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PERCEIVED IMPACT OF INFORMATION AND COMMUNICATION TECHNOLOGY (ICT) ON CURRENT AWARENESS SERVICES IN UNIVERSITY LIBRARIES *IN BENUE STATE, NIGERIA*

Akaaka, Dooshima Theresa (CLN)
Department of Library and Information Science
Federal University of Lafia, Nasarawa State, Nigeria.

Omame, Isaiah Michael (CLN)
University Library
Federal University of Lafia, Nasarawa State, Nigeria

Okechukwu Obediah Chukwuka (CLN)
Department of Library and Information Science,
Federal Polytechnic Nasarawa, Nasarawa State, Nigeria.

Abstract
The study investigated the impact of Information and Communication Technology (ICT) on current awareness service in university libraries in Benue State, Nigeria. In order to determine the perceived impact of ICT on current awareness service in university libraries in Benue state, two objectives were stated which were to find out the impact of ICT on CAS in university libraries in Benue State and to determine the challenges of accessing ICT based CAS in university libraries in Benue State, two research questions were also raised and one hypothesis was formulated to guide the study. The study adopted the descriptive survey research design and a structured questionnaire was used as instrument for data collection. The population of the study was 11,263 and a sample size of 386 registered library users from the three university libraries in Benue State was used for the study. The data collected for the study was analysed using mean and standard deviation to answer the research questions, while chi-square inferential statistics was used to analyse the null hypothesis formulated and tested at 0.05 level of significance. Findings of the study revealed that ICT has significant impact on current awareness services in university libraries in Benue state but not without challenges. Based on the findings of the study, recommendations were made to the effect that university libraries of the surveyed universities should be funded well, so that the challenges of ICT-based current awareness

service delivery will be minimized.

Keywords: *Perceived Impact; Information and Communication Technology (ICT); Current Awareness Services; University Libraries; Benue State, Nigeria.*

Introduction

A university is a higher-level educational institution in which students' study for degrees and where research is done. The university is widely known as a knowledge custodian, where students from various disciplines acquire knowledge and skills for self-development. Universities institutions are seen as pillars of the society. Therefore, the task of the university, which is a well understanding of the world, is the utmost responsibility of all universities. This is achieved by engaging in academic activities that broaden the frontiers of knowledge, which may lead to discoveries, inventions, and innovations (Kaptan& Kore, 2017). According to Anhwere and Afful-Arthur (2018), the university contributes towards problem-solving as well as the gathering, analysis, and interpretation of data. It could also be seen as a location where knowledge and information are shared. Therefore, the degree and quality of programs and resources offered by the university library have a significant impact on the university system's ability to meet its objectives.

The university library is the heart of the university. According to Issa and Ayodele (2011), the aim of university libraries is to provide information services and facilities to support the mission of the university. The author further stated that it is vital to emphasize that with the growth and dynamics of knowledge and information, the university libraries are projected to offer both physical and automated/online information services to meet the ever-growing demands of their clientele. Whong (2014) also described the university library as an institutional library, built to support the goals and objectives of the university in promoting teaching, learning, and research. The university library, right from its inception, has been an integral part of the university system by collecting, developing, and maintaining a diverse collection of material resources and services in the fastest, easiest, and most effective way. Oyewusi and Oyeboade (2009) supported this by stating that university libraries' information assets should, therefore, be adequate in quality, scope, variety, and up-to-date to support the curriculum of the institution.

Against the backdrop of 21st-century library practices, the university library has always handled its information resources delivery and services manually. However, due to information explosion, it has become really difficult for the university library to manage these information resources and services manually. This challenge has, in times past, led to the loss and misplacement of

information resources, poor delivery of library services due to the heavy workload on the staff, user dissatisfaction, among others. In view of the above, ICT has been introduced in the management of information assets and service delivery by university libraries.

Statement of the Problem

The university library plays a vital role in the provision of CAS to fulfill the educational demands of its users. To make this role a reality, the right facilities, resources, and services are collected and organized by professional and competent librarians. The general expectation is that these facilities, materials, and services will be retrieved and utilized by library patrons.

Unfortunately, it is doubtful if the provision of ICT facilities by the university library for the delivery of current awareness services to its users is adequate. The importance of ICT in the delivery of library current awareness services cannot be overemphasized, as it enhances the speed of access to needed information and the effectiveness and efficiency of delivery. The consequences of not using ICT in university libraries are that it will deny users access to the available resources through new technologies, as manual delivery of current awareness services will obviously not satisfy the information needs of users.

This situation can also be said to be the case for library users in university libraries in Benue State, from the researchers' reflection. What then could be the issue? Could it be that the current awareness services that ICT is applied to in the university libraries in Benue State are inadequate? Has ICT made any impact on the delivery of current awareness services in university libraries in Benue State? Could it be that the university libraries in Benue State have been unable to address the difficulties associated with the application of ICT in CAS delivery? The impact of ICT on the delivery of current awareness services in university libraries in Benue State is doubtful, prompting the researchers to conduct this research to determine the impact of ICT on current awareness services delivery (CAS) in university libraries in Benue State.

Objectives of the Study

The aimed at determining the impact of ICT on CAS in university libraries in Benue state. Specifically, this research sought to achieve these objectives:

1. Find out the impact of ICT on CAS in university libraries in Benue State, Nigeria.
2. Determine the challenges of accessing ICT based CAS in university libraries in Benue State, Nigeria.

Research Hypothesis

The null hypothesis was presented at 0.05 level of significance;

$H_0$1. There is no positive significant impact of ICT on Current Awareness Services (CAS) in University libraries in Benue State.

Review of Related Literature

Information and Communication Technology (ICT) are the convergence of computer and communication technologies. Ebijuwa in Saleem, Tabusum, and Batcha (2013) defined Information and Communication Technology (ICT) as instruments for gathering, processing, storage, transmission, and propagation of information. Also, Mayer in Whong (2014) defined ICT as the acquisition, organization, storage, retrieval, and distribution of information in textual, numerical, pictorial, and audio-visual formats. The author explained further that ICT is limited to systems reliant on micro-electronics; that is, the technologies and techniques used in the planning, expansion, and construction of incredibly small electronic circuits such as single-chip computers. Generally speaking, ICT comprises software, hardware, and tools for processing, broadcast as well as the representation of information (Eyo, Nkano, and Nkebem 2011). Chisita and Shoko (2010) in a library setting, ICT is characterized as the use of various technology such as computers, reprographics, audiovisuals, and other electronic devices for the recording, reproduction, and dissemination of content.

The advent of ICT and its introduction to university libraries have brought about a great increase in the conversion of paper print information to electronic format. This has also caused a change in the work processes calling for highly skilled librarians and ICT-literate personnel and a total restructuring of the library system. Idi (2015) opined that the new technology has transformed and changed how the library staff work, as well as how library client's study and retrieve information in libraries. Echezona (2010) stated that ICT has changed the university libraries into a new knowledge center by enabling electronic processes of numerous library operations, especially customer service functions. One of the major highlights of using ICT is that libraries can branch out internationally and offer services 24 hours a day, seven days a week at a relatively low cost. In support of this, Dhanavandan, Esmail, and Nagarajan (2012) stated that information technology has dramatically changed every aspect of human endeavor, including libraries, to the point where libraries are now heavily invested in digitizing almost all library resources to provide users with easy, interactive, and dynamic information services.

Library services are those activities, resources, and programs that are provided by libraries to enable clientele information requirements to be met.

Library services, according to Odine (2011), are a series of tasks that a library engages in to meet the information needs of its patrons. Oyewusi and Oyeboade (2009) asserted that library services are primarily focused on textual collections and other bibliographic information sources. The information and services provided by the Library, according to Ukachi (2013) in Anhwere and Afful-Arthur (2018), are not intended to be limited to the provision of urgently required information but also to include the provision of planned information. Thus, the increased importance of information resources in the university system for learning, teaching, and research purposes has imposed the demand for the provision of more expanded, simpler, and updated library and information systems to satisfy the increasing information needs of users.

Library service delivery is a component of the library system that defines the interaction between librarians and library users, where the librarian offers service. Ucha and Popoola (2014) opined that individuals have perceptions of librarians and information practitioners in terms of how they react to and respond to customers, peers, their organization, and the whole community involved in library service delivery. A noticeable outcome of the recent developments in information service is that on a regular basis, professional and technical growth provides more serious problems and resources to draw on for the library and information practitioners. As a result, information services have become more specialized and specific. Library service delivery is one of the key roles of the university library and ought not to be narrowed to the university library structure but also taken directly to patrons where physical access to an academic library is not likely. The major principle of library service provision is that precise information must be provided to the clientele at the right time, in the right quantity, and format.

The university library is anticipated to always create awareness of its recent and relevant information materials and services, as well as providing these information resources and services without delay for research and learning when the need arises. In line with this, the Library & Information Science Network (2013) defined Current Awareness Service (CAS) as the propagation of information that will keep consumers well aware and up-to-date in their primary fields of interest as well as relevant subjects. Similarly, Umeozor and Afolabi (2014) also defined CAS as methods in which libraries notify their patrons of recently printed materials. University libraries are required to periodically alert users to new and appropriate information tools and facilities, as well as to include these promptly for the advancement of education, necessitating the use of CAS. CAS is a mechanism by which the library assists its users in learning about recent

innovations in a subject.

According to Naqvi (2013), Current Awareness Services (CAS) have made serious progress notwithstanding the fact that librarians are concerned with information overload. Chu and Krichel in Abdullahi (2017) posited that CAS isn't a popular library service, but thanks to technology, it can reach its maximum capacity in digital libraries. Uzohue and Yaya (2016) defined CAS as an effort to notify library users of new library acquisitions as well as any other related library services accessible to them. It is a system that helps to alert users to the latest development in their areas of interest. CAS is a more generalized service given to library users. Umeozor and Afolabi (2014) were of the view that Current Awareness Service (CAS) is provided by libraries to support users to fulfill their information needs. According to the authors, the university library is required to educate users of existing and related material tools and facilities on a regular basis, and to provide these promptly for the advancement of knowledge.

Furthermore, Umbur in Naqvi (2013) stated that CAS was the most widely used information service for research purposes. The author further mentioned traditional methods of CAS to comprise routing point periodicals, distributing reproduced journal material table of contents, and basically browsing skilled methods. Traditional approaches, according to the authors, are labor-intensive and slow while the new method saves time. Bell in Umeozor and Afolabi (2014) suggests that more complex, demanding, and user-friendly programs, such as CAS, should be prioritized.

Uzohue and Yaya (2016) explained that the traditional CAS rendered by libraries includes compilation of bibliographies, reading lists, indexing and abstracting of books, newspaper writings arranged in an album or in a register in an office cabinet, and alerting heads of departments to newly acquired materials on display racks in the library for people to note it, display of the table of contents of newly acquired books and paste on the notice board at strategic locations, indexing and abstracting of books, and notifying department heads as new supplies in specialized fields are obtained by other divisions. ICT, on the other hand, has had a significant effect on the university library since it has introduced simpler and faster CAS approaches, such as performing saved searches in chosen databases and sending e-mail table of contents reminders (Johnson et al., in Naqvi 2013). E-mail updates, internet search engines, and other remote search applications are also included in the online or web-based CAS category. Users will automatically track newly released information using major online CAS (for example, e-mail alerts). Bell (2009) emphasized that CAS is ways to promote the library and expressed concern that most university librarians are no longer

familiar with the craft of CAS, which may be an unfortunate change in our practice. CAS requires awareness of new scientific theories and hypotheses, new methods and approaches, new challenges to solve, and new situations affecting what individuals do and in what way they do it.

The word "impact" means to have an effect or influence on something or somebody. ICT has no doubt exerted a profound impact on university libraries. According to Krubu and Osawuru (2011), the effect of ICT on information services is characterized by improvements in the format, content, and process of processing and distribution of information items. According to Archana (2015), sound ICT infrastructure should face the challenges of a changing environment. The importance of ICT in the delivery of library services is undeniable, but its impact in satisfying the information requests of patrons is yet to be proven in academic libraries in Benue State. As a result, the researcher agreed to examine the perceived impact of ICT on the delivery of library services in university libraries in Benue State.

Research Methodology

Established according to Akuezuilo and Agu (2003), survey research design is a method of analysis that involves using a questionnaire to gather data from a sample of elements taken from a well-defined population. Descriptive survey research design was considered most appropriate for this study since it would elicit opinions of registered library users (respondents) on the impact of ICT on the CAS offered at their university libraries.The study population comprised of 11,173 documented library patrons (students) of the three university libraries in Benue State, namely: University of Agriculture Makurdi (UAM) Library, Benue State University (B.S.U) Library, and University of Mkar Library. This statistical distribution of the sample is shown in Table 1.

Table 1: Total Study Population

S/N	University Library	Population	Percentage
1	University of Agriculture Makurdi (UAM) Library	5,675	50.79%
2	Benue State University (B.S.U) Library	4,298	38.47%
3	University of Mkar Library	1,200	10.74%
	Total	**11,173**	**100%**

Source: University Libraries, University of Agriculture Markurdi, Benue State University and University of Mkar, Benue State, Nigeria

The total number of registered library users that were used for the study were from 200 Level and above as it is assumed that adequate library orientation

has been given them in the library by the library staff of the university library in Benue State.

The sample population comprising of 386 registered library users was used for this study. The researcher used the Taro Yamene method to ascertain the sample size from the total population of library users from the three university libraries. The proportionate Stratified Random Sampling technique was employed at first to stratify the sample size of 386 registered library users into three strata based on location. FUAM (198), BSU (147) and Mkar (41). The choice of the proportionate stratified random sampling technique is justified because it would ensure that the minority constituents of the population of library users within the university libraries in Benue State were adequately represented in the sample. The Simple Random Sampling used, compose of actual sample in each stratum by selecting respondents at random without replacement.

The data for the study was gathered using a closed questionnaire titled "Perceived Impact of ICT on Current Awareness Service in Questionnaire" (PIICTAQ). The Likert scale (Strongly Agree, Agree, Strongly Disagree and Disagree) was used for response option. The data gathering instrument was subjected to face and content validation by three specialists two from the field of Library and Information Science, University of Agriculture, Makurdi and one from the department of Educational Foundations and General Studies (EFOGENS), University of Agriculture, Makurdi. Thirty (30) students from the Federal University, Lafia, Nasarawa state that are not part of the study were randomly selected for the trial test, were used to test the instrument's reliability for this study. To ascertain the internal consistency of the questionnaire items, the Cronbach Alpha reliability coefficient technique was utilized and a coefficient of 0.89 was achieved indicating that the instrument was reliable for the study. The descriptive statistics, notably frequency counts, mean, and standard deviation, were utilized to analyze the research questions, while Chi-square inferential statistics were utilized to test the null hypothesis at the 0.05 level of significance.

Data Presentation and Interpretation

Research Question 1: What is the impact of ICT on current awareness services in university libraries in Benue State, Nigeria?

To address the question above, data on impact of ICT on current awareness services on registered library users in universities in Benue State was gathered and analyzed using mean and standard deviation as shown in Table2.

Table 2: Mean Response and Standard Deviation on Impact of ICT on CAS in University Libraries in Benue State (N=386)

S/N	ICT Impact on Current Awareness Services	X	SD	Remark
1	Creation of awareness on newly introduced library services to library users through library website	3.31	.93	Impact
2	Creation of awareness on newly acquired journals to library users through e -mail	2.91	1.16	Impact
3	Creation of awareness on newly acquired books to library users through mobile phone (bulk SMS)	2.83	1.23	Impact
4	Creation of awareness on newly acquired indexes and abstracts to library users through e -mail	2.64	.94	Impact
5	Creation of awareness on newly acquired government documents to library users through mobile phone (bulk SMS)	2.55	1.06	Impact
6	Creation of awareness on newly acquired government documents to library users through mobile phone (bulk SMS)	3.12	.77	Impact
7	Creation of awareness on newly published articles to library users through social network (like facebook, whatsapp, among others)	2.90	1.10	Impact
8	Creation of awareness on new developments in the library -to-library users through library website	3.28	.96	Impact
	Grand Mean and Standard Deviation	2.94	1.02	

Decision rule: If mean < 2.5, not impact (reject). If mean >= 2.5, impact (accept)

Table 2 shows that the mean values for all eight items varied from 2.55 to 3.31, suggesting that they were all higher above the cut-off threshold of 2.50. This revealed that respondents agreed on all 8 categories as ICT Impact on CAS on registered library users in Benue State institutions. Table 2 also revealed that the standard deviation of the items varied from.77 to 1.23, showing that the respondents' replies on how ICT Impact on Current Awareness Services (CAS) on registered library users at universities in Benue State were not too distant from the mean and from one another's opinions. Therefore, the results show that, ICT has significant impact on Current Awareness Services (CAS) in university libraries in Benue State.

Research Question 2: What are the challenges of accessing ICT based current

awareness services in university libraries in Benue State, Nigeria?

To address the question above, the data on challenges of ICT based current awareness services in university libraries in Benue State was gathered and analyzed using mean and standard deviation as shown in Table 3.

Table 3: The Mean Response and Standard Deviation of Challenges faced in accessing current awareness services via ICT in Benue State (N=386)

S/N	Challenges faced in accessing CAS via ICT	X	SD	Remark
1	Poor electricity	3.36	.63	Impact
2	Poor internet connection for current awareness services	3.16	.61	Impact
3	Lack of professional staff to deal with ICT and network related issues	3.32	.79	Impact
4	Lack of ICT facilities for current awareness services	3.04	.87	Impact
5	Lack of finances to access ICT based current awareness services	3.24	.86	Impact
6	Delay in accessing ICT based current awareness services	3.35	.75	Impact
7	Lack of technical know -how to operate ICT based current awareness services	3.04	.95	Impact
8	Lack of website knowledge	3.19	.92	Impact
	Grand Mean and Standard Deviation	3.21	0.80	

Decision rule: If mean < 2.5, not agree (reject). If mean >= 2.5, agree (accept)

Table 3 shows that the mean values for all eight items varied from 3.04 to 3.36, suggesting that they were all higher above the cut-off threshold of 2.50. This demonstrated that respondents agreed on all eight things as barriers in using ICT to access library services at universities in Benue State. The standard deviation of the items in the table varied from 0.61 to 0.80, showing that the respondents' replies on the obstacles experienced in accessing library services through ICT at universities in Benue State were not too distant from the mean or from one another's opinions. Therefore, results shows, registered library users faced all the challenges itemized in accessing library services through ICT in university libraries in Benue State.

Hypothesis Testing

$H_0$1.There is no significant impact of ICT on Current Awareness Services

(CAS) in University libraries in Benue State.

Table 4: The Chi-Square Test of Impact of ICT on Current Awareness Services (CAS) in University Libraries in Benue State

	Df	x_t^2	x_{cal}^2	Sig.	Alpha Level	Remark
Pearson Chi - square	**9**	**16.92**	**356.990**			**Significant**
Number of Valid Cases		**386**		**.000**	**.05**	

x_{cal}^2

Table 4 shows computed chi-square value of 356.990 which is larger than the table value of 16.92 at the .05 level of significance (i.e., = 356.990> 16.92). As a result, Information and Communication Technology (ICT) has a substantial influence on the Awareness Services (CAS) provided to registered library customers in Benue State university libraries. Thus, the null hypothesis is rejected.

Summary of Findings

Based on the research questions addressed and hypothesis tested, the following conclusions resulted from the study:

1. Result revealed that ICT has significant impact on current awareness services with total grand mean of 2.94
2. Result revealed that ICT based current awareness service is faced with all the challenges itemised with the total grand mean of 3.21

Discussion of Results

Based on the findings, the following were discussed;

The results of the study are similar to the findings of Naqvi (2013) who studied Current Awareness Services in CBHTS Nasinu library at Fiji National University. According to the survey, majority of students and staff learned about Current Awareness Services through the library website, email, and library tours, with email notices of new books and magazines being the most popular. Similarly, the findings of this study agree with the findings of Krubu and Osawaru (2011) who carried out a study on the impact of ICT in Nigerian University libraries also agreed that ICT impact the delivery of CAS in university libraries in Nigeria as their study revealed that readers' services and collection development unit of the university libraries under study were automated. Their study also revealed challenges associated with ICT application in university library to include; lack of training facilities, lack of competent search skill on the side of the library staff at both strategic and operational level, epileptic power supply among others which

further corroborates the findings of this study. The reason why ICT impact current awareness services could likely be that, the university library managements in the study area adequately apply ICT in creating awareness on the new information materials to library users via different channels such as text messages, Facebook, Whatsapp among others, but not without challenges though. This in turn gives users access the library current materials for effective academic work.

Conclusion

The study explores the effects of information and communication technology (ICT) on the delivery of current awareness services (CAS) at university libraries in Benue state. According to the study's findings, ICT impacts on current awareness services in university libraries at Benue state. However, certain challenges were faced by registered library users in accessing ICT based current awareness services such as poor internet connection for current awareness services, poor electricity, lack of ICT facilities for current awareness services among others. The inability of university library in Nigeria to fully embrace ICT will result into denying library users the opportunity to have access to the huge and diverse information resources that are available virtually and which could be useful to them. Therefore, it was concluded that the library management of the three university libraries in the study area need to look into these problems and proffer solutions to them as this will increase the impact of ICT based library service delivery to registered library users in university libraries in Benue state.

Recommendations

The following recommendations were made based on the findings of this study.

1. University librarians in the three universities which include Federal University of Agriculture, Makurdi (UAM), Benue State University (B.S.U) and University of Mkar, Mkar should improve on their current awareness services most especially in their usage of ICT facilities such as mobile phones, email and social media channels such as WhatsApp, Facebook among others to deliver current contents of the library to registered library users.
2. University libraries of the 3 university in Benue State should be well funded by the government so that the challenges of ICT based library services will be overcome.

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