

Perception of Library Users on the Use of ICT Facilities in Abia State Polytechnic Library, Nigeria

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Abstract

This study was carried out to determine the perception of library users on the use of ICT facilities in Abia State Polytechnic Library, Nigeria. The study adopted survey research design. The population of the study comprised 4,857 registered users of Abia State Polytechnic library, Nigeria. The convenience sampling technique was used to select a sample of 200 respondents for the study. A structured questionnaire titled “Perception of Library Users on the Use of ICT Facilities in Abia State Polytechnic Library Questionnaire (PLUUSIFASPLIQ)” was used as an instrument for data collection. Data collected for the study was analyzed using frequency counts and percentages to answer research questions. The findings of the study revealed that users are not satisfied with the adequacy of computers, internet and databases facilities in the library. The findings also revealed observable attitude of librarians towards the use of ICT in rendering services which include lack of interest in providing adequate ICT facilities, poor mastery of ICT facilities in rendering services, inadequate knowledge of appropriate ICT facilities, more comfortability with traditional facilities than ICTs, and lack of strong Library and Information Science background of most library staff. Findings also showed that library users need basic ICT facilities in the library for research purposes, preparing for lecture; preparing for exam; updating knowledge and also for printing, photocopying and scanning documents. Finally, it was recommended that the Abia State Polytechnic should make adequate provision of fund to acquire needed ICT facilities in the library; conduct regular training on library-based ICTs and consider ICT skill as one of the major requirements for recruitment in the library.

Keywords: ICT, ICT facilities, polytechnic, abia state polytechnic library, perception.

1. Introduction

In the present academic environment, Information Communication Technologies have drastically improved the effectiveness of teaching, learning and research in a great measure, and libraries being the highest recipient of the innovation. The decision of selecting appropriate ICT facilities in the library has become vital for regular library routine works and information management. The basic goal of bringing ICT facilities into the libraries is to provide better information and capacity building needed in the development of mankind in the current digital era. Information Communication Technologies have brought significant changes in teaching and learning at all levels of education, especially, in the institution of higher learning. Not only that the library users seek for digital facilities to conduct research, prepare for lectures or exam and printing of documents, they also seek for instructional technologies such as multimedia which serves as a learning tool and knowledge dissemination (Anyim, 2019).

ICT facilities provide the library with facilities to manage explosion of information generated by the modern society. The Information Communication Technologies have also revolutionized the library environment and network domain and made the library virtual in a way data and knowledge can now be communicated to all areas of the globe. In order to be successful and remain relevant, library professionals have to adopt multiple skills in order to survive in the virtual space.

Pedagogy and learning resources have changed since the advent of modern technologies in the institution of higher learning. As many programmes are being introduced in higher

institutions, there is need to diversify ICT facilities and resources to accommodate new changes (Anyim, 2020). ICT is rapidly changing the way information is accessed, librarians are expected to leverage on it and become higher system thinkers with proficiency to work in digital and computer communication environments. Libraries should expand these pursuits, after providing the important training necessary to its staff to secure position in the digital environment and to advance on information delivery to the end users. With the recent wave of information technology in knowledge-based institutions, effective teaching and learning is almost impossible without application of various ICT based instructional resources. In the 21st Century educational environment, Polytechnics are not left out in the drive to apply various ICTs in library services in order to meet the demands of the Information Age (Anyim, 2018).

Aina, Adigun and Ogundipe (2010) defined ICT as computers, telecommunications and microelectronics used for acquisition, storage, retrieval, transfer and dissemination of information to a wider and dispersed audience. Information Communication Technologies make it possible for conversion of information into electronic format which makes it easier for users to access up-to-date information and complete information from different sources with relative speed and convenience (Anyim, 2021).

Information Communication Technologies, according to Janakiraman (2016) help libraries deliver effective services in the following ways: information literacy instruction, quick access to the web-based resources, digital archival and many more. Anyim (2018) states that ICT use in academic library has become an integral part of users' experience. It helps in the provision of instant access to digitized information, electronic information resources and services with the aid of computer or telecommunication technologies. The impact of ICT facilities on library users is unquestioned. ICT has brought significant revolution that makes information access fast and adds value to the research. United Nations Development Programme (2001) refers ICTs as a "powerful enabler of development" because of the significant impact on the economic, scientific, academic, social, political, cultural life of the users. In higher education and human capacity building, there are significant patterns of change because ICTs are impetus for change in traditional concepts of teaching and learning, as well as prime motivation behind the change in scholarly and professional activities. Information and communications technologies (ICTs) have come with disruptions that affect academic services in no small measure. It has become a formidable tool for advancing the quality of education and creating niche for easy access to information and knowledge contents. ICT has brought so much improvements and innovation in teaching, learning and research. With the advancement of ICT in academic library, students and faculty members of the academic institutions are expected to have access to new products and services (Anyim, 2018).

ICT facilities can be used to achieve several information purposes. According to Igwe, (2010) stated that Information and Communication Technology can be utilized for resource sharing among university libraries in Nigeria and through this, users gain access to unlimited information resources. According to Williams and Channaveeraiah (2008), modernization of libraries and information Centers with ICT facilities enable information transfer and access, thereby establishes a network between the library and users. ICT has also made computing easier as many organizations now store their data in cloud technology. Cloud-based technologies facilitate quality service delivery to information seekers. It involves the use of internet connection and browser for on- demand and scalable access to a shared pool of resources hosted in a data Centre at provider's site. Cloud technologies depend on web

computing where shared servers give software infrastructure platform devices and other resources and hosting to clients in order to meet their needs (Anyim, 2019).

Through ICT, libraries subscribe to e-journals, CDROM databases, online databases, web-based resources, and a variety of other electronic resources which are made available for the users. Fourie and Bothma (2006) observe that increased use of the World Wide Web in private, social, business lives of many users is a vital component of the enabling structure for school, university and career institutions.

It has been proved that ICT concentration in the library attract high patronage across the institution. In this sense, the central focus of the library is to employ available technologies capable of solving information needs of the parent institution. The basic ICT facilities to be employed in the library should include computers, Internet, WIFI, OPAC and Databases, library software and reprographic facilities; and these should be functional at all time (Anyim, 2020). Similarly, Yusuf (2005) stressed that, ICT integration for library service provides opportunities for users to communicate with one another more effectively during formal and informal teaching, studying, and learning process. The access to articles in electronic journals offers users searchable databases of contents of e-journals from several publishers, and links to journal site for full text (Chauhan, 2004). E-library in academic institutions generates electronic resources and offer them to users to support their teaching, learning and research activities (Zhang and Liu, 2011). E-resources as a product of Information Communication Technologies are seen by Ternenge and Kashimana (2019) as invaluable research tools for students in higher institution of learning.

ICT facilities such as computers and bandwidth are readily available for browsing the internet and downloading of files while Online Public Access Catalogue is also provided for access to the library resources (Mesagan, Anyim, Ubogu and Echezona, 2017). In this age and time, most of the library operations have been automated using Integrated Library Management System which provides modules for cataloging, catalog (Online Public Access Catalogue), patron management, circulation, fines management, acquisition, use of barcodes, and bar code reader, management reports, and many other tools. (Anyim and Ngwuchukwu, 2019). Several ICT software have enabled the library handle numerous tasks. They have added values to the management and dissemination of library resources. Example of Integrated Library System include KOHA, Evergreen, Eprint, Evergreen, Greenstone, Verso, Apollo ILS, Polaris, Library World, EOS.Web, LibLimeKoha, LIBERO, Book Collector, Alexandria, Mandarin M5, and Bibliotheca.

Users utilize ICT facilities in the Polytechnic libraries for different purposes. For instance, electronic resources are mostly used for conducting personal research and academic research in form of thesis, dissertation and project writing (Obaje and Camble, 2008). Other researchers also identified other uses of ICT facilities in the library to include study or knowledge update, teaching preparation and others. Kumar and Kumar (2008) opined that ICT resources are used for purposes such as study, teaching, printing, documentation and project work.

Several challenges were reported to have associated with the utilization ICT products and services in the library. Uzoagba (2019) identifies lack of good infrastructure in terms of epileptic power supply in Nigeria or low current which might result in damaging ICT equipment in the libraries. It was also discovered that lack of adequate bandwidth size (for effective internet connectivity) and appropriate anti-virus and other necessary software in academic libraries poses serious threat to ICT use in the library (Ukoha, 2011). From the

human resources point of view, Abiolu and Okere (2009) opined that lack of human capacity in the management of the ICT facilities in the libraries is a huge constraint. Abiolu and Okere also mentioned that inadequate skills of human resources, inadequate finance, power supply, system law, ICT literacy and inadequate ICTs infrastructure constitute the major challenges affecting adequate utilisation of ICT products and services.

In the light of the above challenges, there must be consequences that these may impose on the library users which may likely be limited access to information. Meanwhile, the student's inability to access information resources is likely to bring about serious negative effects on the quality of education achieved by the institution. It was observed that when basic ICT facilities are not accessible, effective research for the purpose of solving human problems may be limited (Olewonefa and Musa, 2011).

The application of ICT facilities to knowledge management has been slowly adopted in a great number of libraries. This may be as a result of inadequate ICT facilities, lack of fund, inadequate infrastructure or factors other than these. It could also be that Polytechnic libraries do not fund ICT projects. If consideration is not given to libraries to develop ICT facilities and requisite skills of librarians, it would be difficult to meet the information need of users in the 21st Century. It is quite encouraging to see that the call for ICT adoption in Polytechnic libraries in Nigeria is beginning to yield positive result. The example of such development is that of Abia State Polytechnic Aba.

Abia State Polytechnic Library was established by the Abia State Edict No. 8 of 1992. It is located in Aba North Local Government Area, being a commercial hub of Abia State, Nigeria. The library runs a central library system, serving all the faculties at one building space. The Polytechnic has estimated total population of 15000 students and 1300 teaching and non- teaching staff. The library specifically has a total registered library user population of 4,857. Abia State Polytechnic Library has a staff strength of over 40 that render various types of library services to the users. Recently, the library adopted e-library system with about 80 computers, internet connectivity and other ICT facilities.

1.1 Objectives of the Study

The general objective of this study is to examine the perception of users on the use of ICT facilities in Polytechnics in Nigeria. Specifically, the study seeks to:

1. examine the perception of users on the adequacy of basic ICT facilities available in the library
2. determine the perception of users on librarians' attitude in the use of ICT facilities in library services
3. determine the basic use of ICT facilities in the Polytechnic library

1.2 Research Questions

This study was guided by the following research question:

1. what is the perception of users on the adequacy of basic ICT facilities available in the library?
2. what is the perception of users on librarians' attitude toward the use of ICT facilities in library services?
3. what is the basic use of ICT facilities in the Polytechnic library?

2. Methodology

The descriptive survey research design was adopted for the study. The population of this study was 4,857 registered users of the library consisting of staff and students of Abia State Polytechnic for 2020/2021 academic session. A convenience sampling technique was used to select 200 users. Instrument used for data collection was 200 structured questionnaires which were administered to the respondents. Out of 200 copies of questionnaires distributed, only 180 which forms 90% of the selected population was duly completed, returned and used for the study. Data generated from the questionnaire was analysed using frequency counts and percentages.

3. Findings and discussions

The analyzed data is presented in table, followed by presentation and discussion

The Perception of Users on the Adequacy of Basic ICT Facilities

Table 1. Frequency and Percentages of Responses on the Adequacy of Basic ICT Facilities Available in The Library

Item	Satisfied		Not Satisfied	
	Freq.	(%)	Freq.	(%)
Computers	85	47.2%	95	52.8%
Internet	75	41.7%	105	58.3%
Databases	78	43.4%	102	56.6%
Reprographic equipment	118	65.5%	62	34.5%
OPAC	96	53%	84	47%

Table 1 shows the responses of users on the adequacy of basic ICT facilities available in the library. The result reveals that respondents are satisfied with adequacy of reprographic facilities in the library with 118 frequency (65.5%) and OPAC with 96 frequency (53%); while computers, internet and databases were seen as inadequate. This result is in line with Ukoha (2011) who discovered that lack of adequate bandwidth size for effective internet connectivity, computers, appropriate anti-virus and other necessary software in academic libraries poses serious threat to ICT utilization in the library. Nevertheless, Anyim (2020) advises that basic ICT facilities such as computers, Internet, WIFI, OPAC, databases, library software and reprographic facilities should be adequately functional at all time

Perception of users on librarians' attitude in the use of ICT in library services

Table 2. Frequency And Percentages Of Responses on the Librarians' Attitude Toward the Use of ICT in Library Services

S/N	Item	Agree	(%)	Not Agree	(%)
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1	Inadequate knowledge of appropriate ICT facilities	99	55%	81	45%
2	Showing poor mastery of ICT use in library services	101	56.5%	79	43.5%
3	Lack of interest in providing adequate ICT facilities	110	61.1%	70	38.9%
4	Seem to be more comfortable with traditional facilities than ICT	98	54.4%	82	45.6%
5	Lack of strong Library and Information Science background	95	52.7%	85	47.3%

Table 2 shows the responses of users on librarians' attitude toward the use of ICT in library services. The result reveals lack of interest in providing adequate ICT facilities as observable attitude of librarians with the highest frequency of 110 (61.1%); poor mastery of ICT use in library services with frequency of 101 (56.5%). The result shows that 55% of users agreed on the inadequate knowledge of appropriate ICT facilities by librarians; 54% of respondents agreed that librarians seem to be more comfortable with traditional facilities than the ICT; while 52.7% of respondents perceived that the librarians in the polytechnic lack of strong Library and Information Science background. The finding is similar to that of Abiolu and Okere (2009) who discovered that most library staff display lack of capacity in the management of ICT facilities, poor ICT literacy and unfriendly approach to ICTs infrastructure, products and services.

The Basic Use of ICT Facilities in the Polytechnic Library

Table 3. Basic Use of ICT Facilities in the Polytechnic Library

S/N	Item	Agree	(%)	Not Agree	(%)
1	For research	120	66.6%	60	33.4%
2	For updating knowledge	99	55%	81	45%
3	For preparing lecture	118	65.5%	62	34.5%
4	For exam preparation	104	58%	76	42%
5	For printing, photocopying and scanning documents	97	54%	83	46%

Table 3 shows the responses of users on the uses of ICT facilities in library. The result reveals that users utilize basic ICT facilities in the library for research purposes (66.6%); for preparing lecture (65.5%); for exam preparation (104%); for updating knowledge (55%) and also for printing, photocopying and scanning documents (54%). In agreement with the result, Obaje and Camble (2008) discovered that digital resources are mostly used for conducting

personal research and academic research in form of thesis, dissertation and project writing. Similarly, Kumar and Kumar (2008) identified other uses of ICT facilities in the library to include study, knowledge update, teaching preparation, printing and documentation.

4. Conclusion and Recommendations

Based on the result of the study, it was concluded that ICT facilities in the library play prominent role in the study, teaching, learning, research, printing and documentation needs of users in Abia State Polytechnic, Nigeria. As students and faculty require ICT facilities in the library for preparing lectures, exams, updating knowledge and conducting research, the basic ICT facilities, training and skills have become generally necessary in the library and among library staff so that users could be professionally served or assisted to meet their information needs. Polytechnic libraries must continuously advance with up-to-date ICT facilities to make information retrieval and dissemination easier. With adequate ICT facilities, users can easily access information available in the digital formats or in virtual domain across distance and time. Based on findings of the study, the following recommendations were made:

1. ICT skills should be made an important requirement in the recruitment of librarians in the Polytechnic library
2. Libraries should be well funded to be able to acquire needed ICT facilities.
3. Internet access should be made available at low or no cost for both staff and students.
4. Abia State Polytechnic Management should regularly organize useful training courses, seminars and conferences on Library-based ICT applications and competencies.

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