IMPORTANCE OF POSITIVE ATTITUDE OF LIBRARY PROFESSIONALS IN DIGITAL ERA

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ABSTRACT

It can be concluded that for the implementation of ICT in libraries it is important that the library professionals should have positive attitude as their attitudes towards the use of computers and other technologies do effect the implementation of new technologies which ultimately influence the library services offered to the users. To develop the positive attitude towards ICT, library professionals must upgrade their knowledge of new technologies through attending workshops, seminars and conferences organized by the Departments of Studies or Institutes, in-service training courses and through continuing education programs. This exercise will certainly benefit library professionals in making their libraries well equipped with appropriate hardware, software and other technologies applicable there in. If the library professionals developed negative attitude towards the new innovative technologies, they would not be able to meet the changing demands of the users.

INTRODUCTION

ICT has changed the role of library professionals from intermediary to facilitator of information. For this the library professionals need to learn new technologies and procedures. The traditional functions of libraries have completely changed with the introduction of computers for library operations and services. The modern functions of library professionals include the acquisition of e-journals, working with library management software, digitization of documents, installation and use of RFID, Data mining etc. It may seem frightening for library professionals having little or no prior experience of computer or modern technologies. Their fear might have emerged because of change in routine work that in hybrid libraries is changing fast. If they don't come up with the technological changes, they might be replaced by other persons who are technology saucy. All these technological revolutions in the libraries ask for a fresh approach to the welfare of library professionals who actually use these ICT devices and many a time resist to change **(Prasher, 1997).**

Attitudes are of vital importance in shaping the influence of new technology. The implementation of ICT in libraries largely depends on the attitude of library professional. Attitude is the opinion or feeling about something. ICT has brought a drastic change in library practices which pose challenge to the library professionals. In order to cope up with the latest developments in ICT, the library professionals have to quickly learn and adopt new information technologies and there is a need to develop positive attitude towards the application of ICT in library operations and services. Positive attitudes of library staff are assumed to be fundamental in the acceptance, implementation and success of new technologies **(Spacey, Goulding & Murray, 2003).**

DEFINITIONS OF ATTITUDE

Attitude has been defined as an important concept that helps people to understand the social world. The word attitude is defined as "a learned predisposition to response in a consistently favorable or unfavorable manner with respect to a given object" **(Fishbein & Ajzen, 1975).**

176

Allport (1935) defines attitude "as a mental and neutral state of readiness organized through experience exerting a directive or dynamic influence upon individual's response to all objects or situations with which it is associated".

COMPONENTS OF ATTITUDE

Attitude is not a single element, but it represents a cluster of certain interrelated elements. These elements/components are cognitive (having to do with perceiving, knowing, believing), affective (emotional) and conative (motivational, striving, acting).
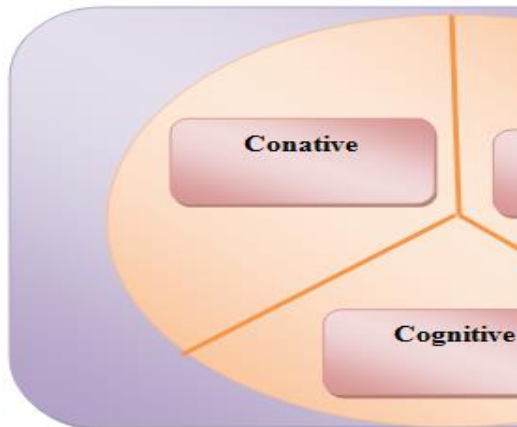
Fig: 4. 1: Three components of attitudes (Source: Jain,Vishal, 2014)

SCALES OF MEASUREMENT OF ATTITUDE

Krosnick, Judd, & Wittenbrink (2005) mentioned that information about attitude is gathered through observation method and self-report. The self-report methods usually involve the series of questions, adjectives or statements about the attitude objects. Attitudes are so important concepts that researchers have developed variety of scales for measurements. The four major types of attitude scales have been discussed below:

(i)   Semantic Differential Scale

Charles Osgood invented semantic differential scale in 1957. It measures people's reactions to stimulus words and concepts in terms of ratings on bipolar scales (usually seven-point scale) defined with contrasting adjectives at each end and

response options are expressed as "semantic space" **(Heise, 1970).**

(ii)   Thurstone Scale

It was developed by Louis Leon Thurstone in 1928. A Thurstone scale is an attitude scale consisting of statements of favorable or unfavorable evaluation of objects with which the respondent either agree or disagree. A number of judges are involved to rank each item on the scale using an eleven-point scale reflecting the attitude that is being measured. The means and variances of the numbers assigned to each statement are calculated. Then two or three statements with very close means are selected, thus producing a final draft of statements. Respondents were asked to read all the statements and indicate those which they agree **(Harvey, 2012-17).**

(iii)   Guttman Scale

Guttman scaling was developed by Louis Guttman (1944) and was first used with War Department research on the morale of American Soldiers. **Abdi (2010)** described Guttman scaling as a set of binary questions answered by a set of subjects and then the subjects are asked to check each statement with which they agree. When a participant agrees with an attitude statement, the participant receives a score of 1 for the item. However, if the participant disagrees with the attitude statement; the participant receives a score of 0 for the item. The participant's total score is the sum of all his/her item scores on the scale. The overall score suggests the participant's degree of favorability towards the attitudinal object. Then the data submitted to Guttman scale analysis. The Guttman method includes a scalogram analysis device for determining the degree of consistency that is present **(Dwyer, 1993)**.

(iv)   Likert Scale

Likert's summated rating method is one of the popular methods of attitude measurement. In this method researcher prepares about 100 statements expressing either 'strongly agree' or 'strongly disagree' towards an object. A set of respondents are then given five or seven response options and are asked to choose one response to express their views on statements. Each participant is then assigned a total score by summing his/her score on all items. Finally, for each item, each person's score is correlated with his/her total score and items with low item-to-total correlations are dropped. Approximately 20-40

177

statements with strongest correlations are selected for administration to the sample **(Likert, 1932).**

IMPORTANCE OF LIBRARY PROFESSIONALS' ATTITUDE IN THE USE OF ICT

Through the advent of new information technologies, the library professionals have experienced major challenges with the changes in generation, creation, dissemination and preservation of knowledge in libraries. There is no doubt, that new technologies provide various opportunities for retrieving information, but in order to recognize these opportunities one has to require new knowledge, competency skills and positive attitudes **(Ramzan, 2010)**. The libraries face many challenges with the introduction of new ICT as it makes manual based library operations and services less relevant. Whilst, facing the challenges, the library professionals in developing countries especially in India, must develop the positive attitude towards the use of new technologies in their libraries **(Eguavoen, 2011)**.

The incorporation of ICT in libraries plays an important role in fulfilling the needs of their users, but one must not ignore the fact that ICT is not only the factor responsible for achieving the goals of libraries, it is the library professional's positive attitude which endorses the implementation of the same. As it is evident from the study that 'attitudes- chiefly positive attitudes are assumed to be fundamental in the acceptance, implementation and success of new technologies' **(Spacey, Goulding & Murray, 2004).** On the other hand, if library professionals hold negative attitude towards ICT then the services they are providing may not be able to fulfill the needs of the users who expect to be offered the latest in technological advance.

There are many reasons which help the library professionals to develop their positive attitude which include: prior knowledge, proper training and continuing education, in-service courses, attending workshops and seminars etc. If library professionals have positive attitudes towards the application of ICT in their libraries, then it will raise their self-confidence, increase productivity, high moral and motivate colleagues. On the other hand, negative attitude will raise high level of anxiety, low level of

self-efficacy, technophobia, cyber phobia and fear to lose their jobs. Negative attitude of library professionals is the main hindrance in the implementation of ICT in libraries. **Adeyinka (2009)** mentioned that there are many variables such as age, qualification, experience, prior knowledge, training about ICT and anxiety seem to influence the attitude of library staff towards the use of ICT.

CONCLUSION

The emerging technologies are creating an electronic information environment, so the library professionals need to restructure the library services as per the electronic environment in the digital era. The emerging technologies have enabled the libraries to produce services and resources in electronic format to enhance accessibility and convenience of the users. This electronic environment in library makes it necessary for library professionals to keep updated with the latest developments in ICT. It is very important to library professionals to develop the positive attitude towards ICT, library professionals must upgrade their knowledge of new technologies through attending workshops, seminars and conferences organized by the Departments of Studies or Institutes, in-service training courses and through continuing education programs. This exercise will certainly benefit library professionals in making their libraries well equipped with appropriate hardware, software and other technologies applicable there in.

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