

STUDENTS' PERCEPTION OF INFORMATION, COMMUNICATION TECHNOLOGY (ICT) AND SUPPORT SERVICES DELIVERY AT THE UNIVERSITY OF IBADAN, NIGERIA.

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ABSTRACT

Effective Information, Communication Technology (ICT) and student support services delivery has been of concern for students of the University of Ibadan. In recent time, however, some of the service delivers are now provided online for students. Nigerian universities appear to use a hybrid of electronic and traditional methods in delivering library services, allocation to hostels, health care services, admission, course registration, orientation and counseling services. The hybrid system could result in misplacement of students' records, mismanagement of courses registered, loss of students' data and delay in hostel allocation. This study investigated students' perception of Information, Communication Technology (ICT) and student support services delivery at the University of Ibadan. It used the descriptive survey research design. The study population consisted of all undergraduate students in the University. Using the multi-stage sampling procedure, 550 undergraduates were sampled. Three research questions and four hypotheses were raised. Data were collected using "ICT and delivery of student support services questionnaire" (ICTDSSSQ) - 'r=0.80'. Data were analysed using simple correlation and multiple regressions. A significant relationship existed between ICT availability and support services delivery [$r = 0.158, p < 0.05$], between ICT accessibility and support services delivery [$r = 0.325, p < 0.05$], and between ICT application and student support services delivery [$r = 0.327, p < 0.05$]. It is recommended that the university should make necessary efforts to provide adequate ICT facilities for all sections of its work force.

Keywords: Information and Communication Technology (ICT), Service delivery, Information Accessibility, Student Support Services.

Introduction

The success of any institution of learning is dependent on several factors, especially, the quality of student support services. Student support services are services provided to learners so that they could overcome barriers to learning and complete their studies successfully (Gatsha and Evans, 2010). Gatsha and Evans (2010) described student support services as an academic assistance given to learners enrolled for an educational programme in order to enhance performance and ensure completion. No one, therefore, can deny the importance and pivotal role of student support services in any educational system (Gujjar, Chaudhry, and Chaudhry, 2009).

In a country like Nigeria, the rising complexity in number of universities, lecturers, enrolments and the like has made the urgent rapid development of student support services inevitable as the manual/traditional method has not only become obsolete and unfashionable but slow, time wasting, frustrating and unfriendly. In the modern world, most services, especially, to large population have become electronic. This is owing to the fact that electronic services have become less laborious, highly efficient and productive.

Until recently, student support services, such as library services, allocation of hostel accommodation, health care services, admission, course registration, orientation and counselling services among others, were delivered manually. However, as educational systems, particularly universities became more complex and proliferated, it became difficult to deliver manually these services as it wasted time that students could have expended on their academic activities. It is in line with this that Alani, Okunola and Subair (2010) posited that the provision of welfare services

manually in all universities was inadequate and seemed to be responsible for learners' low level of satisfaction and poor motivation to learning and therefore, the need to actively seek ways to review and change the manual methods of delivery of student support services.

In view of the foregoing, universities all over the world have continued to change their modes of service delivery in response to the changing demands of the 21st century from which Nigerian universities cannot be an exception. This is clearly evident in the infusion of Information and Communication Technology (ICT) into virtually every area of student support services such as; library services, allocation of hostel accommodation, health care services, admission, course registration, orientation, counseling services and the like in the Nigerian universities. For effective and efficient service delivery, student support services need to be appropriately supported with the use of ICT.

Information and Communication Technology (ICT) is developed to solve problems and provide solutions connected with human needs in more productive ways. If there is no problem to solve, then technology will neither be developed nor adopted (Huda, Tabassum and Ahmed, 2009). Institutional ICT developed and emerged due to problems associated with the manual delivery of support services to students. Such problems included mismanagement of students' academic records, mismanagement of courses registered, loss of student data (Olasina, 2011; Kuria, Wandari and Ondigi, 2011; Odero and Oloko, 2013), delay in the allocation of hostel accommodation, inability of hostel administrators to give accurate information of the occupancy of each room

(Kuria, Wanderi and Ondigi, 2011) such others. Nwankwo (1985), averred that the adoption of ICT has the potential of equipping administrators and decision makers with accuracy of decision, economy of time, ability to disseminate information and retrieve such as and when required.

Stressing the importance of the use of ICT in the delivery of student support services, Boateng, Agyemang and Dzandu (2014) explained that ICT has the capacity of ensuring quick improved services. Prior to the foregoing, Tinto (1987) stated that the integration of technology into student services (admissions, advising, financial aid and orientation) has the benefit of improving service delivery. Tinto (1987) further explained that integrating ICT into student services processes will allow the coordination and efficient grouping of often disparate activities to produce services which are in effect, greater than the sum of their separate parts. Similarly, Ogunsola, Akindojutimi and Omoike (2011), explained that the use of ICT promotes development and improves support services in any organisation. In an academic environment, it speeds up information delivery, facilitates teaching, learning and research.

Despite the enormous potentials of ICT to offer high quality, cost effective and timely service delivery, Akpan-Atata and Enyene (2014) explained that most Universities in Nigeria still use the manual operation method. The reason for this is not far-fetched. ICT in Nigerian university is still largely underdeveloped. In agreement, Afolabi (2009) observed that the prospects of ICT and the ideal situation of educational research in our ICT driven campus is still a mirage.

Academic research has identified a number of indicators that can be used in evaluating support service quality delivery

through ICT. These include (1) availability of ICT facilities (2); accessibility of ICT facilities (3) and application of ICT facilities. A number of studies have examined these indicators.

Etebu (2010) observed that the state of ICT availability for service delivery in Universities is not totally encouraging. Akuegwu, Ntukidem, Ntukidem and Jaja (2012) stated that the availability of ICT for quality service delivery in universities is significantly low. The finding of Akuegwu, Ntukidem, Ntukidem and Jaja (2012) is consistent with the report of Ebirim, Ochai and Obasi (2014) that ICT facilities seem not to be applied in the management and delivery of student services in Nigerian universities.

Accessibility of ICT, on the other hand, is the ability of a person to perceive, use, navigate, communicate and interact with ICT facilities (Oriogu, Ogbuiyi and Ogbuiyi, 2014). Increasing the accessibility of available ICT facilities is considered a positive step in removing barriers that limit students to effective use of ICT facilities in universities (Oriogu, Ogbuiyi and Ogbuiyi, 2014). In the opinion of this study, any institution of learning that wants to thrive in the 21st century must deploy ICT to its support services. In this regards, Goeffrey (2010) posited that there must be of necessity, quality accessories installed with appropriate software and linked to necessary networks to allow access to rich resources beyond the school rather than serve as a resource for minor typesetting and other word processing activities. Matovu (2009) further explained that students are still restricted from access to view results online in spite of the availability of ICT in most schools in Nigeria.

Similarly, Isah (2012) explained that most of the students who have attempted to

access ICT facilities provided by their institutions have one time or the other been stranded and frustrated due to its unavailability or sluggish response to queries. Under the condition just mentioned, delivery of student support services could be adversely affected if students continue to rely on ICT facilities that are either slow or unavailable. It is worth mentioning that although the accessibility to available student support services through ICT within institutions could be very low, it could also be that quite a number of students could not easily access the available support services through ICT because of either low computer literacy skills or ignorance of their availability and relevance.

Deriving from the above, it is quite clear that the University of Ibadan is Nigeria's pioneer university established in 1948 and clearly 12 years older than the closest associate University of Nigeria, established in 1960. While most Universities in the world, especially, developed nations have continued to transverse the academic atmosphere using ICT in leaps and bounds, the same cannot be said of the University of Ibadan confidently despite some level of investments in ICT. This study, therefore, investigated the effectiveness of deploring ICT to student support services delivery at the University of Ibadan, Nigeria.

Statement of the Problem

In the 21st century, all student support services such as; library services, allocation of hostel accommodation, healthcare services, admission, course registration, orientation, counseling services among others used to be provided manually but can now be done through the use of ICT enhanced and prompt service delivery. However, in most Nigerian universities, the

mode of service delivery is still questionable whether manual or electronic.

Several researches on the use, availability and accessibility of ICT facilities have been carried out by Nigerian scholars but none has been able to address the current status of ICT and effective student services delivery implementation methods in the 21st century that is electronic. The universities in Nigeria appear to use a hybrid of electronic and traditional methods of student support services delivery. This has often resulted in misplacement of students' academic records, mismanagement of courses registered for, loss of student data, delay in the allocation of hostel accommodation, inability of hostel administrators to give accurate information of the occupancy of each room in the hostel among others. This study aims at ascertaining the extent of influence of ICT on the delivery of student support services at the University of Ibadan. The importance of a study of this nature cannot be over-emphasised. The success of this study will reduce the time spent by students in attempting to access these services and at the same time increase time that could be devoted to other uses. Again, decision makers are advantaged as students' demographics can be ascertained at the snap of the fingers, in that the electronic equipment could give us what we need (retrieval) on record time.

Hypotheses

The following hypotheses are hereby formulated to guide this study:

H₀₁: There is no significant relationship between the availability of ICT and delivery of student support services (library services, allocation of hostel accommodation, healthcare services, admission, course registration,

orientation and counseling services) at the University of Ibadan, Nigeria.

Ho2: There is no significant relationship between the accessibility of ICT (Internet facility and website) and delivery of student support services (library services, allocation of hostel accommodation, healthcare services, admission, course registration, orientation and counselling services) at the University of Ibadan, Nigeria.

Ho3: There is no significant relationship between application of ICT and delivery of student support services (library services, allocation of hostel accommodation, health care services, admission, course registration, orientation and counselling services) at the University of Ibadan, Nigeria.

Ho4: ICT availability, accessibility and application will not have any significant joint effect on student support services delivery at the University of Ibadan, Nigeria.

Methodology

The descriptive survey research design was adopted for the study. The survey is adopted because it is a design that is suitable for investigating large populations with similar characteristics like this.

The population for the study consisted of all the 13,056 undergraduate students in the 13 faculties of the University of Ibadan. Through multi-stage sampling procedure, 550 undergraduate students were selected to constitute the sample. They were drawn from five faculties: Arts, Education, Pharmacy, Technology and Science. A self-developed structured questionnaire titled "ICT and delivery of student support services questionnaire (ICTDSSSQ)" was used to collect data from respondents. The questionnaire was divided into five sections:

A, B, C, D and E. The sections elicited bio-data, demographic information from respondents, information on ICT facilities availability for student support services, accessibility of ICT facilities for student support services delivery at the University of Ibadan and ICT applicability for student support services delivery at the University of Ibadan. The questions were structured after the likert scale type of 1-4.

The research instrument was face validated by colleagues who are experts in ICT management in the Department of Educational Management of the University of Ibadan and experts in test construction at the Institute of Education of the University of Ibadan. A trial test was conducted on similar targets outside the sampled population using the cronbach alpha statistics that yielded ' $r = 0.89$ ' which was considered high and good enough.

The research questions were analysed using descriptive statistics such as frequency count, mean, percentage and standard deviation. Hypotheses 1-3 were tested using Pearson Product Moment Correlation (PPMC) and hypothesis 4 was tested using linear regression analysis at $p < 0.05$ level of significance.

Results

The results of data collected for the study are analysed as follows:

Hypothesis 1

There is no significant relationship between the availability of ICT and delivery of student support services (e.g. library services, allocation of hostel accommodation, health care services, admission, course registration, orientation and counselling services) at the University of Ibadan, Nigeria.

Table1 Relationship between ICT Availability and Student Support Services Delivery

Variable	N	r	Sig	P	Remark
ICT availability	550	0.158	0.00	<0.05	Significant
Student Support service delivery	550				

P<0.05

Pearson Product Moment correlation coefficient was calculated for the relationship between ICT availability and student support services delivery. The results show that there is low, positive linear relationship ($r = 0.158$) between the variables which was significant at $p < 0.05$. The result shows that ICT availability has influence on level of service delivery. This also implies that increase in availability of ICT facilities will produce corresponding increase in efficiency of service delivery. From the results of the analysis, there is no statistical reason why null hypothesis should not be

rejected. Therefore, null hypothesis is rejected.

Hypothesis 2

There is no significant relationship between the accessibility of ICT (Internet facility and website) and delivery of student support services (e.g. library services, allocation of hostel accommodation, healthcare services, admission, course registration, orientation and counselling services) at the University of Ibadan, Nigeria.

Table 2 Relationship between ICT Accessibility and Student Support Services Delivery

Variable	N	R	Sig	P	Remark
ICT accessibility	550	0.325	0.00	<0.05	Significant
Student Support service delivery	550				

P<0.05

Pearson Product Moment correlation coefficient was estimated to examine the strength and the direction of relationship between ICT accessibility and student support services delivery. The result shows a moderate, positive linear relationship ($r = 0.325$) between the two variables which was significant at $p < 0.05$. The result shows that ICT accessibility is related to student support

service delivery. From the results of the analysis, there is no statistical reason why null hypothesis should not be rejected. Therefore, null hypothesis is rejected.

Hypothesis 3

There is no significant relationship between application of ICT and delivery of student support services (e.g. library services,

allocation of hostel accommodation, healthcare services, admission, course registration, orientation and counselling services) at the University of Ibadan, Nigeria.

Table 3 Relationship between ICT Accessibility and Student Support Services Delivery

Variable	N	R	Sig	P	Remark
ICT Application	550	0.327	0.00	<0.05	Significant
Student Support service delivery	550				

P<0.05

Pearson Product Moment correlation coefficient was calculated to examine the strength and the direction of relationship between ICT application and student support services delivery. The result shows a moderate, positive linear relationship ($r=0.327$) between the two variables which was significant at $p<0.05$. The result shows that ICT application could influence student support service delivery to some extent. The result also implies that increase in application of ICT facilities in student

support service delivery will lead to correspondent increase in service efficiency and effectiveness. From the results of the analysis, there is no statistical reason why null hypothesis should not be rejected. Therefore, null hypothesis is rejected.

Hypothesis 4

ICT availability, accessibility and application will not have any significant joint effect on student support services delivery at the University of Ibadan, Nigeria.

Table 4: Summary of Multiple Regression Showing the Joint Contribution of ICT Availability, ICT Accessibility and ICT Application on Student Support Services Delivery

Model Summary				
Model	R	R Square	Adjusted R Square	Std. Error of the Estimate
1	0.343 ^a	0.118	0.116	0.634
a. Predictors: (Constant), ICTavailabilityaccessibilityapplication				

The model summary of multiple regression analysis reveals a R Square (i.e. the coefficient of determination) of 0.118. The coefficient of determination is the proportion of the variance of the dependent variable (Student support services delivery) that can be explained by the joint variation in the independent variables (ICT availability,

accessibility and application). Thus, 11.8% of the variation in student support services delivery can be explained by the joint differences in ICT availability, accessibility and application.

ANOVA ^a						
Model		Sum of Squares	Df	Mean Square	F	Sig.
1	Regression	29.403	1	29.403	73.209	.000 ^b
	Residual	220.095	548	0.402		
	Total	249.498	549			
a. Dependent Variable: ICT_delivery						
b. Predictors: (Constant), ICTavailabilityaccessibilityapplication						

Results Interpretation

A simple linear regression was calculated to predict the joint influence of ICT availability, accessibility, and application on student support services delivery. A regression equation that was significant was found [$F(1, 548) = 73.209$, $P < 0.05$], with an R^2 of .118. Therefore, Delivery of student support services = $1.456 + .440(\text{ICT availability, accessibility and application})$. This implies that student support service delivery increased by .440 for each combined variance in ICT availability, accessibility and application.

Discussion of Findings

Table 1 established the correlation between ICT availability and student support services delivery and found a weak positive correlation. This indicates a linear relationship that is significant between ICT availability and student support services delivery. In other words, an increase in the availability of ICT is significantly related to an increase in the delivery of student support services. This result is not surprising as it corroborates the work of Akpan-Atata and Enyene (2014) which affirmed that when ICT facilities are available and utilised, the least period of time is spent in the delivery of support services to students. This means that

the availability of ICT facilities fast track the delivery of support services. Similarly, Major (2013) noted that availability of online applications, registration, scoring of scripts, and collating and disseminating of results would improve the efficiency, accuracy and reliability of admission procedures. In the same vein, Ugodulunwa and Mastapha (2005) posited that the scoring, processing and collating of results could also be improved through the use of computers and computer software. Matovu (2009) in a study titled, "Availability, accessibility and use of ICT in management of students' academic affairs" in Makerere University found that ICT facilities emerged because of the poor delivery of services to students such as mismanagement of students' academic records. He, therefore, concluded that if internet facilities, computer, management, information systems, electronic databases are all available to administrators, lecturers and students, all other things being equal, it will facilitate delivery of services. In the words of Odero and Oloko (2013), availability of online registration is quicker than manual system, it enables students know if they had been registered for the examination, it reduces paperwork, it is more reliable than manual, also allows us do corrections after entries are made, reduces multiple

registration of candidates and it reduces impersonation in the examination.

Table 2 established the correlation between ICT accessibility and student support services delivery and found a moderate positive correlation, indicating a linear relationship that is significant between ICT accessibility and student support services delivery. In other words, an increase in the accessibility of ICT is significantly related to an increase in the delivery of student support services. This result is not surprising as it corroborates the statement of Southern Association of Colleges and Schools (2000) that institutions need to provide adequate access to appropriate range of student support services, including admissions, financial aid, advising, delivery of course materials, placement and counselling through ICT in order to provide a platform for effective teaching and learning that will help to ensure students' success.

Table 3 established the correlation between ICT application and student support services delivery and found a moderate positive correlation, indicating a linear relationship that is significant between ICT application and student support services delivery. In other words, an increase in the application of ICT to support services is significantly related to an increase in the delivery of student support services. This finding is in line with the finding of Adebowale (2014) that if student support services are allowed to share in the ICT capability of the university, many needs of students are likely to be met as prompt as possible. In the same vein, Ahmad (2011) opined that the application of ICT is necessary in areas of collection of students' data, recording of students' results, allocation of hostel accommodation, course

registration and effective keeping of students' records.

Table 4 explained the relative and joint contributions of ICT availability, accessibility, application on delivery of student support services and found out that ICT availability, accessibility and application have combined relative influences on the delivery of student support services. The finding corroborates the work of Boateng, Agyemang and Dzandu (2014) which opined that ICT facilities (availability, accessibility and application) can ensure improved and quick service. Similarly, Major (2013) noted that the transition to online applications, registration, scoring of scripts, collating and dissemination of results will improve the efficiency, accuracy and reliability of service procedures. Mbakwem and Okeke (2007) in support of this believed that such transition will guarantee safety, security and efficiency in handling large volumes of scores over a very short period. Going by these assertions, it means that the introduction of ICT in the delivery of student support services could become an antidote for effective solutions to student support problems that would have been difficult, if not impossible, to solve through human effort.

Conclusion

This study examined perceptions of ICT on student support services delivery at the University of Ibadan in Nigeria that is generalizable in the context of what is investigated among five hypotheses. Significant relationship was found between the independent variable (ICT) and the dependent variable (student support services). Joint and relative significant relationships were also found. The findings lead to some simple conclusions that the crux of the study is perception of ICT

support services and not "information transmission" is still weak in Nigerian Universities. Time and accuracy are not guaranteed in the manual/traditional method of information processing which forms the hybrid system that Nigerian universities currently adopt. These challenges affect the smooth operation of the university system.

Recommendations

Based on the findings of the study, the following recommendations are hereby made to improve the quality of student support services delivery in the University.

- i. The University authority should make necessary effort at providing adequate ICT facilities for both academic and non-academic sections of the University for effective delivery of student support services.
- ii. Available student support services through ICT should be made easily accessible to students by compelling the various units/sections of the university to adopt ICT in their process.
- iii. The university should seek for fund locally and internationally to fund ICT outside the normal federal budget allocations.
- iv. There should be staff exchange programmes to world class universities outside Africa to build capacity of its personnel for effective student support services delivery.

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