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Influence of Computer Literacy on Students in three University Libraries in South-Western, Nigeria

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Abstract

Computer literacy is critical to students' success in university libraries because of its influence in information organization and service delivery. The application of ICT in the university libraries in Nigeria has necessitated the need for competency in the use of computer. Therefore, the study investigated the influence of computer literacy on students in three university libraries in South-Western, Nigeria. Survey research design was adopted. Questionnaire was used to collect data for the study, and descriptive statistical method was used in analyzing the data collected. Simple random sampling techniques were used to administer the questionnaire. The findings revealed that 52.1% of the respondents have fair level of computer literacy skills which they acquire mainly through formal computer / IT training programme and practical self-teaching. Also it shows that the respondents are only proficient on the use of Microsoft word. The findings revealed that inadequate computer in the library and Lack of information literacy and sponsorship to computers/IT training program in the University Libraries are the major challenges encountered. The study recommends that universities should provide adequate computer systems in the library and also equip student with proper training on computer literacy.

Key Words: Computer literacy, University libraries, South-Western, Nigeria.

Introduction: The increase use of computer by students and academics alike is an important measure of technological development in an academic environment. Thus, the computer is an electronic device that accepts data, process data, store data and disseminates data as meaningful output. The use of computer is now dominant in all areas of human endeavours more especially in academic institutions. Therefore, there is the need for acquisition of computer skills in order for students to operate the computer effectively. Computer technologies have enabled individuals to handle information processing effectively with greater speed and accuracy regardless of the time and distance.

Computer literacy is critical to students' success in university libraries because of its influence in information organization and service delivery. Although the importance of computer literacy in today's rapidly changing environment cannot be denied. Hence there are still challenges that hinder the effective development of computer literacy in academic intuitions. According to Koschman (1995) some of the constraints include deficiency of funds, scarcity of space, and absence of faculty who believe that a computer course is important in the education of students. Computer literacy skill involves productive use of computer to accomplish different tasks, including using the Internet annd e-mail constructively, word processing for essays and other written reports, spreadsheets for presentation and ease of analysis of research data, oral presentation using power point and an introduction to the development of websites and web pages.

Literature Review: Information and communication Technology (ICT) encompasses the effective use of equipment and programs to access, retrieve, convert, store, organize, manipulate and present data and information. Thus, computer is one of the most predominant ICT tools that greatly perform these functions and plays critical role in the life of students.

Therefore, computer is an electronic device that can follow instructions to accept data as input, process the data and produce information as output (Unagha, 2008). It is also an electronic device

that accepts data as input, process and manipulates data to produce meaningful result as an output. The most prominent among the information technologies is the computer which functions as an embracing mechanism and also an effective electronic device that is capable of accepting, storing, retrieving and processing data based on predefined instructions (Owoyemi, 2001).

Today, it performs manipulation of non- mathematical nature such as sorting, inter-filing, searching, deleting, updating, designing, reproducing and printing. These non-mathematical operations of the computer are the ones most required by libraries and information centers (Imeremba, 2005). The computer is the primary tool with which this change can be affected. Electronic mail, computer based testing, computer aided instruction, digital textbooks and images along with valuable resources on the Internet are now essential to learning and coping tools for students.

Reitz (2004) defines "computer literacy" as the skills required to retrieve information efficiently and communicate effectively using computer hardware and software, based on conceptual understanding of computer technology and how it can be used to accomplish specific task, including an awareness of its inherent limitations as well as its advantages. Safahieh and Asemi (2008) states that it is the knowledge and ability a person have to use computers and technology efficiently. Therefore, computer literacy is the knowledge and ability to use computer efficiently and effectively with a proficient skills covering levels of elementary use to programming and advanced problem solving.

Leland, et al (2000) in America Committee of Computer Competency (CCC), drafted computer literacy competencies (minimum knowledge) that are considered necessary for academic success as:

> *Using word processing programs effectively, use of library databases and catalogues to locate print materials; finding information on the Internet and evaluate its reliability and usefulness, being able to write email effectively and appreciating the ethical issues of computing.*

Therefore basic computer literacy is the learning of specific hardware and software applications-as a prerequisite for engaging with new "digital", silicon or other electronic literacy. If students are unable to effectively operate a personal computer, we argue, they would lack the requisite foundation on which to build the sophisticated skills that are now needed to fully participate in today's digital society (Council of Australian university librarians, 2001).

University libraries are at present providing their students with better and efficient information services through the use of computer in order to effectively access information with ease. Computer literacy is a mixture of awareness (knowledge of what computers are and how they work), and interaction (ability to interact with computers)(Brock, et al 1992; Hess, 1994; Capron and Johnson 2004). According to Hindi, et al (2002) the perspective of computer literacy involves conceptual knowledge related to basic terminology (including social, ethical, legal and global issues) and skills necessary to perform tasks in word processing database, spreadsheet, presentation, graphics and basic operating system functions. Tharanganie, et al (2011) asserts that a student is considered "computer literate" if he/ she possess all the following six skills:

i. Skills in basic hardware and basic operating system functions-identifying computer parts, powering up and shutting down the computer, open/save files, and recognize different file types.
ii. Skills in word processing-Create, save, print document, insert tables / charts/labels/symbols, format page layout (margins, page number, and page borders).
iii. Skills in spreadsheet- create/save/print spreadsheets, insert tables/ charts, insert function and formula.
iv. Skills in presentation graphic create/ save/print slide shows, insert new slide/layout/tables/charts and create animations.
v. Skills in databases-Design basic databases with queries and reports/forms.
vi. Skills in internet and e-mail-surfing the Internet and sending email messages.

Considerably, it is necessary that students should posses one of these computer literacy skills in order to have good ability to use the computers in the library effectively. Allison (2005) said that those without basic computer skills have difficult time finding job and stay connected with the local and global society. The ability of operating computer systems to perform personal, job-related tasks, use web browsers and searching on the internet to retrieve information needs and communicating with

others by sending and retrieving email is essential part of every one's skill especially librarians (safahieh and Asemi, 2008). Computer technologies have enabled individuals to handle information processing effectively with greater speed and accuracy regardless of the time and distance.

According to Liao and Pope (2008) computer technology holds the promise of increased productivity. However, this promise is not realized due to limited abilities of those who make use of computers. Thus, effective use of computers depends on individual's computer literacy and it has been widely recognized as a vital skill. Oketunji (2002) confirmed that the application of information technologies in Nigerian universities has today become an acceptable norm, being the most realistic way and means of providing timely, accurate and efficient information services.

Objectives of the Study: The main objective of this study is to investigate the impact of computer literacy on students in three university libraries in South-Western, Nigeria.
. The specific objectives of the study are to:

1) determine the computer literacy level of students in the university libraries;
2) ascertain how computer literacy skill is acquired by the library users;
3) identify the problems encountered by students in the use of computers in the university libraries.

Scope of the Study: The study covers the university libraries of Babcock University, University of Ibadan and Lagos State University. And it specifically focuses on the students of these three universities. The study also investigated the influence of computer literacy on students on the use of the computer in selected university libraries in South-western Nigeria.

Methodology: Survey research method was adopted and questionnaire was used to collect data. A total of three hundred and fifty questionnaires were sampled from the total population of students of University of Ibadan, Lagos State University and Babcock University, out of which two hundred and eighty five copies were completed for analysis using frequency counts and simple percentage to answer the research questions.

Analysis of Findings:

Table 1: Distribution of the respondents by Institution

Institution	Total number of questionnaire administered	Total number of questionnaire returned	Percentage
Lagos	99	88	30.9
University of	100	72	25.3
Ibadan	151	125	43.9
Babcock	350	285	100%
Total			

Table 1 shows that 88(30.9%) of the respondent were from Lagos, 72(25.3%) were from University of Ibadan, while 125(43.9%) were from Babcock.

Table 2: Distribution of the respondents by Institution

Institution	Frequency	Percentage
Lagos	88	30.9
University of Ibadan	72	25.3
Babcock	125	43.9
Total	285	100.0

Table 2 shows that 88(30.9%) of the respondent were from Lagos, 72(25.3%) were from University of Ibadan, while 125(43.9%) were from Babcock.

Table 3: Distribution of the respondents by Level

Level	Frequency	Percentage
100 level	37	13.0
200level	41	14.4
300 level	67	23.5
400 level	93	32.6
500 level	1	.4

700 level	39	13.7
800 level	7	2.5
Total	285	100.0

Table 3 above shows that 37(13.0%) of the respondent were 100 levels, 41(14.4%) were 200 levels, 67(23.5%) were 300 levels, 93(32.6%) were 400 levels, 1(.4%) was 500 levels, 39(13.7%) were 700 levels, while 7(2.5%) were 800 levels.

Table 4: Distribution of the respondents by Gender

Gender	Frequency	Percentage
Male	166	58.2
Female	119	41.8
Total	285	100.0

Table 4 shows that 166(58.2%) of the respondent were males while their females counterparts were 119(41.8%).

Table 5: Computer literacy level

Sl.No.	Statements	Yes	No
1	Microsoft Word	240 84.2%	45 15.8%
2	Microsoft Power Point	111 38.9%	174 61.1%
3	Corel Draw	43 15.1%	242 84.9%
4	Microsoft Excel	99 34.7%	186 65.3%
5	Microsoft Access	23 8.1%	262 91.9%

The response in Table 5 shows that 240(84.2%) of the respondents are proficient in the use of Microsoft Word.

Table 5b: General knowledge of Computer Usage by the respondents

Sl.No.	Statements	Options	Frequency	Percentage
1	Does your knowledge and skill in computer enable you use the Internet?	No Yes	261 24	91.6 8.4
2	How often do you have access to and use the computer?	None Rarely Often Very often	92 150 39 4	32.3 52.6 13.7 1.4
3	How efficient can you use the keyboard to execute command in the computer?	Low Fair High Very high	87 125 71 2	30.5 43.9 24.9 .7
4	What is the level of your computer literacy skill?	Low Fair High Very high	67 146 69 3	23.5 51.2 24.2 1.1
5	Can you effectively use the mouse to execute command in the computer	Low Fair High Very high	112 125 47 1	39.3 43.9 16.5 .4

Table 5b shows that 261(91.6%) of the respondents indicated that their knowledge and skill in computer do not enable them use the Internet; 150(52.6%) indicated that they rarely have access to and use the computer; 125(43.9%) are fair in the use of keyboard to execute command in the

computer; 146(51.2%) are fair on their level of computer literacy skill and 125(43.9%) are also fair on the effective use of the mouse to execute command in the computer.

Table 6: Ways users acquire computer literacy skill

Sl.No.	Statement	Yes	No
1	Formal Computer/IT program	170 59.6%	115 40.4%
2	Practical Self-teaching	153 53.7%	132 46.3%
3	Assisted by Friends/Colleagues	51 17.9%	234 82.1%
4	Computer/IT books	22 7.7%	263 92.3%
5	Learn by trial and error	52 18.2%	233 81.8%

Table 6 shows that 170(59.6%) of the students acquired computer literacy skills through formal Computer/IT program and 153(53.7%) through practical Self-teaching.

Table 7: Problems encountered on the use of computers in the university libraries by students

Sl.No.	Statement	Yes	No
1	Frequent breakdown of system	43 15.1%	242 84.9%
2	Electric power failure	115 40.4%	170 59.6%
3	Inadequate computers in my library	206 72.3%	79 27.7%
4	Lack of/inadequate computer skills	4 1.4%	281 98.6%
5	Lack of time	40 14.0%	245 86.0%
6	Lack of information literacy and sponsorship to computers/IT training program in the University Library	280 98.2%	5 1.8%
7	Others	31 10.9%	254 89.1%

Table 7 shows that 242(84.9%) of the respondents indicated frequent breakdown of system and 280(98.2%) lack of information literacy and sponsorship to computers/IT training program in the University Library are the major problems encountered on the use of computer.

Discussion of Findings: The findings shows that majority of the students indicates that their level of computer literacy skill is fair and they can use Microsoft word, mouse, keyboard. It was also shown that most of the students are not proficient in Microsoft access, PowerPoint, Coral draw and Excel. It was revealed that majority of the students acquire computer literacy skill mainly through formal computer / IT training programme and practical self-teaching. This supports the study of Hindi et al (2002) that for most, if not all, students' formal education represents a key opportunity to learn and develop computer skills needed for this personal use and professional career. While educational institutions are challenged to provide up-to-date equipment and software packages, educators must also recognize the need to keep abreast of pertinent instructional techniques and trends. The findings revealed that inadequate computer in the library and Lack of information literacy and sponsorship to computers/IT training program in the University Libraries are the major challenges encountered.

Conclution and Recommendations: The influence of computer literacy in education promotes students performance in web-based courses, online searching and effective use of library databases which are essential to students academic performance. Therefore, university libraries should endeavour to provide students with adequate computer system in the university libraries and also provide computer literacy skill that will enable them function effectively in the use of computer system and its services. University management should include computer literacy as a course in their curriculum and make it compulsory for every student entering the university so that they will be equipped with computer literacy skills. Also university libraries should endeavour to include computer literacy as part of the library orientation course so that students can effectively fit in the technology driven library.

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