The Role of Information and Communication Technology (ICT) in the Provision of Library Services in Akwa Ibom State E–Library, Nigeria

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Abstract

This research work is on the role of information and communication Technology (ICT) in the provision of library services in Akwa Ibom State e–library. Survey research design was adopted for the study. The population of the study was made up of 73 staff working in the Akwa Ibom State e-library. A total of 60 respondents were selected from the population as the sample for the study. The major instrument used for collection of data was the questionnaire designed by the researchers. The data collected were analysed using simple percentages. Results of analysis showed that: the Akwa Ibom State library Uyo makes use of information and communication technologies ; there is fund allocation for the use of ICT in the library; there is no internal fund raising mechanism for the development of ICT in the library; there is digital literacy program for the library. Based on the findings, it was recommended among others that: financial support should be granted by government/public library management, charity organizations/corporate bodies to public libraries so as to foster the role of ICTs in the provision of adequate library services; an internal fund raising mechanism should be introduced for the maintenance of ICT equipment in the library.

Keywords: Role of ICT, Provision, li Services, E–Library

Introduction

Information revolution started a number of years ago and the impact all over the world has been tremendous. Information revolution has brought about convergence of information and communication technologies (ICTs) which have remained at the nucleus of global social and economic transformation (Ajayi 2004).

Governments worldwide have recognized the role that information and communication technologies (ICTs) could play in socio-economic development. As information procurement and dissemination organizations and libraries all over the world have found themselves right in the middle of the ICT driven 'global village' and in order to play active roles in the 'global village', public libraries have no other choice than to boost their effectiveness.

Libraries are becoming more aware that in order to play roles in fostering access to development as the basis for the socio-economic development of their countries, they need to exploit ICTs to improve the range and quality of service to their clientele (Ajibola & Tiamiyu 2000).

The role of ICT in the provision of services to public libraries in Nigeria did not come overnight. Libraries existed for many centuries without using ICTs. But as technology emerged in the world at large, e-library embraced these tools as a means to avoid some of the menial task inherent in managing large collections. Online catalogues provide additional searching possibilities. Such systems help in communicating with one another about which books are held in the libraries and the use of computer to borrow various inter-library loan systems. The library can be transformed into a new information service unit providing electronic cataloguing, electronic acquisition and serials controls and electronic circulation functions and reference services. But it must be realized that most public libraries in Nigeria are yet to adopt modern ICTs. However, because of the imperativeness of integrating ICT in public library functions, Nigeria public libraries must seize this opportunity. Although, it seems impossible presently because of the problems and inadequate facilities playing the nation and the public libraries.

Statement Of Problem

We are in an information age, the dawn of a new era where information flows before the use with promise of new ways of thinking, living and working through the use of ICTs and other information technologies. Unfortunately, despite the benefits and potentials of ICTs in e-library, the researchers have observed that Nigerian public libraries are still far from integration and equipping the invaluable resources of ICT facilities in the reference services. Most e-libraries in Nigeria have not embraced these modern technologies in their services. They still resort to the manual services, and process of storing and retrieving information which is faced with a number of problems that have brought frustration on the public libraries reference services to the users. This frustration includes difficulties in having access to information, time wastage in searching for information among others.

Purpose Of The Study

The purpose of this study was;
1. To ascertain the information communication technology (ICT) infrastructure available in Akwa Ibom State e-library.
2. To determine if there is proper funding of information communication technology (ICT) to facilitate the provision of services in Akwa Ibom State e-library.
3. To find out the nature of training given to Akwa Ibom State e-library staff on information communication technology (ICT).
4. To determine the problem/factors militating against the use of information communications Technology in the provision of reference services in Akwa Ibom State e-library.

Research Methodology

The survey research design was adopted for this study. This study was conducted in Uyo local government area of Akwa Ibom State, Nigeria. The population of this study was made up of 100 staff working in the Akwa Ibom State e-library. A total of 60 respondents were selected from the population as the sample for this study. The major instrument used for

collection of data was the questionnaire designed by the researchers. The validity and reliability of the instrument were properly ascertained.

Results And Findings

Table 1

Sex Respondents

Sex	Frequency	Percentage %
Male	37	61.67
Female	23	38.33
Total	**60**	**100**

From the above data presented in table 1 shows that 37 (61.67%) of the respondents are male while 23 (38.33%) of the respondents are female.

Table 2

Age Range

Range	Frequency	Percentage %
25-30	13	21.67
31-35	10	16.67
36-40	7	11.67
41-49	10	16.67
50 and above	20	33.33
Total	**60**	**100**

As revealed in table 2 above, it shows that 13 (21.67%) of the respondents were between the ages of 25-30, 10 (16.67%) were between the ages of 31-35,7 (11.67%) were between the ages of 36-40, while 10 (16.67%) of the respondents were between the ages of 41-49 and 20 (33.33%) were between the age of 50 and above.

TYPES OF ICT INFRASTRUCTURE USED IN E LIBRARY

Table 3

Do You Use ICT in your Library?

Option	Frequency	Percentage %
Yes	60	100
No	-	-
Total	**60**	**100**

The above table 3 shows that 60 (100%) of the respondents agreed that ICTs are been used in the library while none rejected the fact. This is to say that the library use ICT in their operation on their daily activities.

Table 4

What ICTs are Available?

Types	Frequency	Percentage %
Fax	-	-
Email	4	5.26
Internet	9	11.84
Mobile phone	60	78.95

Voice-mail	3	3.95
Total	**76**	**100**

Table 4 above shows that 4 (5.26%) accepts that Email is used, 9 (11.84%) of the respondents agreed that internet is used in the library, while 60 (78.95%) of the respondents says that mobile phone is used in the library and 3 (3.95%) say that voice mail is used. The rate of respondents shows that mobile phone is more available in the library even though other ICT are available.

Table 5
Are these ICT equipment reliable?

Option	Frequency	Percentage %
Yes	40	66.67
No	20	33.33
Total	**60**	**100**

This table 5 shows that 40 (66.67%) says that ICT equipment are reliable while 20 (33.33%) said that ICT equipment are not reliable.

Table 6
Does your library have adequate ICT infrastructure?

Option	Frequency	Percentage %
Yes	-	-
No	60	100
Total	**60**	**100**

Table 6 shows that 60 (100%) of the respondents said that there are no adequate ICT infrastructure in the library.

Table 7
Is there any allocation of fund for ICTs?

Option	Frequency	Percentage %
Yes	40	66.67
No	20	33.33
Total	**60**	**100**

Table 7 shows that 40 (66.67%) of the respondents said that there is fund allocation for the use of ICT while 20 (33.33%) of the respondents said that there is no fund allocation the rate of the respondent shows that there is allocation for ICT in the library.

Table 8
Does the library have special budget for ICT maintenance?

Option	Frequency	Percentage %
Yes	23	38.33
No	37	61.67
Total	**60**	**100**

From the respondent in table 8 it is observed that 23 (38.33%) of the respondents said that the library has a special budget for the maintenance of ICT, while 37 (61.67%) of the respondents said that there is no special budget for the maintenance of ICT in the library.

Table 9
Is the fund allocated for the maintenance of ICT in the
library actually used for this purpose.

Option	Frequency	Percentage %
Yes	20	33.33
No	40	66.67
Total	**60**	**100**

Table 9 above reveals that 20 (33.33%) respondents are of the opinion that fund allocated for the maintenance of ICT in the library is not used for its purpose.

Table 10
Is there general training on the use of ICT in the provision of reference services?

Option	Frequency	Percentage %
Yes	35	58.34
No	25	41.67
Total	**60**	**100**

From the respondents. In table 10, it is observed that 35 (58.34%) of the respondents said that they have undergone general trainings on the use of ICT in the provision of reference service while 25 (41.67%) of the respondents said that they have not receive any training on the use of ICT in the provision of reference services.

Table 11
Have you received training on the use of ICT in the provision of reference service.

Option	Frequency	Percentage %
Yes	50	83.33
No	10	16.67
Total	**60**	**100**

Table 11 shows that 50 (83.33%) of the respondents said that there have received training on the use of ICT in the provision of reference service while 10 (16.67%) of the respondents said that there is no training on the use of ICT in the provision of reference serve the rate of the respondent shows that there is training on the use of ICT in the provision of reference service.

Table 12
Have you receive training on how to browse using the internet?

Options	Frequency	Percentage %
Yes	40	66.67
No	20	33.34
Total	**60**	**100**

Table 12 reveals that 40 (66.67%) of the respondent have receive training on how to browse the internet while 20 (33.34%) of the respondents said they have not receive training on how to browse using the internet.

Table 13
Does you library access databases of other libraries online?

Options	Frequency	Percentage %
Yes	50	83.34
No	10	16.67
Total	**60**	**100**

Table 13 shows that 50 (83.34%) of the respondents said that the access data bases of other libraries online white 10 (16.67%) said that they do not access databases of other libraries online.

Table 14
Does poor network often times affect the smooth use of ICT in the
provision of services?

Options	Frequency	Percentage %
Yes	34	56.67
No	26	43.34
Total	**60**	**100**

Table 14 shows that 34 (56.67%) of the respondents says that poor network often times affect the smooth use of ICT in the provision and use of reference services while 26 (43.44%) said that poor network does not affect the smooth use of ICT in the provision and use of reference service.

Table 15
Does electricity interrupt efficient use of ICT in the provision of reference service.

Options	Frequency	Percentage %
Yes	44	73.33
No	16	26.66
Total	**60**	**100**

Table 15 Shows that 44 (73.33%) of the respondent said that electricity interrupt efficient use of ICT in the provision of reference service while 16 (26.66%) said electricity does not interrupt efficient use of ICT in the provision of reference services.

Table 16
High cost in running an e – library is a setback.

Options	Frequency	Percentage %
Yes	38	63.33
No	22	36.66
Total	**60**	**100**

Table 16 shows that 38 (63.33%) of the respondent said that high cost in running an e-library is a setback, while 22 (36.66) said that high cost in running an e-library is not a setback in the provision of reference service.

Table 17
Do your library users have inadequate knowledge on the use of ICT?

Options	Frequency	Percentage %
Yes	43	71.66
No	17	28.33
Total	**60**	**100**

Table 17 reveals that 43 (71.60%) of the respondents testify that their library has inadequate knowledge on the use of ICT by users while 17 (28.33%) of the respondent said that their library has adequate knowledge on the use of ICT by users.

Discussion Of Findings

From the analysis it was revealed that the Akwa Ibom State library Uyo makes use of Information and Communication Technologies as 60 (100%) of the respondents confirmed computer internet and mobile phone were also available. It was also discovered that these ICT infrastructures are reliable since 40 (66.67%) said so, but not adequate as indicated by 60 (100%) of the respondents.

The analysis also revealed that there is fund allocation for the use of ICT in the library as indicated by 40 (66.67%) of the respondents. It also revealed that the special trend budget for ICT is not used for its purpose as indicated by 40 (66.67%) of the respondents.

The analysis revealed that there is no internal fund raising mechanism (i.e no collecting of money from the users) for the development of ICT in the library as said by 40 (66.67%).

It was discovered that there is digital literacy program for the library staff as attested to by 42 (69.57%) of the respondent and it's been organized by the library management. It also revealed that 50 (83.33%) of the staff have undergone training in the use of ICT while 10 (16.67%) of the staff are yet to number go training in ICT use, which was organized by the library management.

Table 18
Do you received training on daily bases on the use of internet.

Options	Frequency	Percentage %
Yes	40	66.67
No	20	33.34
Total	**60**	**100**

Table 20 shows that 40 (66.67%) says that the received training on daily bases while 20 (33.34%) said that they do not received training on daily bases. The rate of the respondent shows that there is training on daily bases.

Conclusion

Conclusively, e-library in Nigeria suffer from inadequacy of infrastructures, lack of proper management of ICT infrastructure, failure to use allocated fund for its budget, lack of digital literacy/user education for its users. It was discovered that the role of ICTs in the provision of reference services in public libraries will improve the services and operations of the reference section to the users. Meanwhile, the integration of ICTs in the public libraries functions is still at a snail speed.

Recommendations

In other to avert the pit falls contributing to the liability of Nigerian e-libraries to integrate fully into ICTs functions and role in the provision of reference service the following recommendations were made.

1) Financial support should be granted by government/public library management, charity organizations/corporate bodies to public libraries so as to foster the role of ICTs in the provision of adequate reference service. An internal fund raising mechanism should be introduced for the maintenance of ICT equipment in the library.
2) Digital literacy/user education program should be fully integrated into library services.
3) Sophisticated and modern ICT equipment should be made available to libraries by the Federal and States governments.

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