

INFORMATION AND COMMUNICATION TECHNOLOGIES (ICTS) AWARENE AND USE BY ACADEMIC STAFF OF TERTIARY INSTITUTIONS IN IMO STATE

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ABSTRACT

This work examines the awareness and Use of Information and Communication Techno (ICT) by academic staff of tertiary institutions in Imo State with a view to ascertaining frequency of use and specific areas of use, among others. Survey design was adopted using questionnaire to collect data from 1200 lecturers out of which 1000 (83%) of the lecturers returned their questionnaire. The data collected reveals that awareness of information communication technology (ICT) amongst academic staff of tertiary institutions in Imo 5 were high. (100%) in computer, electronic mails (e-mail), browsing and cellular phone (mobile) communication; but low in On-line Public Access Catalog (OPAC); Compact Disc, Read Only Memory (CD-ROM); Tele-facsimile; Micro-form and New Media Resource. Similarly the level of use. i.e. practical applicability was correspondingly high in cell-phone (mobile) communication, e-mail, browsing and Computer application; while relatively I OPAC. CD-ROM. Tele-facsimile, Micro-form and the New Media Resource. Impediments to awareness were identified to include insufficient availability of ICT facilities like Computers, Internet Centres. While impediments to use include lack of expertise/training, non-availability, epileptic power supply, and high service charge. The study recommends an ICT friendly and conducive environment as a bed rock for creating awareness and use of ICT by academics in the tertiary institutions.

Introduction

The increasing rate of development in the field of information and communication technology (ICT) has impacted positively on nearly every facet of human endeavours especially the education sector. It has broadened the scope of information, thus making it possible for scientists, teachers, researchers and students to access information from non-traditional sources other than the library, archival and documentation centres.

In the present age, it is generally agreed that information is the communication of knowledge and that the possession of requisite knowledge itself is power. Therefore, the essence of information and communication technology (ICT) lies in its power to help individuals and societies achieve greater access to knowledge and ideas that would move humanity forward. Tertiary institutions being citadel of learning are expected to provide the much needed infrastructure for the transformation of human ingenuity. Therefore, the academic staff being agents of transformation is greatly challenged to avail herself of opportunities offered by the use of information and communication technologies (ICTs) in order to advance this great task. In the emerging scenario, emphasis is no longer on the traditional providers or purveyors of information like the libraries and information/documentation centres alone but on other information service providers hence there is a shift from 'collection to access'.

In Nigeria, we are now faced more than ever with a situation where all universities and other institutions of higher education are having to redefine their tasks. They all need to develop an expansion of high learning opportunities such as could be provided by the use of ICT. Academics and lecturers particularly those in tertiary institutions have a tremendous vole to play in shaping the society through adequate and timely information. Jolly (1978) buttressed this when he said that it is not the importance of man's contribution to knowledge that gives his teaching a time quality, but the experience of personal participation in the act of discovery. This assertion, he says, is true of teaching as well as learning. He concluded that inspite of the important role academics play in the realization

of the goals of the university or tertiary education, academics in too many institutions of higher learning exist in glorious but frustrating isolation. The frustrating isolation", here I believe could not be any other than the lack of awareness and use of ICT as a veritable tool in search of relevant and timely information. Oketunji (2001) supports this view and went further to make recommendations for the way forward. He agreed and stressed the need for academics to reappraise their service delivery capabilities by ensuring that they respond adequately to awareness and use of information and communication technologies (ICTs). For academics to realize their objective in this scientific age, they must endeavour to acquaint themselves with the knowledge (awareness) and practical use of various types of information and communication technology (ICT)

LITERATURE REVIEW

While many see the terms (IT) and (ICT) as one and hence use them interchangeably, others see them as different and distinct concepts. According to the American Library Association (1983). Information Technology (IT) is the application of computers and other technologies to the acquisition, organization, storage, retrieval and dissemination of information". In this sense, IT is not limited to one type of technology, rather it applies to the various technologies used by information managers to carry out their services. Whereas Information and Communication Technology (ICT) can be defined as the type of technology that links the computer to the global telecommunications network to make it possible for users to acquire, process, compare, store and disseminate oral, printed and pictorial information. In effect, ICT embraces all the technologies that enable the handling of information and facilitate different forms of communication between man and electronic systems, and among diverse electronic systems such as radio IV, cellular phones, computer networks and satellite systems (Ormes and Depsey. 1997).

It is therefore expected that the awareness of the availability of these ICT facilities and their use by academic staff will enhance the communication of knowledge and improvement in academic activities.

The utilization of information and communication technology in Nigeria's tertiary institutions are still at its infancy. As reported by Asamoah-Hansan (2002), only very few academic institutions in Nigeria are equipped with the services of full-blown information and communication technology (ICT).

Madu and Adeniran (2005) traced the problem of ICT utilization in higher institutions in Nigeria to the problem of developing countries. Oketunji (1999) summarized the problem of ICT utilization in tertiary institutions in Nigeria to include:

- ❖ General inadequacy in the level of relevant infrastructure
- ❖ A largely exploitative local computer market and unsatisfactory after sales maintenance and support
- ❖ An inadequate pool of relevant technical staff and problem of their recruitment and retention
- ❖ The potential of management resistance to the funding of ICT related activities.

Similarly, lack of availability amongst others affects awareness of ICT facilities. The idea of one man, one computer is still a mirage in academic institutions in Imo State.

OBJECTIVE OF THE STUDY

- To examine the level of awareness of ICT by academic staff
- To find out the type of ICT that are more frequently used by academic staff in Imo State.
- To ascertain the specific areas/purpose of use of ICT by academic staff.
- To determine the suitability/satisfaction level of academic staff in the use of ICT.

- To ascertain the problems of awareness and use of ICT by academic staff of tertiary institution in Imo State.

METHODOLOGY

The study focused on four major tertiary institutions in Imo State, namely.- Federal University of Technology Owerri (FUTO)-, Imo State University Owerri (IMSU); Federal Polytechnic Nekede (FPN) and Alvan Ikoku College of Education (A.I.C.E) Owerri. The population consists of 1200 academic staff drawn from only the core and full time lecturers of the four tertiary institutions, under-study. Having determined the number per school, the Questionnaire were distributed to each School/faculty, covering the number of academic staff. At the end, 1000 respondents completed and returned their Questionnaire, Data analysis was done by the use of frequency table and simple percentage.

DATA ANALYSIS

Table 1: Population of Study/Distribution and Return Rate

Tertiary Institutions	No. of Academic Staff	No. of Respondents	%
FUTO	450	400	89%
IMSU	250	150	60%
FPN	255	230	90%
A.I.C.E	245	220	90%
Total	1200	1000	83%

Table 1 shows the population of study which stood at 1200 and the number of respondents which was 1000, showing 83% return rate.

Table 2: Level of Awareness of (ICT) by Academic Staff

S/No	Variables	Frequency	% of Awareness
1	Computer	1000	100
2	Photocopier	1000	100
3	Scanner	500	50%
4	Tele-facsimile	200	20%
5	Cellular phone (Mobile Handset)	1000	100%
6	Micro-form	300	30%
7	New Media Resource	200	20%
8	CD-ROM	150	15%
9	On-Line Public Access Catalog (OPAC)	50	5%
10	Electronic Mail (e-mail)	1000	100%
11	Browsing	1000	100%
12	Internet	800	80%

Data as represented in table 2, shows that all the academic staff. 1000/100% respondents are quite aware of ICT resources such as computer, photocopier, cellular phone (mobile) communication and electronic mail (e-mail), whereas there was low awareness on On-line Public Access Catalog (OPAC) 50 (5%). Compact Disc Read Only Memory (CD-ROM). 150 (15%), New Media Resource 200(20%)

and Tele-facsimile. 200 (20%). Comparably, this analysis shows a high level of awareness of ICT by academic staff of tertiary institutions in Imo State.

Table 3: Types of ICT and Frequency of Use

S/N	Variables	No. of Respondents	Frequency of Use			
			Daily	3-5 time per week	Once a month	During Exam/Project/Assignment
1.	Computer	500 (50%)	10 (1%)	50 (5%)	140(14%)	300 (30%)
2	Photocopier	200 (20%)	10(1%)	50 (5%)	60 (6%)	80 (8%)
3	Scanner	180 (18%)	-	40 (4%)	60 (6%)	100 (10%)
4	Tele-facsimile	100(10%)	-	10(1%)	40 (4%)	50 (5%)
5	Cellular Phone (Mobile Handset)	1000(100%)	800 (80%)	80 (8%)	50 (5%)	70 (7%)
6	Micro -Form	50 (5%)	-	10(1%)	20 (2%)	20 (2%)
7	New Media Resource	200 (20%)	20 (2%)	40 (4%)	60 (6%)	80 (8%)
8	Compact Disc Read Only Memory (CD-ROM)	100 (10%)		20 (2%)	30 (3%)	50 (5%)
9	On-Line Access Catalog (OPAC)	80 (8%)	-	20 (2%)	30 (3%)	30 (3%)
10	Electronic Mail (e-mail)	600 (60%)	150(10%)	100 (10%)	150(15%)	250 (25%)
11	browsing	500 (50%)	100(10%)	100 (10%)	150(15%)	250 (25%)
12	Internet	500 (50%)	100(10%)	150(15%)	100(10%)	150(15%)

Data in table 3, shows that all the respondents 1000 (100%) use Cellular Phones (Mobile Handset), while 600 (60%) and 500 (50%) use e-mail, computer, internet and internet browsing, respectively. On the frequency of use, it was discovered that 800 (80%) use Mobile Handset on daily basis out of the 1000 (100%) respondents, whereas the frequency of use of other ICT resources was heavy during projects/assignments as in the case of computer. 300 (30%); e-mail. 250 (25%); Browsing, 250 (25%), and internet 150 (15%).

This finding was similar to earlier studies carried out on lecturer's use of information technology in Nigeria, by Mabawonku and Okwilagwe (2004). Ehikhamenor (2003) investigated the use of internet resources by scientists in ten (10) Nigerian Universities. Sangowusi (2003) carried out a study on the impact of information and communication on scholarly publications of scientists at the University of Ibadan and discovered that 76% of academics use computer in their academic activities. Chifwepa (2003) in "The use of Intranet and internet by teaching staff of the University of Zambia", discovered that 77% and 42% of academic staff of the Zambian University use internet for accessing other library catalogue and for up-dating their knowledge.

Table 4: Specific areas of Use of ICT by Academic Staff

Options	Frequency	Percentage
Up-dating lecture notes/knowledge	250	25%
Indepth Research work	200	20%
Communication	400	45%
Leisure/Recreation	150	15%
Total	1000	100%

Table 4, shows that greater number of respondents 400 (40%) Use ICT resource especially internet and Mobile Handset in communication purposes. 250 (25%) use it to up-date their knowledge on their subject area, while 200 (20%) engage in indepth research activities, and only 150 (15%) use ICT for leisure and recreation purposes.

It follows that research activities which include up-dating of knowledge (250 + 200) = 450 (45%) tops the reason or purpose of use of ICT by academic staff in Imo State tertiary institutions. This result was corroborated by Chifwepa (2003) when he discovered that 77% and 42% of academic staff of the Zambian University use internet for accessing other library catalogue and up-dating their knowledge in their subject area.

Table 5: Extent of Satisfaction of ICT

Options	Frequency	Percentage
High	300	30%
Moderate	500	50%
Low	200	20%
Total	1000	100%

A question was posed as to the extent the use of ICT satisfies the information needs of academic staff in the tertiary institutions in Imo State. It was discovered that 500 (50%) out of the entire population of 1000 lecturers indicated moderate satisfaction, while 200 (20%) expressed low satisfaction and 300 (30%) indicated, high satisfaction. It follows then that academic staff in Imo State derives moderate satisfaction in the use of ICT facilities in their information needs.

Table 6. Inhibitors to Use of ICT

Options	Frequency	Percentage
Insufficient availability of ICT facilities	400	40%
Inadequate training and expertise	200	20%
Lack of encouragement	100	10%
Time constraint	80	8%
High cost of procurement	120	12%
Epileptic power supply	100	10%

Data in table 6 shows that the greatest inhibition to use of ICT is its insufficient availability to academics (400/40%). This was followed by inadequate training and expertise on the use of ICT facilities by academic staff (200/20%); high cost of procurement of personal laptop/personal computers and its accessories; accounts for 120 (12%), while lack of Management encouragement or

support of staff by way of augmenting cost of usage or provision of facilities and enabling environment, and epileptic power supply, accounts for 100 (10%). respectively.

CONCLUSION AND RECOMMENDATIONS

From the analysis and discussion of findings, it was evidenced that:

- Academic staff of tertiary institutions in Imo State have a high awareness level of ICT facilities. This high awareness was complemented by use.
- It was discovered that with the exception of mobile Hand-set, the use of other ICT facilities was heavy only during the time lecturers were carrying out projects or assignments.
- Lecturers use ICT more for communication purposes and specifically to up-dating their knowledge and carrying out indepth research activities.
- The level of satisfaction derived in using ICT to satisfying their information needs was still moderate.
- Factors such as non-availability of ICT resources, and components affected **awareness** and use. while inadequate technical know-how and training as well as high cost of procurement of ICT resources greatly hampered use by academic staff.

The study recommends that:

- ❖ Awareness and use of ICT facilities by academics could be enhanced by the Management of the various tertiary institutions embarking on a deliberate and systematic arrangement of making computers available to every academic staff.
- ❖ Academics could also make self-conscious efforts aimed at acquiring requisite practical and operational knowledge of computer and other ICT facilities.
- ❖ An improved conducive ICT friendly environment should be vigorously pursued.
- ❖ Finally a culture of ICT complaint should be inculcated in the **tertiary** institutions in Imo State.

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