

Attitude of Professional Librarians towards the Use of Information and Communication Technology (ICT) In Delta State University Library

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ABSTRACT

The rapid development of information and communication technology (ICT) and related technologies during the last few decades has made significant impact in transforming many aspects of library administration in general and librarian attitude in particular. Basically, the changes in ICT provide both opportunities and threats to librarians in university libraries. Hence Professional Librarians expected to embrace ICT have reacted in a variety of ways to the introduction of ICT which should, by this stage, be transforming librarian attitudes and library services in general. This survey study examined the attitude of professional librarians to the use of ICT in Delta State university library. It present and analyses survey data on competence levels in a range of ICT skills required, ICT facilities mostly used, choice of scholarly publication and level of anxiety and enthusiasm professional librarians had toward the use of ICT in their library.

Keywords: Information, Communication, Technology, University Professional and, Librarian

Introduction

In recent times academic librarians have experienced major changes in the creation, dissemination, and presentation of knowledge, through changing social, philosophical and educational paradigms, and the emergence of new technologies. Cullen and Chawner (2009) opined that academic librarians have shown themselves to be adopted at adjusting to these changes, and been proactive in advancing research, scholarship and knowledge. In fact professional librarians must take an active part in this development and offer new services in order to fulfil their roles as information providers.

The Delta State government has a policy to support the university in ICT development, though the support has been slower in coming to Delta state university library,

its benefits are beginning to be felt in the development of administrative and teaching infrastructures. In addition the university authority has also put measures in place to ensure that the library is ICT driven. Beside implementation of ICT in the library depends largely on the attitudes of professional librarians to its usage. Therefore, the purposes of this research were to study the professional librarians in the university library, in regard to their attitudes to the use of ICT. The research sought to compare their basic ICT attitudes by factors of sex, qualifications, ICT devices mostly used, computer competency, and barriers to the use of these technologies and also to ascertain if ICT have influenced service delivery and other academic work.

The mission of the academic library is to provide a network of information for its immediate community (students, lecturer, researchers, management and other privilege users). University libraries are expected to produce world class information base which can be made possible only through world class library systems, characterised by the availability of world class ICT facilities and above all, world class professional librarians to disseminate knowledge, conduct research, publish the outcome and administer the library properly.

Therefore, professional librarians are expected to be skilled in using computers networking, the internet and all other related technologies to fulfil their professional obligations. The university libraries and librarians in general have learned that the information highway is so vast and that the web can offer a wider body of knowledge than what the physical library and textbook can provide. Ogunsola (2004) lends credence to this when he observed that digital library would offer facilities for online access to an open ocean of academic information by higher education institutions in Nigeria and the world in general. The use of ICT tools such as e-mail, fax, computer, and video-conferencing overcomes barriers of space and time, and opens new possibilities for learning.

While the use of ICT across university libraries has been established, integration into the university libraries system has been slow in Nigeria university libraries. This could be traced to poor funding of university libraries, poor attitude towards the deployment of ICTs in library operations, shortages of manpower, weak national information infrastructures, erratic power supply, poor library policies, and negative attitudes of university authorities toward library development and a host of others. A cursory glance at the above problems will indicate that all stakeholders in the university systems have a major role to play in this dispensation. Hence, Ejedafiru, (2010) opined that building ICT infrastructures in Nigeria universities should be seen as a 21st century necessity rather than optional directive to foster-

economic growth. It is in this regard that NUC have been emphasizing that technology should play a leading role in molding our universities activities and their libraries.

Besides, Nigerian University Commission (NUC) is in the process of implementing the ICT solutions project which will transform into the Nigeria Research and Education Network. This will do the following.

1. Interconnect all the universities on UPN using existing fibre optic cable laid by the private sector.
2. Provide each university with a minimum of STM – 1 connection, giving than access to at least 155MB bandwidth.
3. Comprehensive capacity building in state of the art ICT technologies.
4. Provision of alternative solutions to power the ICT centres.
5. Access to state of the art content that will enhance research and which ultimately bring the universities at par with their peers worldwide (Okojie, 2011).

Literature Review

It is a truism that the introduction of information and communication Technology (ICT) is causing series of disturbances between the professional librarians and libraries in general as older technologies and systems are displaced by new ones. The university services particularly require the use of ICT to provide effective and excellent services. In an information economy, the drivers of economic growth would be the ICT infrastructure. Hence, university libraries in Nigeria are caught in a vicious cycle-lack of ICT infrastructures which automatically reduces the demand for communication services, which further constrains future investment in the infrastructure. Though another source of threat is that ICT provide opportunity for a technology driven library to bypass the traditional print library. Corroborating this Dilek-kayaoglu (2008) in a research on use of electronic journals by faculty members at Istanbul University, revealed that majority of respondents supported the transition from print to electronic resources. The truth is that literatures have shown that both complement each other.

The acceptance of the ICT by professional librarians is a factor that is crucial to the realization of the mission of the university library. The successful utilization of technologies in university libraries depends mainly on the librarians attitudes toward these tools. A review of the psychological literature reveals diverse definition of attitude. Yusuf (2005) defined attitude as an individual perception and reactions to task which is expected to be carried out

or executed in a group, institution, school setting or an organization. Attitude can be said to be positive or high when individual response to the task or program is favorable and when they show commitment to their duties. Attitude is defined as an implicit, drive-producing response consider socially significant in the individual's society. This definition states, in effect, that from the psychological point of view, attitude is an implicit response with drive strength which occurs within the individual as a reaction to stimulus patterns and which affects subsequent overt responses.

Attitude has been used to represent perceptions of librarian on the value attached to ICT in libraries services. Adeekule, Omoba and Tella (2007) reported the research work of Klausmeir and Godwin which state that attitude is a learned emotionally toned disposition to react in a consistent way favorable or unfavorable towards a person, object or idea. Attitude affects behavior and must be considered in managing staff, especially during change and innovation (Spacey, Gilding and Marray, 2004). For instance, Janes (2002) established that reference librarians with digital reference experience had more positive attitudes than those who had no experience.

Objective of the study

The main objective of the study is to explore the attitudes of the professional librarians towards the use of ICT in Delta State University library. The specific objectives of the study were:

- i) To know the various ICT devices mostly used by professional librarian.
- ii) To know the ICT capability of the professional librarians
- iii) To assess the current status of the state of the art on ICT facilities in Delta State University library.
- iv) To ascertain the specific factors that tend to promote positive attitude of professional librarians toward the use of ICTs and their attitudes towards adopting the technology.
- v) To ascertain the barriers to ICT use by professional librarians.

Methodology

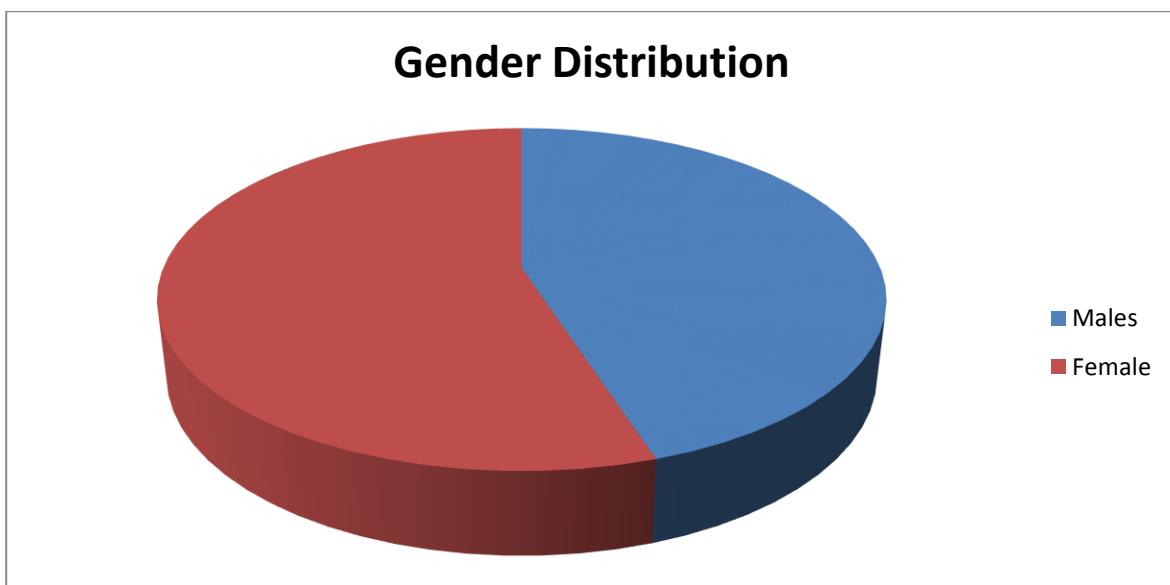
A structured questionnaire was developed for the purpose of data collection and questionnaires were distributed personally among the professional librarians of the Delta State university library. While designing the questionnaire due care was given to make it comprehensive by including all essential components without sacrificing the objectivity of

the study. Frequency counts and percentages were used to analyze the data generated. A total of 20 copies of questionnaire were distributed to the 20 professional librarians of Delta State university library. However, para-professional and non- professional staff of the library were excluded from the survey.

Results and Discussion

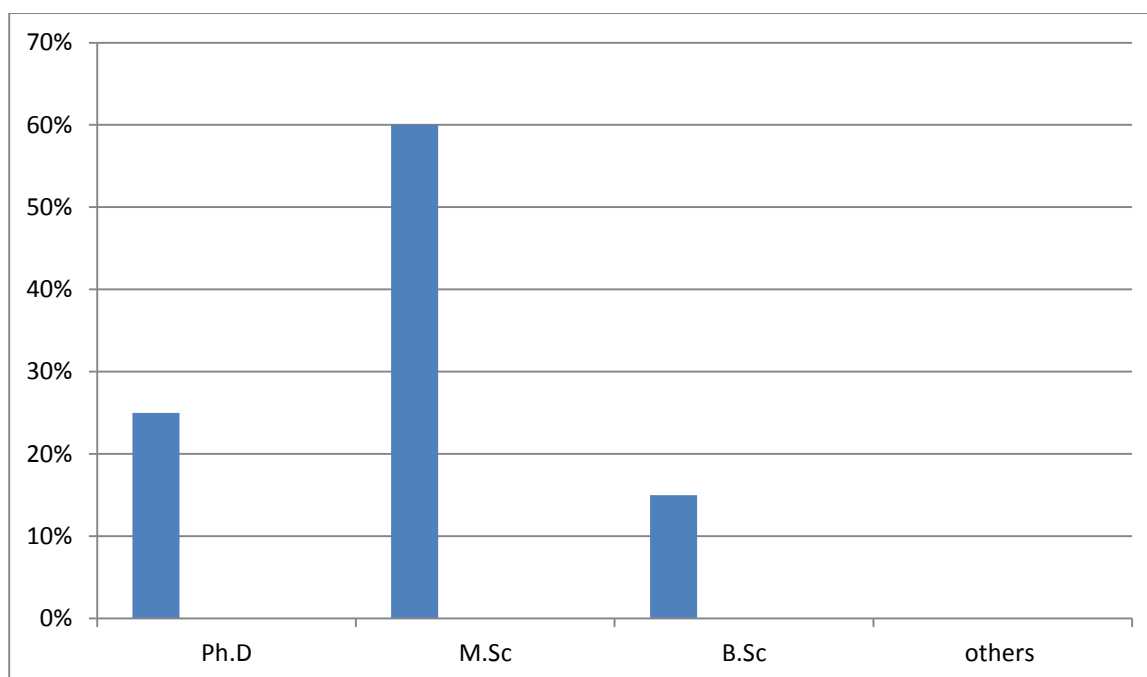
The outcome of the study has been presented in the following tables and diagrams with their interpretation:

Table1:Gender Distribution of Respondents



. The table above shows that 11 respondents representing 55% were females while the remaining 9 representing 45% were males. This means that the females were the highest respondents used.

Table 2: Qualifications of respondents



In recent years higher qualifications have been demanded of professional librarians in the workplace, the importance of professional education is increasing worldwide. In Nigeria training modes for professional librarians are basically provided in different programmes ranging from first degree and its equivalent, M Sc and PhD. Those with M Sc. ranked highest, followed by respondents with PhD as their maximum qualification. It was also observed that more than 90% of those with Msc certificates are undergoing PhD programmes in different universities within and outside the country. With this changing scenario, modern librarianship has become a profession, with a diversity of opportunities and challenges for professional librarians. Hence, it becomes a necessity for professionals to acquire new skills through acquisition of higher qualifications in other for them to be relevant in this 21st century.

Table 3: ICT devices mostly used by respondents

Devices	Frequency	Percentage
Audio Tape Players	4	20
Audio Tapes	2	10
Computer	14	70
E-mail	16	80
LAN	3	15

Laptops	15	75
MAN	nill	0
Photocopies	13	65
Printers	12	60
Projector	3	15
Satellite Dish	nill	0
Scanners	8	40
Slide	4	20
Telephon landline	nill	0
Telephone Network	2	10
Video Tapes	6	30
Video Tapes Players	4	20
VSAT Proxy Server	nill	0
WAN	nill	0
Website	4	20

The responses in Table 3 showed that e-mail (80%), laptops (75%) and computers (70%) were mostly used by professional librarians at Delta State University library. The table also showed that photocopiers and printers are next respectively in ranking of mostly used ICT devices. It is important to observe here that professional librarians found these technologies useful because they provide convenient, timely, non disruptive and inexpensive mechanism for communication with their colleagues throughout the world.

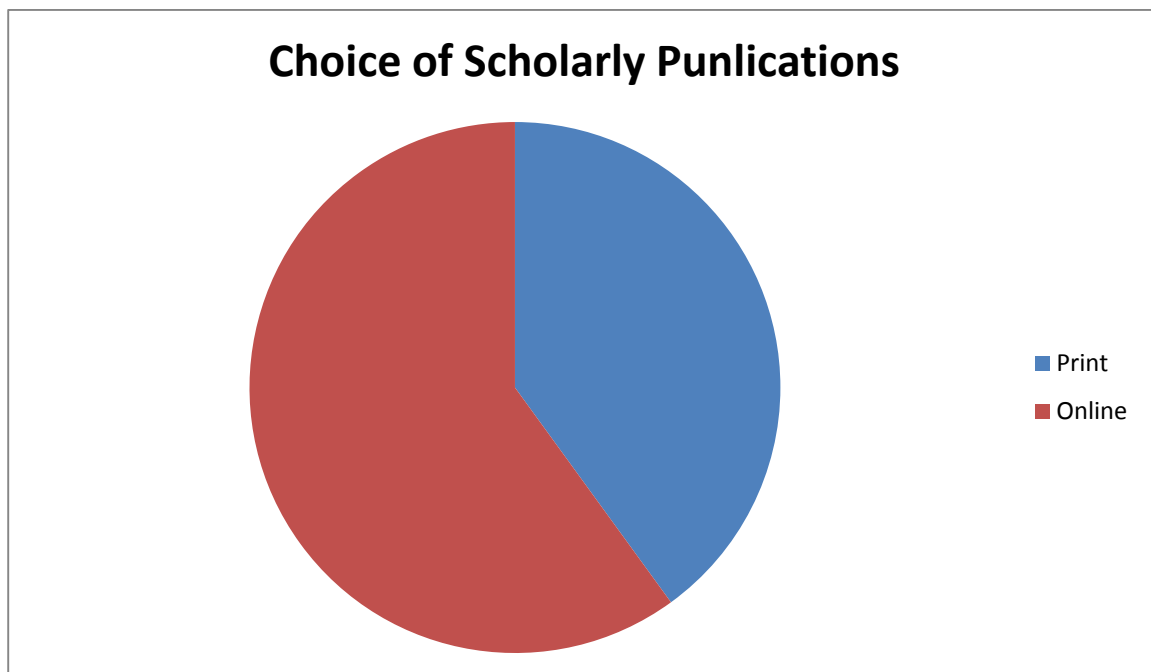
Table 4: Competence level of professional librarians in ICT skills

Variables	Frequency	Percentage
Ability to use online databases effectively	10	50%
Ability to operate computer effectively	17	85%
Ability to use www search engines	14	70%

Acquisition of internet skills	15	75%
Effective and efficient use of electronic journals	12	60%
Effective use of video confirming	2	10
Using online information for research	16	80%

From the table ICT competence level of respondents are not in doubt, hence 85% of respondents claimed that they can operate computer effectively, while 80% and 75% said they use online information for research and are capable of using www search engines respectively. This positive competence level could be trace to the fact that contemporary university library services provision is highly influenced and predominated by the dynamics of ICT devices which are enormous. Hence, Obiora, Okeke & Ejedafiru (2013) opined that networked information services are gradually becoming the most likely use services in university libraries.

Table 5: Choice of Scholarly Publications by Respondent



From the table 60% of the respondents opted for online publication for their research output. Technology has eased word processing and facilitated the speedy production of such texts. Hence professional librarians in Delta state university library tend to develop positive attitude

towards online scholarly publication. Many e-journals have not been subject to rigours of peer review and thorough copy-editing. Though, one is aware that peer review does not always guarantee fairness or quality.

Table 6: Barriers to the Use of ICTs by Respondents

Barriers	Frequency	Percentage
Inability to keep track with ICT innovations	5	25
Inadequate funds	20	100
Inadequate ICT facilities	13	65
insufficient ICT skills	10	50
Insufficient power supply	11	55
Limited access to computer terminals	16	80
Negative attitude of management to ICT	8	40
Nonchalant attitude professional library toward ICT innovations	7	35

From the table, 100% of the respondents see inadequate funding as the major barrier to use of ICT in their university library. In their study Obiora, Okeke, Ejedafiru (2013) opined that university libraries in Nigeria have been submerged by the financial challenges of electronic resources. The poor funding has serious effects on the attitude of professional librarians on the use of ICT. While limited access to computer terminals (80%) and inadequate ICT facilities (65%) were next respectively. These inadequate funding and limited access to certain ICT tools suggest that some of the uses may either be poor or slow which can automatically leads to negative attitude on the part of the professional librarians if proper care is not taken to address the anomalies.

The level to which ICT devices are put to use by professional librarians in Delta state university library may largely depend on the librarian expertise, perception, availability, access and skills. In collaboration with this study, several researchers had earlier identified various challenges to the effective use of ICT in library operations in Nigeria. Nwalo, (2000), Elisha, (2006), Ahiazu, (2006), Behera and Singh (2011), identified various challenges militating against the effective use of ICTs in academic libraries. These include lack of ICT skills, financial constraints, problem of coping with incessant upgrade, etc.

It is clear from this study that, though professional librarians appreciate the importance of ICT as a tool to transform the library in all ramifications; the declining financial resources, inadequate ICT facilities coupled with incessant innovations in ICT constitute a stumbling block to a positive attitude towards the use of ICT. In their study, Sax, Astin, Korn, & Gilmartin (1999) observed that ‘two thirds of United States’ college faculty members reported that keeping up with information technology (IT) was stressful for them. Therefore, the position of professional librarians in Delta State University library cannot be an exception.

Conclusion

The study reveals that professional librarians in Delta State university library paid a warm welcome to ICT and its related technologies. Their attitude was positive towards ICTs for library services and personal development. It was discovered that gender and qualification of respondents had no effect on the strength of their attitude towards ICT. However, frequency of use, level of perceived skills and training in the use of ICT had strong impact on the extent of participant attitude.

The participants of this study were only professional librarians who because of their experience and training in the field of academic librarianship were more ICT compliance. The rest para-professional and non-professional librarians were not studied. Bearing in mind that the findings of this study, measures should be taken to provide ICT facilities to all librarians irrespective of status or types of libraries they find themselves. There is a general consensus that positive attitude towards ICT use will definitely enhance efficiency and quality of services they render and also enhance their personal development.

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