Availability, Perception And Constraints Of Final Year Students To The Use Of Computer-Based Information Communication Technologies (Cb-Icts).

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Abstract: There is no doubt that ICTs are the major focus for the day to day running of every society. ICTs create a room for a quicker, faster, easier access and exchange of information in the world today. The study investigated the availability, attitude and constraints of final year students in the use of computer-based ICTs (CB-ICTs) in Abia State. Data were collected with the use of a well structured questionnaire. Data collected were analysed with descriptive statistics. Results from analysis revealed that the mean age of the respondents was 23 years, 7 CB-ICTs were available to the respondents at varying degrees. The respondents had a positive attitude ($\bar{x} = 3.11$) to the use of CB-ICTs and the major constraint to their use of CB-ICTs was poor resource centre where they can access CB-ICTs. Based on the findings we recommended that resource centre(s) should be built in the institution and if it exists, should be well equipped and running. Equally, awareness to the fact that there is or there will be a resource centre in the institution should be widely spread so that students can utilize the opportunity of its existence and make maximum use of the facilities there in. On the other hand, internet service provider should scale up their services in the area so as to provide a more stable internet connection in the institution as this will enable the students to use more effectively CB-ICTs in the institution and for their academic work.

Key words: Communication, Computer-based, Final year student, Information, Information Communication Technologies (ICTs), Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs), Technologies,

INTRODUCTION

Information is essential for facilitating an all round development of the society and bringing about social and economic change. The success of any laudable development programme and the development of desirable social economic status depend to some extent on the communication system adopted as it is that which makes new facts, figures and opinions available to the public (Yahaya, 2003). Dissemination of information using the right communication technology is very important if the receiver must make a meaning out of the message received. The importance of Information Communication Technologies (ICTs) in the overall development of the world as a global village cannot be over emphasized. This is because the world access information (data) quicker, faster and even easier by using ICTs and this has a drastic effects on human existence both in the developed and developing countries.

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The development of ICT has encouraged the usage and accessibility of information by many people at the same time to make timely decisions (Adekoya , 2006). In our world today, access to information is faster and quicker, especially now that there is integration of computers to facilitate accessibility of information. Spore (2004) stressed that the accessibility of information which is made readily available by Information Communication Technologies (ICTs) has helped in molding our attitudes towards life. According to Alocha (2010) ICTs can be defined as umbrella term that include communication devices or application, encompassing radio, television, cellular phones, computer and network hardware and software, satellite systems and so on, as well as the various services and applications associated with them such as video conferencing and distant learning. Information Communication Technologies have both hardware and software components. They refer to innovations that facilitate the capturing, storage, processing, transmission and display of information by electronic means (Michleis and Van Crowder, 2001). They can also be defined as a diverse set of technological tools and resources used to create, communicate, disseminate, store and manage information (Fillip, 2000). ICTs are combinations of softwares and hardwares and means of production that allow processing, exchange, management of knowledge and information, using a range of electronic technologies which when converged on new configuration are flexible, adaptable, enabling and capable of transforming an organization (O'Farrel, 2007). Kiplangat (2003) stressed that ICTs have become a driving force in development, providing a means of narrowing the information gap between developed and developing countries and among their communities. ICTs offer opportunities for vertical and horizontal communication and for opening up of communication channels for communities, the intermediaries and development organizations that support communities. Information Communication Technology (ICT)

is often used as an extended synonym for Information Technology (IT), but is a more specific term that stresses the role of unified communication and the integration of telecommunications (telephone line and wireless signals), computers as well as necessary enterprise software, middleware, storage, audio, visual and audio-visual systems, which enable users to access, store, transmit, and manipulate information (Wikipedia, 2016). Unified communications (UC) is the integration of real-time communication services such as instant-messaging (chat), presence information, telephony (including IP technology), video conferencing, data sharing (including web connected electronic whiteboards or Interactive White Boards, call control and speech recognition with non-real time communication services such as unified messaging (integrated voicemail, e-mail, SMS and Fax) (Wikipedia, 2016). Unified communication allows an individual to send a message on one medium and receive the same communication on another medium. The best known computer network is the internet (Wikipedia, 2016). The internet is a collection of interconnected computer networks that allows information to be exchanged around the world (Alocha, 2010). It has been described as people's network that allows every user to be an information provider and knowledge sharer (Richardson, 2007). The adage "information is power" (Kintumonye, 1992) is by no means significant in the use of ICTs but most African countries have not devoted adequate attention to providing their citizens with access to information, especially in the educational sector where it is needed the most for the transformation of all the other sectors of life. The Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) which is a transition from the Millennium Development Goals (MDGs) are referred to as the global goals set to be achieved by 2030 by the countries of the world. They include no poverty, zero hunger, good health and well being, quality education, gender equality, clean water and sanitation, affordable and clean energy, decent work and economic growth, industry, innovation and infrastructure, reduced inequalities, sustainable cities and communities, responsible consumption and production, climate action, life below water, life on land, peace, justice and strong institutions and partnerships for goals. According to a new Oversea Development Institute (ODI) flagship report, "not a single goal will be met by 2030 if the world continues as today. There is therefore a need for more action and awareness. Education is one of the most powerful instruments for reducing poverty and inequality. The knowledge is readily increased by the limited connection to Information Communication Technologies (ICTs) which is the key driver for improving the educational and economic prospects of a country. ICTs generally play a vital role in the attainment of the SDGs.

PROBLEM STATEMENT

As ICT is the major focus of the day to day running of societies in the world due to the fact that the world is now a global village, the need of making it effective is important (Alocha, 2010). Both the real time and non real time computer-based Information Communication are now the bet for today's communication. The use of e-mail, SMS, instant messaging, networking hardware, and internet by youths especially students nowadays cannot be over emphasized. Students are regarded to be in their final year of study when they are in their last academic year as appropriated by the tertiary institutions they are admitted into which might be in their fourth or fifth year of study as the case may be for a four-year or five-year course respectively. During their final year, they are expected to be engaged squarely in academic work that should help them excel and graduate. Information Communication Technologies especially computer-based ICTs are readily accessible by these final year students in the sense that most of them if not all in one way or the other have access to the internet or web either with the aid of their internet-connected phones (java and simbian phones) on their laptop or desktop connected with the aid of a modem. Students can access information on the web: download materials, watch videos, read news, know more about sports and lots more about what is happening around them readily and at any time. With all these, there is still performance below expected from most of our final year students in their academics. The question now is, does it mean that those who call themselves students especially final year students do not use computer-based ICTs to get information (data) that will help them excel in their academics? If they do, then how? For what aim? What is their attitude towards these facilities? Why their poor academic performance when they can get academic information that can make them have all A_s when they use computer-based ICTs.

OBJECTIVES OF THE STUDY

The main objective is to assess the use of computer-based information among final year students in the study area for their academic work. The specific objectives include:

i. examine the demographic characteristics of the final year students in the study area
ii. ascertain the availability of computer-based ICTs to the final year students in the study area
iii. ascertain the attitude of the respondents towards the use of computer-based ICTs
iv. examine the constraints faced by the final year students in their use of computer-based ICTs.

METHODOLOGY

The study area is Michael Okpara University of agriculture, Umudike (MOUAU), Abia state, Nigeria. It is one of the three federal universities of agriculture in Nigeria. It was established in November, 1992 and started formal activities in May, 1993. The university is located in the well-known agricultural training and research community of Umudike in the South-Eastern part of Nigeria along the Umuahia- Ikot Ekpene highway, approximately 12 kilometers from Umuahia the Abia state capital. It lies between longitude 70^0 and 70^0 05^1E and latitude 50^0 and 50^0 25^1N. MOUAU runs the collegiate system. It has 10 colleges, 2 schools and several centres of academic excellence. MOUAU runs both science and arts courses ranging from agricultural courses, natural science courses, engineering courses, applied sciences to management sciences (www.mouau.edu.ng). The population of the study will include all the final year students in the area. Multi stage sampling technique was used in the selection of the sample for the study. The first stage involved the purposive selection of 6 colleges from the 10 colleges in the university

which are the College of Agricultural, Economics, Rural Sociology and Extension, College of Management Sciences, College of Engineering and Engineering Technology, College of Physical and Applied Sciences, College of Applied Food Science and Tourism, College of Education. The reason for this selection is for the entire university certificate courses to be represented. The second stage involved the random selection of two (2) Departments each from the selected colleges bringing it to a total of 12 departments used. The third stage involved the random selection of 20 students who are in their actual final year each from the selected Departments making it up to 240 respondents. A structured questionnaire was used to collect data from the respondents. The data collected was analysed using descriptive statistics like frequencies, percentages and mean score.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

Demographic characteristics of the respondents

According to the descriptive statistics presented in Table 1, most survey respondents were female (68%). This percentage of the sample being female depicts that at least there would be a positive perception of the respondents towards the computer-based ICTs (CB-ICTs) for academic work majorly. The mean age of the respondents was about 23 years. This shows that the sample was in their active years and their perception to technological tools would be positive. Majority (89.6%) of the sampled respondents were single. Most of the respondents under study were Christians (92.9%).

Table 1: *Demographic characteristics of the respondents*

Variables	Frequency	Percentages
Sex		
Male	77	32.1
Female	163	67.9
Total	240	100
Age		
16-20	8	3.3
21-25	189	78.8
26-30	39	16.3
31-35	4	1.7
36-40	-	-
Total	240	100
Marital Status		
Single	215	89.6
Married	25	10.4
Divorced	-	-
Widowed	-	-
Total	240	100
Religion		
Christianity	223	92.9
Islam	5	2.1
Traditional belief	12	5
Total	240	100

Source: *Field data, 2016.*

Computer-based ICT Facilities Available to the respondents

From Table 2 which is on the availability of Computer-based ICTs (CB-ICTs) by the respondents, it was discovered that among the CB-ICTs available to the respondents at varying levels, the readily available was mobile phones (92.9%). E-mail (74.2%) was equally readily available to them. CB-ICTs like Camcoders (0.4%), Digital cameras (2.1%), were not readily available to them.

Table 2: *Computer-based ICT Facilities Available to the respondents*

Computer-based ICT Facilities	Availability			
	Yes		No	
	Freq	%	Freq	%
Computer	103	42.9	137	57.1
Mobile phones	223	92.9	17	7.1
E-mail	178	74.2	62	25.8
World Wide Web (Website)	129	53.7	111	46.3
Online newspapers/ magazines	45	18.7	195	81.3
Online Books/ Journals/ proceedings	45	18.7	195	81.3
Internet	135	56.3	105	43.7
Video recording	18	7.5	222	92.5
Digital camera	5	2.1	235	97.9
Camcorder	1	0.4	239	99.6

Source: *Field data, 2016.*

Attitude of the respondents towards Computer-based ICT Facilities

From the descriptive statistics in Table 3, we discovered that the attitude of the respondents towards the use of CB-ICTs was positive as depicted in their attitudinal score of ($\bar{x} = 3.11$) which is higher than the bench mark of 2.5 set. The respondents also had positive attitude to some statements posed to them like: CB-ICTs are the best to use in academic work (3.89), CB-ICTs provide new knowledge and information ($\bar{x} = 3.8$), CB-ICTs provide easy access to current issues ($\bar{x} = 3.78$) amongst others. They (respondents) equally asserted as they showed negative attitude in the areas that using CB-ICTs is a waste of time ($\bar{x} = 1.42$), and the lack of funds to purchase CB-ICTs is the major reason I do not use them ($\bar{x} = 2.49$).

Table 3: *Attitude of the respondents towards Computer-based ICT Facilities*

Attitudinal statements	Weighted Sum	Weighted Mean	Overall Response
CB-ICTs provide new knowledge and information	912	3.8	Positive
Using CB-ICTs is a waste of time	341	1.42	Negative
Brings about awareness and understanding of ideas/topics	768	3.2	Positive
Provide better access to information	888	3.7	Positive
Use CB-ICTs to do my assignments	696	2.9	Positive
Provide access to high quality information about recent issues	602	2.51	Positive
Improve self confidence and self esteem	717	2.99	Positive
Provides easy access to current issues	907	3.78	Positive
Provides more reliable information on topical issues	840	3.5	Positive
Lack of funds to purchase CB-ICTs is the major reason I do not use them	597	2.49	Negative
CB-ICTs are the best to use in academic work	933	3.89	Positive
Grand Mean		**34.18**	
Attitudinal Score		**3.11**	**Positive**

Source: *Field data, 2016.*

Constraints to the use of CB-ICTs

The constraints identified by the final year students to their use of CB-ICTs included: poor resource centre where I can access CB-ICTs (100%), Unstable/unreliable electric power supply (87.5%), lack of money to access the CB-ICTs on their own (86.7%). The respondents showed that low computer literacy (12.5%) was the least constraint which implies that most of the respondents were computer literate. This affirms the fact that the respondents in their final year in school have in one way or the other availed themselves of computer literacy studies. They equally asserted that lack of awareness about CB-ICTs (20.8%) was a minimal constraint to their use of CB-ICTs. It could therefore be said that the respondents were aware of CB-ICTs.

Table 4: *Constraints to the use of CB-ICTs*

Constraints	Frequency	Percentage
Lack of awareness about CB-ICTs	50	20.8
Unstable/unreliable electric power supply	210	87.5
Poor resource centre where I can access CB-ICTs	240	100
Lack of money to purchase CB-ICTs	205	85.4
Lack of money to access the CB-ICTs on my own	208	86.7
Lack of time	-	-
Religious reasons	-	-
Low computer literacy	30	12.5
Poor internet connectivity	146	60.8
Inadequate source of information about the CB-ICTs	160	66.7

Source: *Field data, 2016.*

CONCLUSION / RECOMMENDATIONS

Information is essential for facilitating an all round development of the society and bringing about social and economic change. ICTs create a room for a quicker, faster, easier access and exchange of information in the world today. The study investigated the availability, attitude and constraints of final year students in the use of computer-based ICTs (CB-ICTs) in Abia State. Data collected were analysed with descriptive statistics. Results from analysis revealed that the mean age of the respondents was 23 years, about 7 CB-ICTs were available to the respondents at varying degrees. The respondents had a positive attitude to the use of CB-ICTs and the major constraint to their use of CB-ICTs was poor resource centre where they can access CB-ICTs. Based on the findings we recommended that resource centre(s) should be built in the institution and if it exists, should be well equipped and running. Equally, awareness to the fact that there is or there will be a resource centre in the institution should be widely spread so that students can utilize the opportunity of its existence and make maximum use of the facilities there in. on the other hand, internet service provider should scale up their services in the area so as to provide a more stable internet connection in the institution as this will enable the students to use more effectively CB-ICTs in the institution and for their academic work.

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