

UTILIZATION OF ICT FACILITIES FOR EFFECTIVE LIBRARY SERVICES IN THE NIGERIAN LAW SCHOOL LIBRARY, BWARI, ABUJA

By

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Abstract

Information communication Technology (ICT) refers to technologies that provide access to information through telecommunications. It covers products that will store, retrieve, manipulate, transmit or receive information electronically in a digital form, examples of such include; personal computers, digital television and robots. On a broader level, this also includes the internet, intranet, email, cell phones, and other communication mediums. This study examined the Utilization of ICT facilities for effective library services, a case study of the Nigerian Law School Library. The study adopted survey research design to gather relevant data for the study. A total of 32 respondent participated in the study. Findings revealed that majority of the staff of the Nigerian Law School library are computer literate including also the students that utilize the library. The findings of the study showed that staff and students who made use of the library possessed good level of computer literacy and skills to use the library. The study recommended that qualified IT skill personnel should be employed to provide constant services and supervision of the operations of ICT facilities and effective maintenance for a better utilization by all patrons of the library. The study concluded that remediation of IT skills, training opportunity for both staff and users should be instituted.

Keyword: *Information Communication Technology; Library; Utilization; Facilities; Effective.*

Introduction

With the emergence of digital age, information and communication technology has become an integral part of any field and has contributed not only to the library system but other types of organization. The medical field, banking system, electronic voting and agriculture have all been enhanced by the adoption of ICT resources. ICT is defined as a comprehensive set of technological tools and resources used to communicate, create, disseminate, store, manage information and promote human activities. These include computers, internet, printer, scanner, photocopying machine, binding and laminating machine, projectors and so on, which are essentials in today's libraries (Agboola and Shaibu, 2019).

Despite the quality of materials in a library, the effective and efficient dissemination and utilization of the information is of utmost importance to any library organization. In the early stages of 20th century, libraries faced problems of how to cater and fulfill the users' demand within the minimum span of time. Their solution was to adopt the ICT based products and services, to deal with the new challenges and increasing demand of users. Libraries started reshaping, redesigning and repackaging their services and information products by integrating ICT based products and services (Parvez, 2011).

The law library in the context of this study is an academic library with mainly collections of legal studies. The classification scheme used in this library is different from the library of congress (LC) and Dewey Decimal Classification scheme (DDC), but it is derived from LC classification scheme and is known as MOYS classification scheme. The traditional law library system made up of the reference section, technical section, readers service section, which are all responsible for carrying out various functions in the library, but the Nigerian law library at Abuja has only two distinct sections; technical service division and reference service sections. The technical service section is responsible for selection of needed materials in the library, stamping, pasting of labels, giving accession numbers. All these processes are executed manually by a library staff in a traditional law library and prone to errors of giving two library materials the same accession number and it also takes a longer time to execute. The work being done in the various sections of this library is usually tedious, exhausting and prone to human error.

Although with the application of ICT into the library system lots of these activities can be made easier, faster, more accurate and even less expensive, thus making library services more effective and utilized.

Statement of problem

Ezekwe, (2019), opined that ICT resources are available in libraries but the utilization of those resources was not equal to the facilities available, owing to the limited work stations and skills available. Libraries have ICT facilities such as computers, scanners, internet services but these facilities are not being utilized to full capacity and hence a major problem that should be addressed to improve library services. The law library in Abuja has various ICT resources which are not appropriately utilized, which has affected the service rendered and is a major problem which the study seeks to examine.

Objectives

The main aim of this study was to critically examine and investigate the utilization of ICT on the effective library services, below are the objectives of the study;

1. To determine the ICT facilities in the library.
2. To determine the level of utilization of the ICT facilities in the library.
3. To determine the level of computer literacy of staff.
4. To determine the challenges of ICT utilization

Literature review

As has been discussed earlier, ICT application can be in various fields and can also be of positive impact in those fields. In library services, information explosion and advancement in technology has brought about the need for ICT in the library.

Osawele and Uzairue (2013) identified ways that ICT has enhanced library services to include.

1. **Online Public Access Catalogue (OPAC):** It is the computer form of library catalogue to access materials in the library.
2. **Storage Capacity:** Digital libraries have the potential to store much more information, since it requires very little space to contain it.

3. **Preservation and Conservation:** An exact copy of the original can be made any number of times without any degradation in quality.

Bhoi (2017) opined that in recent years, increased computing power, improved wireless and user-friendly technology and reduced telecommunication costs have contributed to lowering barriers to information access and exchange. The potential for using more innovative, cost-efficient and user-friendly ICT solutions in education and for reaching all groups of society - including the poor, those in remote areas and other disadvantaged groups has become increasingly feasible in less advanced countries and in more advanced ones. The opportunities for education arising from developments in information communication technologies are very promising.

ICT application to library indeed promises to be effective; however, there are various reasons or factors that oppose the effective utilization of the ICT infrastructure. Numerous factors have been highlighted by different authors as reasons for the challenges of ICT application in libraries, not only in Nigeria but also in other developing countries.

Librarians with access to ICT resources and those who are younger in age and experience are more willing to adapt to the use of ICT resources than others (Fadaie, Nakhoda and Shafaghati, 2013). Adoption of ICT in library services has faced some common challenges such as; insufficient funds to acquire and maintain these resources, operational costs exceeding year by year, inadequate trained staff and fear of loss of employment (Vijayakumar and Sudhi, 2011).

Many libraries possess ICT infrastructures but are unable to fully utilize it due to lack of trained staff among other reasons. Fidelis, (2018) suggested a regular in-house training programme because of the vast evolution of ICT products and services. Libraries should formulate and implement an ICT strategy which would act as a guideline in laying out short and long term skill development programs as well as procurement of ICT infrastructure.

ICT also provides reprographic services, which makes use of reprographic technology to photocopy and reproduce document easily as well as converting printed works to digital formats. It also provides library automation software such as; Kowa and Libsys, which perform library services such as cataloguing, classification, serial management at a faster rate and lower cost (Bhoi, 2017).

Methodology

Descriptive survey was used for the study. The Nigerian Law School library was purposively selected from FCT for the study. The population for the study was the academic librarians of the Nigerian Law School, which were a total of 32 staff. The entire population was adopted for the study, although thirty copies of questionnaire were retrieved. The research instrument used was questionnaire and was administered randomly to the staff during office hours, direct observation was also carried out to obtain data for this study. The questionnaire comprised of three sections; section A for the respondent bio-data, section B contained information on the impact of ICT and its challenges, while section C was concerned with possible solutions to the challenges highlighted in the previous section.

Data Analysis

In order to identify the impact of ICT facilities in libraries, descriptive statistics of tables and percentages were used in analyzing the data collected and to show the questionnaire response rate.

Table 1: Respondent's Qualification

Responses	Frequency	Percent %
B.sc	7	23.3
HND	12	40
OND	10	33.3
NCE	1	3.3
Total	30	99.9

From table 1, it shows that 7 respondents representing 23.3% were B.Sc. certificate holders, 9 respondents representing 30.0% were HND certificate holders, 3 respondents representing 10.0% were OND certificate holders, 1 respondents representing 3.3% was an NCE certificate holder.

Table 2: Respondent's Age

Responses	Frequency	Percent %
20-29 Years	8	26.67
30-39 Years	17	56.67
40 and above	5	16.67
Total	30	100.0

From table 2, 8 respondents representing 26.67% are within the age range of 20-30years, 17 respondents representing 56.67% are within the age range of 30-40years, and 5 respondents representing 16.67% are within the age range of 40-50years.

Table 3: Level of computer literacy

Responses	Frequency	Percent %
Very High	8	26.67
High	15	50.0
Low	6	20.0
Very low	1	3.33
Total	30	100.0

Table 2 above shows that, 8 respondents representing 26.67% were very high, 15 respondents representing 50.0% were high, 6 respondents representing 20.0% were low and 1 respondents representing 3.33% was very low.

Table 4: ICT facilities currently in use in Library

Responses	Frequency	Percent %
Yes	14	46.67
Not Really	8	26.67
No	4	13.33
Not Sure	4	13.33
Total	30	100.0

From table 4 above, 14 responder ed that they were ICT facilities in use in the library, 8 respondents representing 26.67% said not really, 4 respondents representing 13.33% said no ICT facilities are in use and 4 respondents representing 13.33% said not sure of its use.

Table 5: ICT facilities that are available in the Library

ICT facilities	Frequency	Percent %
Computer	6	20.0
Internet connection	3	10.0
Legal database/software	7	23.33
Printers	4	13.33
Scanners	3	10.0
Photocopying machine	7	23.33
Total	30	100.0

From the table 5, 6 respondents representing 20.0% said that computer were available, 3 respondents representing 10.0% said internet connections were available, 7 respondents representing 23.3% said legal database/software were available, 4 respondents representing 13.3% said printers were available and 3 respondents representing 10.0% said scanners were available, 7 respondents representing 23.3% said photocopying machine was available in the library.

Table 6: Functionality of the ICT facilities

Functionality of ICT facilities	Frequency	Percent
Very Functional	11	36.6
Functional	11	36.6
Fairly Functional	6	20.0
Malfunctioned	2	6.6
Total	30	100.0

From table 6 above, 7 respondents representing 36.6.0% said very functional, 11 respondent representing 36.6% said functional, 6 respondents representing 20.0% said fairly functional and 2 respondents representing 6.6% said that the facilities were malfunctioned.

Table 7: Level of its utilization by the users

<i>Responses</i>	<i>Frequency</i>	<i>Percent</i>
Very High	3	10.0
High	9	30.0
Medium	12	40.0
Low	6	20.0
Total	20	100.0

From the table above, 3 respondents representing 10.0% said very high, 9 respondents representing 30.0% said high, 12 respondents representing 40.0% said medium and 6 respondents representing 20.0% said low.

Table 8: Challenges encountered in making use of ICT infrastructure

Responses	Frequency	Percent
i. Insufficient allocation of funds by management	3	10.0
ii. Lack of competent IT personnel	6	30.0
iii. Low computer literacy level	6	30.0
iv. Lack of adequate knowledge of new technology	6	
v. Poor power supply	4	30.0
vi. Lack of adequate maintenance	5	
Total	30	100.0

Table 7 above reveals 2 respondents representing 10.0% said that all the challenges listed above were present, 6 respondents representing 30.0% said that challenge i, ii, v, vi are encountered, 6 responses representing 30.0% said challenge i, ii, v are encountered and 6 other responses representing 30.0% said that challenge v, vi are encountered in the use of ICT in the library.

5. Discussion

Based on the analysis above, the findings revealed that majority of the staff of the Nigerian Law School library are computer literate so also are the students that patronize the library. It was also discovered that the staff made use of the library and have a very good computer literacy level.

Further findings disclosed that currently they are ICT facilities in the library which includes; computers, internet connection, legal database/ software, printers, scanners and photocopying machines, and the level of utilization by users is of an average rate because of inconsistency of network by service providers, lack of trained information technologist and poor maintenance.

Also, some of the challenges encountered in making use of ICT infrastructure entails the following; Insufficient allocation of fund by the management, lack of competent IT personnel, poor power supply and lack of adequate maintenance. Thus, it was suggested that to change the situation, there should be establishment and strict adherence to policy by management on acquisition and usage of ICT infrastructures, increase funding, ICT training for library staff and sponsoring on further training of staff on ICT courses.

Conclusion

This study was carried out to analyze the Utilization of ICT facilities for effective library services using the Library of the Nigerian Law School, Bwari, Abuja as a case study, it was discovered that there is presence of ICT facilities in the law school library and that more than half of the library staff are computer literate. The utilization of the facilities is on an average rate and there were also challenges facing its optimum utilization in the library; such as funding, training, power supply.

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