytechnic Mubi, College of Health Technology Mubi, and the American University of Nigeria (AUN). Questionnaire was used

as the instrument for data collection. Closed-ended questionnaire on a 4-point rating scale of: 1 = “Strongly disagree”, 2 = “Disagree”, 3= “Agree” and 4 = “Strongly Agree” was used to collect data from all the staff of technical division of the Adamawa State University (ADSU), Modibbo Adama University, Yola (MAUY), Federal Polytechnic Mubi, College of Health Technology Mubi and the American University of Nigeria (AUN) libraries. The questionnaire was first validated by two experts in Library and Information Science profession at the Adamawa State University and the American University of Nigeria. All the technical staff of the libraries was used in the research because of their relevance to the study. After the validation of the instrument a total of 31 copies of the questionnaire were prepared and distributed by the researchers. Out of 31 copies of questionnaire distributed only 20 copies or 65% of the numbers were returned. Data collected were analyzed using percentages, frequencies and mean.

Results and Analysis of Findings

Table 1: Institutions for the study

Institution	Number of Questionnaire Administered	Number of Questionnaire Retrieved
American University of Nigeria (AUN)	2	2 (100%)
Adamawa State University (ADSU)	7	6 (85%)
College of Health Technology (CHT)	5	3 (60%)
Federal Polytechnic Mubi (FedPoMub)	8	4 (50%)
Moddibbo Adama University, Yola	9	5 (55%)
	31	20

The questionnaire administered and retrieved vary this is because some of the technical staff either resigned their position or were on study fellowship at the time of distributing the questionnaire. For example, at Federal Polytechnic Mubi the return rate stood at 50%, the remaining have either

resigned or on study fellowship. The overall return rate for the questionnaire stood at 65%.

Table 2: Demographic Characteristics of Respondents

Gender	Male	15(75%)
	Female	5(25%)
	TOTAL	20 (100%)
Work Experience in Technical division	1-5years	3(15%)
	6-10years	6(30%)
	11-15years	3(15%)
	16-20years	3(15%)
	21-25years	2(10%)
	26-30years	3(15%)
	31-35years	0(0%)
	TOTAL	20 (100%)
	Diploma	5(25)
Level of Education	Bachelor's Degree	11(55%)
	Master's Degree	4(20%)
	Doctor of Philosophy	0(0%)
	TOTAL	20 (100%)

Table 2 shows the demographic characteristics of respondents. From the table it can be deduced that majority of the respondents are male staff represented by 75%, and work experience of 6-10years has the highest

number of frequency. Again, 20% of the respondents have masters' degree while 55% have the qualification of Bachelor's degree.

Table 3: Cataloguing and Classification tools used in Selected Libraries
N=20

Item	Frequency	Percentage
I use Library of Congress Subject Heading (LCSH)	13	65%
I use Cutter Table	13	65%
I use Library of Congress Schedules (LCS)	13	65%
I use Thesaurus	18	90%
I use Anglo American Cataloguing Rules II (AACR2)	20	100%
I use Resource Description and Access (RDA)	1	5%
I use Dictionary	20	100%

It can be seen from Table 3 that 19 respondents representing 90% use Thesaurus to get synonyms of terms in order to understand terms before they assign class mark to information materials. Also, 65% of the respondents use Library of Congress Subject Heading when performing classification, this number is likely coming from the university libraries because universities libraries of the study use the Library of Congress Classification Scheme.

Table 4: Cataloguing and Classification Competencies of Technical Staff

S/N	Items	SA	A	D	SD	Mean	Remark
1.	I am able to use cataloguing rules and standards when Cataloguing	52	18	0	1	3.55	Positive
2.	Am able to identify access points e.g. main entry, added entries	32	33	0	1	3.30	Positive
3.	I am able to establish the relationships between AACR2/RDA and MARC coding	8	33	12	1	2.70	Positive
4.	I understand local procedures, policies and practices in cataloguing and classification to provide consistency throughout the collection.	16	24	14	1	2.75	Positive
5.	I am able to establish the subject matter of a book or any information	32	24	4	2	3.10	Positive
6.	I understand the difference between AACR2 and Resource Description and Access (RDA)	12	21	18	1	2.60	Positive
7.	I understand the coding of Machine-Readable Catalogues (MARC) and therefore able to work with it	16	9	4	2	1.55	Negative
8.	I am able to adapt fast to emerging technologies and standards	12	30	10	2	2.70	Positive
9	Understand how to search schedules/indexes to establish class of any information resource	24	30	6	1	3.05	Positive
10.	I am able to perform geographic subdivisions.	20	24	6	4	2.70	Positive
11.	I am able to assign subject to a class	36	24	0	3	3.15	Positive
Cumulative Mean						2.83	

Keys: Strongly Agree (SA), Agree (A), Disagree (D), and Strongly Disagree (SD)

Decision rule: 2.5 - 4.0 is positive and 2.49 - 1.0 is negative and the cumulative mean of all the items on the table is 2.83.

Table 4 shows the responses on the competencies of technical staff of the area of study. The ultimate response is positive since the cumulative mean of 2.83 is greater than the criterion mean of 2.50. A closer look shows that the first item on the table “I am able to use cataloguing rules and standards when cataloguing” has the highest mean of 3.55. This is because cataloguing rules are very central to the technical tasks of librarianship such that without it, the organization of knowledge will not be universally the same. On the other hand, the lowest mean is 1.55 and it is item number seven (7) “I understand the coding of Machine-Readable Catalogues (MARC) and therefore able to work with it” This implies that the respondents have not had experience with the MARC.

Table 5: Problems Associated with Cataloguing and Classification

S/N	Items	SA	A	D	SD	Mean	Decision
1.	Lack of Adequate space	32	21	4	3	3.00	Positive
2.	Lack of training opportunities for staff	40	30	0	0	3.50	Positive
3.	Shortage of trained professional staff	48	18	4	0	3.50	Positive
4.	Shortage of working tools	24	30	6	1	3.05	Positive
5.	The use of obsolete cataloguing and classification tools	16	27	14	0	2.85	Positive
6	Lack of Information and Communication Technology (ICTs) skills by librarians	20	27	8	2	2.85	Positive
Cumulative Mean						3.13	

Keys: Strongly Agree (SA), Agree (A), Disagree (D), and Strongly Disagree (SD)

Decision rule: 2.5 - 4.0 is accepted and 2.49 – 1.0 is rejected and the cumulative mean of all the items on the table is 3.13.

From table 5 it can be seen that the overall response is positive since the cumulative mean 3.13 is greater than the criterion mean of 2.5. Looking intently at the table, the highest mean is 3.50 which are the second and third items on the table stated “lack of staff training” and “shortage of trained professional staff”. Also, the lowest mean is 2.85 which is “the use of obsolete cataloguing and classification tools” and “lack of ICT skills by librarians”. However, since they are all above the criterion mean of 2.5, they are all accepted as problems associated with cataloguing and classification in the study area.

Discussion of Findings

The result on tools used revealed that all the technical staff makes use of cataloguing rules, Anglo American Cataloguing Rules II in particular. This means that they all adhere to global practice in descriptive cataloguing. This finding agrees with Istifanus et al., (2023) and Akidi and Omekwu, (2019) who found out in their study that the librarians use AACRII in carrying out descriptive cataloguing. This implies that the staff understands and applies the cataloguing and classification standards which ensure their work is consistent with global standard practices. Only one respondent claim to have been using Resource description and Access (RDA).

The result on competencies of technical staff in cataloguing and classification of resources revealed that the staff are competent and therefore can use the cataloguing and classification tools to perform cataloguing and classification. However, the staff members are not conversant with RDA which is the recent cataloguing rule in use now. This result is consistent with Akidi and Omekwu, (2019) whose study on cataloguing and classification practices of the National Library of Nigeria in the digital age: a bibliographic control perspective revealed that use of RDA in cataloguing was not rated at all. The implication is that the technical staff is competent because they can use the cataloguing and classification tools effectively to do their work however, they lack adequate knowledge of the RDA which is the recent cataloguing and classification rules in use now.

The problems associated with cataloguing and classifications according to the study are lack of adequate space, lack of training opportunities for staff, shortage of trained professional staff, shortage of working tools, use of obsolete cataloguing and classification tools, and lack of ICT skills by librarians. Prominent among these problems are lack of training opportunities for staff and shortage of trained staff. This study supports the

findings of Ajani et al., (2022) who identified lack of training opportunities for staff in the technical unit of institutions in Kwara State. This implies that the staff requires capacity development to be able to function with the new trends.

Conclusion

This study was meant to identify cataloguing and classification tools and competencies of technical unit staff. Based on the finding, it is hereby upheld that the staff are competent. However, there is room for improvement if the catalogue is to show what the library has and where a particular information resource is to be found. There exist great opportunities for the libraries to leverage recent cataloguing and classification tools and rules.

Recommendations

Based on the study, the following recommendations are hereby made:

1. The management of the libraries should offer more opportunities for training of technical staff in the areas of cataloguing and classification and ICT.
2. Staff should specifically be trained on RDA and implement it in the libraries in order to move with current trends.
3. The Management of the library should provide adequate cataloguing and classification working tools.

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