

**COMPETENCIES OF ACADEMIC LIBRARY STAFF IN PRIVATE AND
PUBLIC COLLEGES AND UNIVERSITIES IN BACOLOD
AND TALISAY CITIES, NEGROS OCCIDENTAL**

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By

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ABSTRACT

Introduction of the Study

This study was conducted to evaluate the personal and professional competencies of the academic library staff and the characteristics may have influenced them. This is a descriptive relational study which employed a one-shot survey design. It involved forty-two (42) academic library staff members in eight (8) private and public colleges and universities in Bacolod and Talisay Cities of Negros Occidental. The respondents were rated by themselves and their head librarians.

A complete enumeration was employed. The researcher utilized a self-administered questionnaire in data collection. The questionnaire was composed of two (2) sets: set A for academic library staff self-evaluation, and set B for academic library staff evaluation by their head librarians. The questionnaire was submitted to a panel of experts in their field for content-validation, and then revised so as to suit local setting and later pre-tested for reliability. The test and retest method for validation was conducted last December 29, 2009 and January 5, 2010 respectively. The Statistical Package for

Social Sciences (SPSS) software was used for analysis in this study. The collected data were analyzed using frequency count, percentage, and means, Cramer's V, and Gamma.

Major Findings

Majority of the academic library staff were ages 38 years old and below, married and had earned a bachelor's degree in library science with master's units and above related to library science. Most of the academic library staff had served for more than 15 years or more occupying a librarian's position both as professional and para-professional. It was found out that majority of library staff had one or more local seminars attended but less than half had the same numbers for regional and even lesser for national seminars.

Self-evaluation by library staff level of their personal competencies revealed that of the 8 items on skills, the top three competencies rated as very highly competent were listening to the needs of the user, having the ability to manage multiple tasks, and exercising leadership in the area assigned. In terms of attitude, the highest ratings were the items on having a positive attitude in life, and being approachable towards library users. When the competencies in values aspects were considered, 4 in every 10 academic library staff rated themselves very highly competent in general.

The summary of the ratings of their levels of personal competencies as to skills showed that one-third (33.3 percent) of the library staff were rated as very highly competent. Surprisingly, in terms of the attitudes and values of the academic library staff both groups posted a similar proportion of less than 20 percent. This finding is similar to the study of Goleman (1998), which revealed that in order to rise in professional competence at the workplace, it is not just essential that individuals are good in their jobs, but they are required to be more positive, approachable, warm emphatic and optimistic.

The ratings regarding their level of professional competencies in the area of information

resources, nearly three-fourths (73.8 percent) of the academic library staff were rated highly competent. It is interesting that they posted a similar rating percentage in information access. As to information technology, 22 out of 42 academic library staff or slightly more than one half (52.4 percent) were rated as highly competent while majority (71.4 percent) of the academic library staff were rated highly competent in managing information.

Based on the means of the two groups of raters who considered the academic library staff personal competencies as very highly competent in the three areas of personal competencies, it can be observed that the ratings by the academic library staff themselves were higher than the ratings by their head librarians in all items. As to the means of the two groups of rates who considered the academic library staff professional competencies as very highly competent, it was also observed that the ratings by academic librarians themselves is higher than the ratings by their head librarians in all items. In area of accessing information, the staff rated themselves as very highly competent in ability to be resourceful in retrieving information for the user, while the head librarians rated their subordinates as very highly competent in the ability to identify and provide solutions if the needs of the user were not met. The staff was rated as very highly competent in using technology effectively to disseminate access and preserve information.

As to the relationship between the academic library staff personal and work-related characteristics (34.8 percent) of the academic library staff who belong in the older group was very highly competent as compared to their younger counterparts (31.6

percent). There were more married (37 percent) academic library staff that were very highly competent as compared to single (26.7 percent) and widow respectively. It also reveals that among the four (4) categories those with other bachelor's degree posted the biggest percentage of those who were a very highly competent followed by those with Bachelor of Science in Library Science with master's units or masters degree. This implies that education attained by the academic library staff has a little influence with their personal competencies. As to length of work experience those academic library staff who served for 14 years or less were very highly competent (35.3 percent) as compared to academic library staff who served for more than 15 years (32 percent). In terms of academic library staff position or job assignment those who held an assistant librarian's position were very highly competent (36.8 percent) as compared to those occupying a librarian's position. This implies that not all assistant librarians were para-professional. Professional academic library staffs were very highly competent (38.1 percent) and got a highest percentage compared to the para-professional which only got 28.6 percent. However, majority of the academic library staff were highly competent. When the number seminars/ trainings/ workshops attended (local, regional and national) were being compared those academic library staff without any seminars attended in three levels got a highest percentage as compared to those who attended a seminar.

In terms of the relationship between the academic library staff personal and work-related characteristics and their professional competencies, as to age those who belongs to the older group (39 and above) were very highly competent as compared to their younger counterparts. Married academic staff were very highly competent when the three groups are being compared. This implies that the civil status of the academic

library staff had a little effect on their professional competencies. Academic library staff who earned a bachelor's degree in Library Science with master's units or master's degree got the highest percentage of (29.4 percent) and were very highly competent followed by other bachelor's degree and bachelor's degree in library science respectively. This implies that the higher the educational attainment of the academic library staff obtained the more they will be competent. As to length of work experience and professional competencies, academic library staff with longer experience (15 years or more) has a highest percentage of 24 percent and were rated very highly competent with those shorter experience (14 years or less) while those academic library staff who were occupying a librarians position got a highest percentage of 26.1 percent and were very highly competent while the assistant librarian only got 10.5 percent. Meanwhile, professional academic library staff has a higher percentage (28.6 percent) and were rated very highly competent compared to the para-professional (9.5 percent). When the number seminars/trainings/ workshops attended (local, regional and national) were looking into those who able to attend seminar were very highly competent. However, most of them were highly competent.

In the relationship between personal and professional competencies of academic library staff as to skills and information resources, more than half (81.2 percent) of the academic library staff's were highly competent. However, 35.7 percent were very highly competent. By looking at their attitude, academic library staff has positive attitudes towards library clients the result between the said variables was very highly competent (31.6 percent). However, majority (78.3percent) of the academic library were highly competent. In terms of values and information resources, most (82.6 percent) of the

academic library staffs were highly competent while 31.6 percent were very highly competent.

As to the relationship between personal and professional competencies of academic library staff skills and information access most academic library staff listens attentively to the needs of the user, it follows that academic library staff were also very highly competent in accessing and retrieving of information quickly and accurately because of their knowledge on which information resources to provide to library users. When attitudes were being considered, 42.1 percent of academic library staff were very highly competent in their personal and professional aspects. Meanwhile, most of the academic library staff were committed to service excellence and shows respect to different library users the academic library staff were also very highly competent in identifying which information resources to provide to library user. This is the reason why academic library staff can access and retrieve information quickly and accurately.

In the area of skills and information technology, majority (85.7 percent) of the academic library staff were very highly competent. This implies that the academic library staff who listens attentively to the needs of the user knows how to find and use information using the internet and other electronic resources because they demonstrate good interpersonal skills and effective verbal and written communication which the reason why academic library staff knows what kind of reference questions to ask. Most, (83.3 percent) of the academic library staff was very highly competent in relation to their attitudes and information technology competencies while in terms of values and information technology academic library staff has moderately high effect on their competencies.

It was found out in the study that between the personal competencies and the information technology there is a relationship that exists and as a whole mostly were highly competent.

Conclusions

Based on the above findings the following conclusions were drawn:

1. Majority of the academic library staff were in their thirties and pursuing a master's degree. In addition, twenty-five (25) out of forty-two respondents served for more than 15 years. Majority holds a librarian's position, surprisingly in academic library staff status, both group (professional and para-professional) had equal quantity. In regional and national seminars/trainings/workshops attended most of the academic library staff had less number attended compared to local setting which majority of them attended.
2. As to the distribution of respondents according to their ratings on the academic library staff level of personal competencies, data in terms of skills showed that the highest rating was in listens attentively in the needs of the user and lowest in demonstrating good interpersonal skills and effective communication while it was very highly competent in item" has a positive outlook in life" when attitude where looked into. Moreover, it got a highest rating in shows respect to different individuals in terms of values.
3. It was found out that academic library staff were very highly competent in the level of their professional competencies however most of them were highly competent. They excel in the areas of information resources and information access but fall short in assessing the content of resources, ability to access and

retrieve information through the use of bibliography, indexes and other bibliographic materials, knowledge in using word processing, graphics, and knowledge in the content and format of information management.

4. Based on the two groups of raters, the academic library staff themselves had their highest rating on their personal competencies. Specially in demonstrating good interpersonal skills and effective verbal and written communication, as well as in “sees the big picture in the library organization” and “seeks opportunities to share expertise and knowledge to colleagues and library user”. As to the proportion of the two groups of rates that considered the academic library staff professional competencies as very highly competent, it can be observed that those rated by academic librarians themselves has a higher proportion than those rated by their head librarians in all items.
5. As to the relationship between the academic library staff personal and work-related characteristics academic library staff that belong in the older group was very highly competent as compared to their younger counterparts. There were more married academic library staff that were very highly competent as compared to single and widow respectively. It also reveals that among the four (4) categories, those with other bachelor’s degree posted the biggest percentage of those who had a very highly competence followed by those with Bachelor of Science in Library Science with master’s units or masters degree. This implies that education attained by the academic library staff has a little influence on their personal competencies. As to length of work experience, those academic library staff who served for 14 years or less was very highly competent as compared to

academic library staff who served for more than 15 years. In terms of academic library staff position or job assignment those who held an assistant librarian's position were very highly competent as compared to those occupying a librarian's position. This implies that not all assistant librarians were para-professional. Professional academic library staffs were very highly competent and got a highest percentage as compared to the para-professional. However, majority of the academic library staff were highly competent. When the number seminars/ trainings/ workshops attended (local, regional and national) were being compared those academic library staff without any seminars attended in three levels got a highest percentage as compared to those who attended a seminar.

6. In terms of the relationship between the academic library staff personal and work-related characteristics and their professional competencies, as to age, those who belong to the older group were very highly competent as compared to their younger counterparts. Married academic staff were very highly competent when the three groups are being compared. This implies that the civil status of the academic library staff had a little effect on their professional competencies. Academic library staff who earned a bachelor's degree in Library Science with master's units or master's degree got the highest percentage and were very highly competent followed by other bachelor's degree and bachelor's degree in library science respectively. This implies that the higher the educational attainment of the academic library staff obtained the more they will be competent. As to length of work experience and professional competencies, academic library staff with longer experience has a highest percentage and were rated very highly competent

with those shorter experience (14 years or less) while those academic library staff who were occupying a librarians position got a highest percentage and were very highly competent while the assistant librarian only got 10.5 percent. Meanwhile, professional academic library staff has a higher percentage and were rated very highly competent as compared to the para-professional. When the number seminars/ trainings/ workshops attended (local, regional and national) were looked into, those who were able to attend seminar were very highly competent. However, most of them were highly competent.

7. In the relationship between personal and professional competencies of academic library staff as to skills and information resources, more than half of the academic library staff's were highly competent. By looking at their attitude, academic library staff has positive attitudes towards library clients, the result between the said variables was very highly competent. However, majority of the academic library were highly competent. In terms of values and information resources, most of the academic library staffs were highly competent.
8. As to the relationship between personal and professional competencies of academic library staff skills and information access, most academic library staff listen attentively to the needs of the user, it follows that academic library staff were also very highly competent in accessing and retrieving of information quickly and accurately because of their knowledge on which information resources to provide to library users. When attitudes were being considered, academic library staff were very highly competent in their personal and professional aspects. Meanwhile, most of the academic library staff were

committed to service excellence and show respect to different library users. The academic library staff were also very highly competent in identifying which information resources to provide to library user. This is the reason why academic library staff can access and retrieve information quickly and accurately.

9. In the area of skills and information technology, majority of the academic library staff were very highly competent. This implies that the academic library staff who listen attentively to the needs of the user know how to find and use information using the internet and other electronic resources because they demonstrate good interpersonal skills and effective verbal and written communication which is the reason why academic library staff knows what kind of reference questions to ask. Most of the academic library staff were very highly competent in relation to their attitudes and information technology competencies while in terms of values and information technology, academic library staff have moderately high effect on their competencies.
10. It was found out in the study that between the personal competencies and the information technology there is a relationship that exists. As a whole mostly were highly competent.

Recommendations

Based on the findings and conclusions the following were suggested:

1. Those para-professional librarians must take up a librarian's licensure exam to be professional in the field of librarianship according to the Section 2 of the Republic Act No. 9246 also known as "An Act Modernizing the Practice of Librarianship in the Philippines".

2. In the highest educational attainment it is noted that majority of the respondents is bachelor's degree holder with masters units and above related to library science. It is recommended that they have to finish their master's degree program to be more qualified in their field of work.
3. Based on the results, academic library staff were highly competent in almost all of the areas but even if the result is high there is still a need to have a seminars/training/workshops especially in the areas which the academic library staff had low ratings and some of these are "demonstrating good interpersonal skills and effective verbal and written communication skills in marketing the library to other libraries", "ability to work under pressure", "knowledge in assessing the content of resources in print, non-print and electronic resources and knowledge in using word processing, graphics, spreadsheets and similar software package for office management".
4. In view of the fact that personal competencies of the academic library staff highly influence the professional competencies it is suggested that academic library staff should try to improve the personal and professional competencies which they are rated low in and maintain those they were rated high in.
5. There is a need to conduct annual performance evaluation for all employees in order for them to be aware of which area they lack and try to improve it.
6. To the head librarians, they have to send their subordinates to seminars/trainings/workshops to update their selves in the latest trends with regards to librarianship especially we now in the digital age.