The Influence of ICT Capacity Building on Librarians Service Delivery in University Libraries in Benue State, Nigeria

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ABSTRACT

This study examined the influence of ICT capacity building for effective service delivery by librarians in university libraries in Benue State. The aim of this study is to find out how ICT capacity building influences services delivered by librarians in university libraries in Benue State. Survey research design was used for the study. The target population was 63 librarians in three universities. Four (4) objectives and four (4) research questions guided the study. Total population sampling technique was employed. A self-developed questionnaire with 25 items was used as the instrument for data collection. Thus, 63 copies of questionnaire were distributed and response rate of 100% was recorded. Data was analyzed using descriptive frequency counts displayed in tables, mean and standard deviation. The findings agree that ICT capacity building influences library services such as serials, collection development services, also that ICT capacity building has high influence on librarians' skills of delivering services to users, conferences, seminars, workshops, in-house training and on the job training were ICT capacity building programs adopted by librarians to ensure effective services to users etc. Challenges such as inadequate library skills, lack of participation in ICT capacity building programs etc. were identified and recommendations were made.

Keywords: ICT Capacity Building, Service Delivery, University Libraries, Librarians

INTRODUCTION

The emergence of information and communication technology (ICT) has greatly enhanced the capabilities of university libraries to achieve efficiency and effectiveness in delivering services to users across the globe. University libraries all over are striving hard to join the trend of using modern technologies to facilitates and speed up service delivery to users. Traditionally Library services were manually delivered as university library materials were only in print format. This was time-consuming and a tedious process that invariably affected effective delivery of services to users. As a result, many librarians became frustrated as their lack capacity to deliver services to users. This prevented many users from utilizing the library as they feared spending the whole time browsing through the shelves without necessarily stumbling on the desired information materials. Some of the traditional systems are characterized by manual systems information organization, utilizing predominantly pre-coordinate indexing system with resultant author or dictionary catalogue as the main storage and retrieval devices. Unfortunately, this method is domicile in most of the university libraries in Nigeria today.

University libraries are established simultaneously with the parent institution to support teaching, erudition, and research activities of its community by providing current and timely information which are accessible and easy to retrieve. To achieve this goal, university libraries

trained librarians as professionals in collecting, storing, organizing, preserving, and disseminating information to its parent organization and the community. Basically, university library is divided into different departments which may have some variations among universities and environment in which they are situated. Umaru Musa Yaradua University (2019) gave a brief description of the conventional departments in the library as: acquisitions where selection of materials is done, it also encompasses ordering, stamping, and accessioning; cataloguing department or technical services, is a place where library materials are catalogued and classified, and labels are put on them for proper identification and later transferred to the shelves for consultation. The serial department houses current information such as journals, magazines, and newspapers that allow users to attune with current event in the society. The readers' services department usually comprises of circulation unit which is the heartbeat of the library where users have direct access to library holdings. Its functions involve charging and discharging library materials to the users when demands are made at the circulation desk and the reference unit. Recently, the new services such as the Internet and Internet based tools and services that permit access to electronic information sources and digital library of local and institutional documents have emerged. All these are packaged to ensure effective delivery service to users. Therefore, assessing librarians' capacity to deliver services in the 21st century involves identifying the strengths, weaknesses, opportunities, and threats (SWOT) as this will help in capacity building of librarians.

The first step of a capacity building plan and vision is to assess the current capacity of the librarians in delivering services to users in this era where most university libraries have gone digital because of the advent of ICTs. Oyedipe and Popoola (2018) stated that to ensure delivery of proactive library services, there must first be an evaluation of current capabilities and a plan to consistently build capacity. They further emphasized that for the library to create a future for itself, it must be courageous and ready to depart thoroughly from service models if it does not totally erase its legacy or core mission. Capacity building enable librarians to develop competencies and skills that would make them more effective as well as increase their potentials for delivering effective services to library users. Capacity development often involves enhancing the knowledge and ICT skills of librarians whose work results greatly rely on the performance of the university library in which they work.

Capacity building involves acquiring skills and knowledge of librarianship in general. It also enables librarians to be aware of new possibilities empowered by gaining new skills brought about by ICTs, upgrading their old skills, and having continuous access to information resources and equipment. Sarmah (2014) maintained that Information and Communication Technology (ICT) has enormously increased the capabilities of library services thus creating options for networking to provide access to vast stores of electronic information, for more sophisticated library housekeeping systems, and for greater bibliographic access through services. The researcher however, advanced that technology can also create further pressures and drains on a library's resources simultaneously for delivering a vastly advanced service. Problems of obsolescence and compatibility of hardware and software can be costly, and the demands for training both staff and library users are great. Basically, there are two types of training programs that may influence ICT capacity building in university libraries: formal, and informal training. These training play crucial role in the training and retraining of staff for effective performance in their service delivery.

Ojowhoh (2016) affirms that capacity building can take many forms; the most common is a formal training course, where an individual attempts to add new or to improve existing knowledge and skills. Informal training is another component of capacity building that can improve and enhance service delivery among staff. This type of training includes workshops, conferences, and seminars. Therefore, participating in conferences, workshops and seminars is recognized as a benchmark for capacity building. Building capacities in university libraries

have three major dimensions that are interlinked for effective result such as librarians, Library, and the enabling university environment like universities in Benue state. Benue state is in North-central Nigeria and have numerous universities with functional libraries where services are delivered to users on daily bases using ICTs. It is because of this that, the researcher investigated influence of ICT capacity building for effective service delivery by librarians in university libraries in Benue state, Nigeria.

Statement of the Problem

Preliminary observation has shown that librarians in university libraries in Benue state, Nigeria do not adequately possess ICT capacity building that would enhance effective services delivery in the 21st century era. Could this be attributed to inadequate participation in ICT capacity building programs that would keep them abreast with new trend of facilitating and enhancing effective service delivery in these university libraries? It is in this light that the study investigated the influence of ICT capacity building on librarians for effective service delivery in university libraries in Benue state, Nigeria.

Objectives of the Study

The objectives of the study sought to:
1) Identify available library services that ICT capacity building can influence effective service delivery by librarians in universities in Benue state.
2) Determine Librarians' skills that ICT capacity building influences effective service delivery in university libraries in Benue state.
3) Find out ICT capacity building programs participated by librarians that influence effective service delivery in university libraries in Benue state.
4) Examine challenges hindering the influence of ICT capacity building for effective service delivery by librarians in university libraries in Benue state.

Research Questions

The study was guided by the following research questions.
1) What are the available library services that ICT capacity building can influence for effective service delivery by librarians in universities in Benue state?
2) What are the librarian skills that ICT capacity building influences for effective service delivery in university libraries in Benue state?
3) What are the ICT capacity building programs participated by librarians that influence effective service delivery in university libraries in Benue state?
4) What are the challenges hindering the influence of ICT capacity building for effective service delivery by librarians in university libraries in Benue state?

LITERATURE REVIEW

Capacity building is a deliberate attainment of skills, knowledge, understanding, values as well as behavioral orientations needed for individual, institutional, or national advancement (United Nations Development Programme, UNDP 2011). In essence, capacity denotes the aptitude of a person, establishment, or society to carry out task proficiently, successfully, and continuously. This shows that for capacity building to be effective, there must be a review of and change in the social system. Panda, Swain, and Jena (2010) defined capacity building as a harmonized method of involvement in the enhancement of skills and improvement of procedures to enable organizations (and individuals) to be maximally productive. Capacity building, therefore, is a comprehensive term which includes skilled individuals, effective administration, innovation, sustainable organizations, adequate funds, physical facilities, effective workflow, and good motivations. It is an ongoing process through which individuals,

groups, organizations, and societies enhance their ability to identify and meet development challenges. Capacity building involves man-machine interfaces in organizations to enhance operating efficiency, expertise, and skills of personnel towards the achievement of organizational excellence. According to Ogunmodede (2012) capacity building is the process by which individuals, groups, organizations, institutions, and societies develop abilities (individually and collectively) to perform functions, solve problems, set, and achieve objectives. The primary aim of capacity building is to achieve individual development, career progress and effective service delivery, which by implication is the achievement of organizational goals and organizational development.

Capacity-building is mandatory when there is a lack of capacity. Thus, the success of capacity building greatly depends on an evaluation of the capacity presently possessed by librarians. As this may highly be of benefits to them for assessing their capacities in relation with the functions, they need to perform for effective service delivery to users. Hence, some of these users are highly competent in handling information formats in this technological age. Librarians are managers of libraries, where they supervise administrative staff and oversee the daily operations of academic, public, and private libraries. Working as a librarian requires a wide range of skills, including technical and soft skills and specific personal qualities (The Indeed Career Guide, 2022). Acquisition of these skills requires librarians to perform their duties effectively. Librarian skills simply refers to the soft and hard competencies acquired by professionals to perform their duties effectively. Soft skills are the ability to communicate effectively in writing and verbally, skillfully working with other people, develop leadership and problem-solving strategies. Once these skills are developed, they can apply to all areas of library services and are transferrable in nature. Hard, or technical skills, requires proficiency in library management software, archiving, documentation, and several other expert knowledge.

The Indeed Career Guide further emphasized 11 essential skills that can help librarians become more efficient at work as: communication, information curation, cataloguing, documentation, computer literacy, organizational skills, leadership skills, problem solving, analytical skills, teaching skills, and research skills. According to Mazumdar (2007) skill is an ability or proficiency in execution or performance, which is required for a person to plan and execute an action designed to achieve some goals or accomplish a particular task. A skilled person can perform any task successfully. Thus, to cope with the ever-changing library and information science profession, the library professional must be a skilled professional. Sharp (2000) maintained that the core skills traditionally associated with information professionals which include information handling skills, training and facilitating skills, evaluation skills, cataloguing, classification, indexing, enquiry work and user education all functions which if managed by librarians will help to make the Internet an easier place to navigate. Mazumdar further enumerated library professional skills for effective service delivery such as information retrieval skill, skill for classification and cataloging of documents, method of indexing and abstracting, managerial Skill, communication skill, preservation skill and technological skills.

Oguche (2017) corroborated this by maintaining that for competitiveness and enhancement of service delivery, workforce (library personnel) must integrate the use of ICTs in their daily work activities. Omotayo (2015) emphasized this by concluding that development of human resources (capacity building) has become crucial in every organization to enhance success in an increasingly knowledge- based globalized economy. Mcguinness, Pouliakas and Redmond (2019) maintained that continuous innovations in technology make skills formerly acquired to become superseded. This explains the importance of continuous capacity building as a strategy for effective service delivery. The study corroborates McCarthy (2005) who summarized the new skills and attributes needed by library personnel as communication,

training, technology, planning, organizing, innovativeness, enterprise, teamwork, and self-management.

Application of new ICT into the libraries immediately requires improvement of different kinds of skills and knowledge in library information science professionals (Sarmah, 2014). ICT skills are the practical ability to use electronic equipment to access, manage and disseminate information and these include computing skills, communication skills, programming skills, digitization, and networking skills. Kude (2016) in an investigation of computer skills amongst academic library personnel in universities in Nigeria and submitted that library staff cannot perform above their capacities. Therefore, the skills and attributes possessed by librarians will help them to effectively play their information role and provide access in digital era. Librarians in this digital age need ICT skills which must be continually updated to enable improved library service delivery. Ademodi and Adepoju (2009) in corroboration advanced that, ICT skills refers to the application of technology to ensure fast and cheap service delivery.

Emiri (2015) in a study affirmed the following as skills needed in effective use of ICT: database computer skills, creation and management of database, file management, Internet operations and knowledge and use of electronic resources. Abban (2018) who posited that possession of ICT skills by librarians in Ghana has led to maximal use of ICTs for service delivery. Roberts (2018) stated that computing technology, communication, and mass storage technology are key aspects of constant innovation which change methods of acquisition, organization, packaging and sharing of information by library staff. Thus, the capacity building determines services delivered. Imam, Muhammad, Abba and Ijiekhuamhen (2020) findings of their study revealed that the capacity building needs of library and information professionals in university libraries were majorly troubleshooting new technologies, academic research, internet search skills, e-library management, and library automation, among others. All these skills are librarian's requirement for effective service delivery to users especially in the 21st century where every library services were fast becoming digital.

Service delivery is defined as the ability of a librarian to strive within and outside available resources to provide answers to users' query and to meet the overall information needs of the users. According to Madu (2010) service delivery in libraries is the total library activities aimed at facilitating the use of the library and its resources. It is the activity of a librarian in a university library within and outside available resources to provide answers to user's queries and meet their information needs. Similarly, Iqbal and Khan (2017) noted that the conventional library services include the online public access catalogue (OPAC), user services, reference service, current awareness service, document delivery, inter-library loan, audio-visual services, and customer relations.

Other services are online reservation of books, recommendation of library material, photocopying/printing services, orientation and information sessions, selective dissemination of information, audio -visual services, serial services, technical services, collection development services, cataloging and classification, online referencing, indexing, and abstracting, information retrieval system, bibliographic services etc. In the present era, ICT has great influences on almost all sections of library services. Sarmah (2014) pointed out that, Web based, meta-data, resource links, cross database searching, print collection plus online data – bases, document delivery, extensive E – resources, information literacy, hands-on "learning" and consortium were influence of Information Technology (IT) on librarians for library services. However, the consistent decline in the services delivered in university libraries in Ekiti and Ondo States of Nigeria have prompted many stakeholders and information practitioners to canvass for a state of emergency to be called on the nature of service delivery in university libraries in both states (Ebiwolate, 2010).

Effective service delivery can be achieved if appropriate ICT capacity building programs are adopted for enhancement of librarians' professional skills. Imam, Muhammad, Abba &

Ijiekhuamhen (2020) findings show clearly that on-the-job training, in-house training, participation in professional association, lecture/discussion and exercises, and job rotation were the major methods of building the capacity of library and information professionals. Adeniji, Babalola and Adeniji (2012) revealed that formal training of the library staff results to effective and efficient service delivery to users, hence the more staff obtain higher degree, the more he/she increases in knowledge on how to serve users effectively. Anunobi (2012) revealed that the more staff obtain higher degree, the more he/she increases in knowledge on how to serve users effectively. Also, Chukwu (2017) studied the impact of conference attendance on job performance of professional librarians of tertiary institutions in Imo State, Nigeria, and revealed that conference attendance enhances and promote service delivery through acquisition of new knowledge from different expert around the globe in the field of library and information science. Sarmah (2014) pointed out that continuous staff training on emerging technologies is essential to learn, improve and develop various kinds of professional skills, knowledge, and competencies. All these were not without challenges.

Lack of ICT skills of library personnel, erratic power supply, low bandwidth among others were the most preponderant challenges of service delivery in academic libraries in Nigeria and Ghana respectively (Emezie & Nwaohiri, 2015; Ahenkorah-Marfo & Akussah, 2017). Abban (2018) who examined the continuous professional development practices of two universities in Ghana and found that a prevalent challenge was that library personnel were unaware of capacity building programs. Study conducted by Farah (2013) on the factors that influence quality service delivery in public libraries in Kenya a case of Garissa provincial library and disclosed that the library lacked proper in-house seminar to library staff, lacked library orientation for its users, poor searching skills, the information in the library was not well organized by some set of library staff, information in the library did not cater for all categories of users, information in their library was limited and if available lack skills and training.

METHODOLOGY

Survey research design was adopted for the study. The population for the study was 63 librarians from the three university libraries in Benue state which are: Francis Suleimanu Idachaba Library (FSIL), Joseph Sarwan Tarka University Makurdi (JOSTUM) (31), Library and Information Services, Benue State University Makurdi (BSU) (24), and Asom Bur Learning Centre, University of Mkar, Mkar (UMM) Gboko (8) (Offices of the University librarians of these universities, 2023). The choice of librarians was because they are the people responsible for ensuring the provision of effective service delivery to university library users therefore need ICT capacity building. Total population sampling technique was employed for the study. According to Etikan, Musa and Alkassim (2016) total population sampling is a technique where the entire population is studied because it is relatively small and manageable. Self-developed questionnaire with 25 items were used for data collection. The response options of Strongly Agreed, Agreed, Disagreed and Strongly disagreed, Very highly influenced, Highly influenced, Low influenced and Not influenced with the four points rating scales of 4,3,2, and 1 was employed with an acceptable benchmark of 2.5. Sixty-three (63) copies of questionnaire were administered to the librarians, and 100% return rate was achieved. The data collected was analyzed using descriptive statistics of frequency counts, mean and standard deviation.

DATA ANALYSIS, INTERPRETATION AND DISCUSSION

Table 1 shows that ICT capacity building capacity influences effective service delivery by librarians in universities in Benue state. All the seven items have their mean scores ranging from 3.12 – 3.49 and standard deviation of .58 - .87 with the grand mean and standard deviation of 3.26 and 0.69 respectively. These fall within the agreed category with their mean scores

above the benchmark of 2.50 indicating that ICT capacity building have influence on the above library services for effective service delivery.

Table 1: Library services that ICT capacity building influences effective service delivery by librarians in universities in Benue state

S\N	Items	N	Mean	Standard Deviation	Decision
1	Selection dissemination of information	63	3.12	.83	A
2	Technical service	63	3.17	.87	A
3	Collection development service	63	3.42	.58	A
4	User service	63	3.12	.68	A
5	Current awareness service	63	3.26	.65	A
6	Reference service	63	3.30	.61	A
7	Serial service	63	3.49	.66	A
	Total grand mean	**63**	**3.26**	**0.69**	**A**

Key: A= Agreed

Table 2 shows librarians' skills that ICT capacity building influences effective service delivery in university libraries in Benue state**.** All the seven Items ranging from communication with the mean scores of 3.5 - computer literacy skills - 3.14 and with standard deviation of .64 - .91 respectively fell within the categories of 'high influence' which is above the benchmark of 2,50. The grand mean of 3.34 and standard deviation of 0.72 further indicated that ICT capacity building highly influences librarians' skills for effective service delivery in university libraries in Benue state.

Table 2: Librarians' skills that ICT capacity building influences effective service delivery in university libraries in Benue state

S\N	Items	N	Mean	Standard Deviation	Decision
1	Communication Skills	63	3.53	.64	HI
2	Cataloguing and Classification Skills	63	3.31	.66	HI
3	Networking Skills	63	3.36	.70	HI
4	Computer Literacy Skills	63	3.14	.91	HI
5	Internet Search Skills	63	3.23	.87	HI
6	Documentation skills	63	3.41	.63	HI
7	Information Sharing Skills	63	3.42	.66	HI
	Total grand mean	**63**	**3.34**	**0.72**	**HI**

Key: High Influence

Table 3 revealed ICT capacity building programs participated by librarians that influence effective service delivery in university libraries in Benue state. All the five Items fell in the Agreed 'option' with their mean scores ranging from 3.52 – 3.20 and have the standard deviation of .71 - .69 which is above the benchmark of 2.50. The grand mean and standard deviation of 3.31 and 0.59 respectively indicated that all ICT capacity building programs participated by librarians influence effective service delivery in university libraries in Benue state.

Table 3: ICT capacity building programs adopted by librarians that influence effective service delivery in university libraries in Benue state

S\N	Items	N	Mean	Standard Deviation	Decision
1	Conferences	63	3.38	.63	A
2	Seminars	63	3.22	.70	A
3	Workshops	63	3.23	.75	A
4	In-house Training	63	3.20	.69	A
5	On the Job Training	63	3.52	.71	A
	Total grand mean	**63**	**3.31**	**0.69**	**A**

Key: A= Agreed

Table 4 shows challenges hindering the influence of ICT capacity building on librarians for effective service delivery in university libraries in Benue state. All the six items have their mean scores ranging from 3.41 – 3.20 and standard deviation of .63 - .80 with the grand mean and standard deviation of 3.28 and 0.70 respectively. These fall within the agreed category with their mean scores above the benchmark of 2.50 indicating challenges that hindered the influence of ICT capacity building on librarians for effective service delivery in university libraries in Benue state.

Table 4: Challenges hindering the influence of ICT capacity building for effective service delivery by librarians in university libraries in Benue state

S\N	Items	N	Mean	Standard Deviation	Decision
1	Inadequate Library Services	63	3.41	.63	A
2	Inadequate library Skills	63	3.30	.75	A
3	Lack of participation in ICT capacity building Programs	63	3.23	.61	A
4	Inadequate in-house training	63	3.20	.80	A
5	Poor Searching	63	3.30	.71	A
6	Lack of Sponsorship of Librarians to workshops, Seminars, and conferences	63	3.26	.74	A
	Total grand mean	**63**	**3.28**	**0.70**	**A**

Key: A= Agreed

DISCUSSION

The findings of this study revealed that selection dissemination of information, technical services, collection development services, user education service, current awareness service, reference services and serial services were some of the library services that influences effective service delivery by librarians in universities in Benue state. These agreed with that of Iqbal and Khan (2017) noted that the conventional library services include the online public access catalogue (OPAC), user services, reference service, current awareness service, document delivery, inter-library loan, audio-visual services, and customer relations. The findings of this study also revealed that Librarians' skills such as communication skills, cataloguing and classification skills, networking skills, computer literacy skills, internet search skills, documentation skills and information sharing skills served as a pillar to which ICT capacity building influences for effective service delivery in university libraries in Benue state. This is in line with that of Mazumdar (2007) enumerated library professional skills for effective service delivery as information retrieval skills, skill for classification and cataloging

documents, method of indexing and abstracting, managerial skill, communication skill, preservation skill and technological skills.

Sharp (2000) maintained that the core skills traditionally associated with information professionals which include information handling skills, training and facilitating skills, evaluation skills, cataloguing, classification, indexing, enquiry work and user education all functions which if managed by librarians will help to make the Internet an easier place to navigate. In addition, conferences, seminars, workshops, in-house training and on the job training were ICT capacity building programs adopted by librarians to influence effective service delivery in university libraries in Benue state. These findings agreed with those of Imam, Muhammad, Abba and Ijiekhuamhen (2020), which clearly show that on-the-job training, in-house training, participation in professional association, lecture/discussion and exercises, and job rotation were the major methods of building the capacity of library and information professionals. Chukwu (2017) revealed that conference attendance enhances and promote service delivery through acquisition of new knowledge from different expert around the globe in the field of library and information science.

The findings further revealed that inadequate library services, inadequate library skills, lack of participation in ICT capacity building programs, inadequate in-house training, poor searching, lack of sponsorship of librarians to workshops, seminars, and conferences were challenges hindering the influence of ICT capacity building on librarians for effective service delivery in university libraries in Benue state. These agrees with Farah (2013) disclosed that the library lacked proper in-house seminar to library staff, lacked library orientation for its users, poor searching skills, the information in the library was not well organized by some set of library staff, information in the library did not cater for all categories of users, information in their library was limited and if available lack skills and training. Also, Emezie and Nwaohiri (2015), Ahenkorah-Marfo and Akussah (2017) in their findings revealed that, lack of ICT skills of library personnel, erratic power supply, low bandwidth among others were the most preponderant challenges of service delivery in academic libraries in Nigeria and Ghana respectively.

CONCLUSION

The study concluded that ICT capacity building has greatly influenced effective service delivery by librarians in university libraries in Benue state. With ICT capacity building librarians now improve their conventional methods of delivering services to more effective ways. The skills acquired because of ICT capacity building has made librarians to speed up their services to users. Hence the knowledge acquired through participating in formal training, conferences, seminars, workshops, and in-house training influences effective services to users. Despites these, there are challenges hindering effective service delivery to users by university librarians.

RECOMMENDATIONS

1) The library management should encourage and support ICT capacity building of all librarians in the universities to ensure effective service delivery to users.
2) The library management should organize and as encourage librarians to participate in ICT capacity building programs. This will not only enhance their skills of delivering effective services but keep them abreast with technological changes that will improve their services.
3) The library management should continuously sponsor Liberians on both local and international conferences to update their ICT capacity building for effective service delivery. Capacity building exposed librarians to new knowledge and expand their coast of service delivery.

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