

# The Application of ICT Competence in Library Service Delivery in Public Libraries in South-South, Nigeria

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## ABSTRACT

Service delivery in libraries is all the activities that librarians engage with in providing information resources that are available to the questions and queries of the users and to meet their information needs. However poor service delivery appears to be rampant in public libraries this can be as a result of poor ICT competence on service delivery. This study therefore investigated the influence of ICT application on service delivery. The study adopted survey research design. The population of the study comprised 319 library personnel from public library board in South-South, Nigeria. The questionnaire was the main data collection instrument and data analysis was done using simple frequency count and percentages. Findings revealed that ICT competence had significant influence on service delivery by library personnel in public libraries in South-South, Nigeria ( $Adj.R^2 = 0.606$ ,  $F(3, 255) = 131.880$ ,  $p < 0.05$ ). ICT skill  $R^2=0.550$ ,  $t(252)= 5.673$ ,  $p < 0.05$ ) had significant influence on service delivery in public libraries in South-South Nigeria. The study concluded that ICT application improved service delivery of library personnel in public libraries in South-South, Nigeria. The study recommended library management should formulate invest in the training and retraining of librarians in public libraries in South-South, Nigeria.

**Keywords:** ICT Competence, Library personnel, Public libraries, Service delivery

## INTRODUCTION

Globally, libraries are dedicated to being socially responsible by contributing services that reach people in all works of life regardless of their social status, thereby bridging the information gaps through service delivery to people in the society. Public libraries exist in many countries across the world including Nigeria and are often considered essential part of an educated and literate populace. Service delivery by employees in public libraries are fundamental to the quality of education. Since public libraries are saddled with the responsibility of providing free access to a wide range of resources, including books, magazines, newspapers and electronic resources such as e-books, audiobooks, and online databases. This allows people to learn about a variety of subjects and keep up with current happenings around them.

In other words, the objective of service delivery in public libraries is to ensure that the information needs of users are met through effective and efficient provision of information services and resources in the library, for research, learning and teaching. Mbofung and Popoola (2014) described library service delivery as that which involves individuals, who have expectations of the library and information science professionals in such ways as how they relate and behave towards the users, colleagues, their organizations and the entire society.

In the practice of librarianship, service delivery is determined from the types of services rendered in the library and how it is rendered. Traditionally, libraries provide information to their users and carry out their duties such as collection development, user instruction, reference services and current awareness services manually. Public library also provides services such as the organization of information and analyses of information needs of users. Meyega (2018) categorized library services into user services and technical services. User services include: circulation, bibliographic instructions, government documentation, special

collection and reference services while technical services include: acquisition, cataloguing, classification, interlibrary loan, serial systems and document delivery.

Scholars like Emasealu and **Umeozor (2021)**, Sahabi and Ogunbote (2017) have rated service delivery in Nigerian libraries as poor, particularly in the area of community service delivery programs. Factors lowering service delivery of libraries could also be the collection of obsolete library resources in Nigeria, especially in public libraries in Nigeria where most of the library resources are full of outdated and mostly irrelevant materials for this present-day use. Public libraries may not be effectively utilized by the public as expected owing to the fact that most of the library resources are outdated, websites are lacking and there are no directory service deliveries available in public libraries to locate their web sites. In spite of all these, no scholarly literature has been written on the topic on behalf of public libraries in South-South, Nigeria. The implication of this is that there would be no emerging of library web sites in the public libraries in Nigeria and wherever it thus exists, there would be no uniformity among branches. An effective library service delivery usually has its roots from its websites but it is a reverse case in public libraries in Nigeria. All these issues when carefully considered may lead to low service delivery and users' lack of satisfaction. Hence, service delivery is obviously a problem in public libraries in Nigeria as at present.

Research from the literatures, revealed that factors influencing service delivery in libraries include: availability of information resources, accessibility of information resources by users, technological adaptation, financial resources and infrastructure. However, here are some listed major challenges against service delivery in public libraries in Nigeria as well as other library institutions in the country as lack of infrastructural facilities, lack of e-resources equipment, inadequate qualified numbers of staff (Librarians), erratic power supply and lack of funds among many others. It might be possible that these factors may not be effective on their own without good ICT skills. Therefore, ICT skills could however be significant factors that may influence service delivery in Cross River State Public Library Board, Calabar, Nigeria.

Before the advent of Information and Communication Technologies (ICTs), library services, were essentially delivered manually and the library materials were primarily in print format. These services were only available during the library open hours. The staff and other users had no option but to use the library in the open hours. These libraries depend highly on print resources and manual inter library loan system. Most times, the information resources available in the library are inadequate to meet the information that is needed by the clientele. Many of the services that were delivered by the librarians fall short of the roles librarians play as information providers.

The scenario is different in many libraries around the world today as ICTs have affected delivery of information service. ICTs have had tremendous impact on almost every sphere of activity including the services provided by librarians in public libraries. The emergence of ICTs and the accessibility of information resources online have transformed the services that public libraries provide to their clientele.

The introduction of ICT has led to a lot of library services been delivered electronically. Kemdarne (2013) defined ICT as the combination of telecommunication and computer technology to facilitate transmission, collection, processing, interpretation and distribution of information. ICTs are the applications of modern technologies to the collection and dissemination of information. The application of ICT in public libraries has enabled timely and rapid access to information. The introduction of ICT has significantly affected almost all library functions. ICTs have brought tremendous changes to information service delivery.

Librarians in public libraries have realized the importance of ICT competence in facilitating library service delivery. Information and Communication Technologies are used in library services such as acquisition processes, circulation services, reference services, serials management, cataloguing and classification and online service delivery among others. ICT competence help libraries in providing broad access to a variety of information resources and provide a way of improving studying and learning experiences in the library. New web-based services like virtual reference services, online reservation services, online-public access

catalogue (OPAC), news clipping scanning services, e-mailing and Internet services are some of the newly introduced services using ICT applications to respond promptly and adequately to the changing information seeking pattern of library users (Akande, 2014).

Ebiwolate (2010) revealed that numerous problems are bedeviling public libraries in Nigeria in their bid to provide effective services to the users. Some of these problems include inadequate funding, inadequate and outdated stock, bad location, lack of adequate and qualified staff, lack of staff motivation and insecurity of library materials. In Nigeria, public libraries are located in urban areas. As a result, their services are limited to people who live in urban areas. The rural dwellers are not benefitting from public library services hence book mobile services.

Book mobile services was established according to Bioks and Papadimitrion (2018), to serve the public and disseminate knowledge to all, especially to those who find it difficult to resort to standard libraries due to social or geographic reasons or health issues or old age. Ebiwolate (2010) reported that the government established bookmobile services in the '60s and '70s however, this was not sustained in Nigeria due to certain factors like bad roads, long distances and use of dilapidated vehicles. These services were kept in abeyance and they create negative effect in public library service delivery.

Majority of the public library staff lack ICT competence. Studies have consistently reported inadequate levels of ICT competence as one of the major problems facing libraries in Nigeria as they move into the 21st century. ICT infrastructure development and poor funding have been identified as problems, followed by poor ICT skills among staff (Ebiwolate, 2010). This validate the work of Nkamnebe, Okeke, Udem, and Nkamnebe (2015), that librarians were weakly skilled in information and communication technologies. There is no doubt that the traditional library and information services need improvement as a result of their limitations and inadequacies. It is against this backdrop that this study investigate the application of ICT competence on library service delivery in public libraries in South-south, Nigeria.

### **Objectives of the Study**

The objectives of the study are to:

1. examine the level of service delivery by library personnel in public libraries in South-south, Nigeria.
2. determine the level of ICT competence of library personnel in public libraries in South-south, Nigeria

### **Research Questions**

This study will answer the following questions:

1. what is the level of service delivery by library personnel in public libraries in public libraries in South-south, Nigeria
2. what is the level of ICT competence of library personnel in public libraries in South-South, Nigeria

### **Research Hypothesis**

The following null hypothesis will be tested for the research work at 0.05 level of significance:

1. ICT competence has no significant influence on service delivery by library personnel in public libraries in South-south, Nigeria.

## **METHODOLOGY**

The study sought to obtain data on ICT competence and service delivery by library personnel in in public libraries in South-south, Nigeria. Descriptive survey design was adopted for this study. The survey design is

suitable for this study because it will provide an accurate and valid representation of how the independent variables (ICT competency interplay to influence the dependent variable (service delivery) among the respondents. The population of the study consist all the professional librarians’ para-professional librarians’ and non-professional librarians in public libraries in South-south, Nigeria. A total of 256 staff according to the States Library Boards (2022). Total enumeration method was used since the population was very small. This was guided by Afolabi (1999) who suggested that a researcher can adopt the entire population in a study when the population is manageable and accessible to the researcher.

A structured questionnaire was the instrument for data collection. The questionnaire was divided into two sections. Section A focused on demographic information of library personnel in public libraries such as gender, age, name of institution, educational qualification, designation and working experience while Section B focused on eliciting information on level of ICT competences and service delivery by personnel in public libraries in South-south, Nigeria. Data gathered from the respondents were analyzed with SPSS and the results obtained were presented in descriptive statistics such as frequency distribution, percentages, mean scores and standard deviation.

## DATA ANALYSIS AND PRESENTATION OF RESULTS

**Table 1. Library personnel demographic information**

Demographic Variables	Frequency (n)	Percent (%)
<b>Name of library</b>		
Akwa Ibom State Public Library	63	24.6
Bayelsa State Public Library	37	14.5
Cross River State Public Library	31	12.1
Delta State Public Library	65	25.4
Edo State Public Library	47	18.4
Rivers State Public Library	13	5.1
Total	256	100.0
<b>Gender</b>		
Male	122	47.7
Female	134	52.3
Total	256	100
<b>Age</b>		
25 years and below	44	17.2
26 – 30 years	36	14.1
31 – 35 years	31	12.1
36 – 40 years	32	12.5
41 – 45 years	50	19.5
46 – 50 years	37	14.5
51 – 55 years	20	7.8
56 – 60 years	6	2.3
Total	256	100.0
<b>Academic Qualification</b>		
SSCE	7	2.7

OND/HND	37	14.5
BSc/BA/BLS	79	30.9
MLIS/MSc/MA	88	34.4
PhD	45	17.6
Total	256	100.0
<b>Work experience</b>		
1-5 years	50	19.5
6-10 years	59	23.0
11-15 years	48	18.8
16-20 years	64	25.0
21-25 years	24	9.4
26-30 years	2	0.8
31 years and above	9	3.5
Total	256	100.0

**Source:** Researcher’s Field Survey, 2022

Table 1 shows that this study was dominated by female participants 52.3%, while males had 47.7% representation. This suggests that there are more female library personnel than males in public libraries in South-South, Nigeria. Majority of the respondents 72.2% were between the ages of 26 to 50 years, which implies that majority of the library personnel in public libraries in South-South Nigeria were young. Table 1 also reveals that 34.4% had a Master degree. This is followed by 30.9% with Bsc, then 17.6% with PhD. This implies that majority of the library personnel in public libraries in South-South Nigeria were adequately trained and qualified to administer and run the library. About 76% of the library personnel have had between 6 to 25 years working experience, 19.5% have had 1 to 5 years working experience, while few had over 26 years work experience.

**Table 2. Service delivery of library personnel**

Service Delivery	Very high level (4)	High level (3)	Low level(2)	Very low level (1)	Mean	Std.
<b>Reliability</b>					<b>3.17</b>	<b>0.654</b>
<b>The ability to:</b>						
Provide correct/accurate information to clientele	73 (28.5%)	163(63.7%)	20 (7.8%)	0	3.21	0.567
Show sincere interest in solving clientele’s problems	82 (32.0%)	141 (55.1%)	33 (12.9%)	0	3.19	0.644
Do something by a certain time as promised	82 (32.0%)	132 (51.6%)	42 (16.4%)	0	3.16	0.680
Provide services at the time required/promised	82 (32.0%)	131 (51.2%)	43 (16.8%)	0	3.15	0.683
Perform services right at the first time	79 (30.9%)	129 (50.4%)	48 (18.8%)	0	3.12	0.695
<b>Empathy</b>					<b>3.14</b>	<b>0.598</b>
Library staff understand the needs of their clientele	73 (28.5%)	157 (61.3%)	26 (10.2%)	0	3.18	0.595

Convenient service hours	65 (25.4%)	164 (64.1%)	27 (10.5%)	0	3.15	0.582
Library staff have the clientele's best interest at heart	68 (26.6%)	156 (60.9%)	32 (12.5%)	0	3.14	0.610
Library staff deals with clientele in a caring fashion	65 (25.4%)	158 (61.7%)	33 (12.9%)	0	3.13	0.607
Library staff give clientele individual attention	56 (21.9%)	164 (64.1%)	36 (14.1%)	0	3.08	0.596
<b>Assurance</b>					<b>3.14</b>	<b>0.586</b>
Library staff makes clientele feel safe in their operation	65 (25.4%)	170 (66.4%)	21 (8.2%)	0	3.17	0.555
Library staff have the knowledge to answer clientele's questions	62 (24.2%)	170 (66.4%)	24 (9.4%)	0	3.15	0.561
Library staff are consistently courteous	65 (25.4%)	163 (63.7%)	28 (10.9%)	0	3.14	0.586
Library staff instill confidence in clientele	67 (26.2%)	148 (57.8%)	41 (16.0%)	0	3.10	0.643
<b>Responsiveness</b>					<b>3.11</b>	<b>0.630</b>
Library staff inform clientele about when services will be performed	72 (28.1%)	149 (58.2%)	35 (13.7%)	0	3.14	0.631
Prompt library service to clientele	72 (28.1%)	148 (57.8%)	36 (14.1%)	0	3.14	0.635
Readiness to respond to clientele requests	65 (25.4%)	149 (58.2%)	42 (16.4%)	0	3.09	0.641
Willingness to assist clientele	59 (23.0%)	159 (62.1%)	38 (14.8%)	0	3.08	0.611
<b>Tangibles</b>					<b>2.99</b>	<b>0.681</b>
Neat and professional appearance of library staff	70 (27.3%)	157 (61.3%)	29 (11.3%)	0	3.16	0.602
Visually appealing materials associated with the library service	57 (22.3%)	150 (58.6%)	47 (18.4%)	2 (0.8%)	3.02	0.662
Visually appealing facilities in the library	44 (17.2%)	143 (55.9%)	66 (25.8%)	3 (1.2%)	2.89	0.683
Modern equipment used in the library	57 (22.3%)	119 (46.5%)	73 (28.5%)	7 (2.7%)	2.88	0.778
<b>Grand Mean</b>					<b>3.11</b>	<b>0.630</b>

Decision Rule: 1.0-1.74 = Very low; 1.75-2.49 = Low; 2.50-3.24 = High; 3.25-3.99 = Very high

The level of service delivery by library personnel in public libraries in South-South, Nigeria was explained and the result revealed the following. Inferring from the Grand mean of ( 3.11, SD = 0.630) on a 4point Likert-type scale, it could be said that the service delivery by library personnel in public libraries in South-South, Nigeria is high. The findings further revealed that the reliability indicator had the highest average mean ( 3.17) while tangibles indicator had the lowest average mean ( 2.99). The implication of this analysis is that library personnel in public libraries in South-South, Nigeria had slightly higher level of service delivery in terms of reliability, empathy, and assurance than responsiveness and tangibility.

**Table 3. ICT competence of library personnel**

ICT Competence	Very high (4)	High (3)	Low (2)	Very low (1)	Mean	Std.
<b>Internet Skills</b>					<b>3.28</b>	<b>0.581</b>
Ability to locate e-resources on the web	96 (37.5%)	145 (56.6%)	15 (5.9%)	0	3.32	0.579
Capability in searching for information on the Internet search engine	91 (35.5%)	150 (58.6%)	15 (5.9%)	0	3.30	0.572
Ability in setting up and participating in Internet conferencing/meetings	81 (31.6%)	153 (59.8%)	22 (8.6%)	0	3.23	0.592
<b>Ability to use the computer application</b>					<b>3.23</b>	<b>0.629</b>
Competence in using MS word	103 (40.2%)	138 (53.9%)	15 (5.9%)	0	3.34	0.587
Skilled in using Spread Sheet (Excel) i	93 (36.3%)	139 (54.3%)	24 (9.4%)	0	3.27	0.621
Skilled in using PowerPoint	96 (37.5%)	131 (51.2%)	29 (11.3%)	0	3.26	0.649
Skilled in collaborating with other colleagues online	81 (31.6%)	152 (59.4%)	23 (9.0%)	0	3.23	0.597
Skilled using Google drive to store files	82 (32.0%)	136 (53.1%)	38 (14.8%)	0	3.17	0.664
Skilled in using Google docs to create and edit files	71 (27.7%)	148 (57.8%)	35 (13.7%)	2 (0.8%)	3.13	0.657
<b>Electronic Communication Competence</b>					<b>3.14</b>	<b>0.687</b>
Skilled in handling e-mailing services	94(36.7%)	145 (56.6%)	17 (6.6%)	0	3.30	0.587
Skilled in creating a discussion group using search engines like yahoo	76 (29.7%)	146 (57.0%)	34 (13.3%)	0	3.16	0.636
Skilled in the use library management software	85 (33.2%)	124 (48.4%)	47 (18.4%)	0	3.15	0.704
Skilled in digital image processing	68 (26.6%)	120 (46.9%)	56 (21.9%)	12 (4.0%)	2.95	0.820
<b>Grand Mean</b>					<b>3.22</b>	<b>0.632</b>

**Source:** Researcher’s Field Survey, 2022

Decision Rule: 1.0-1.74 = Very low; 1.75-2.49 = Low; 2.50-3.24 = High; 3.25-3.99 = Very high.

The respondents were asked to indicate their level of ICT competence in Table 3. The result indicates a high level of ICT competence of library personnel in public libraries in South-South, Nigeria ( 3.22, SD = 0.632), on a Likert-type scale of 4. ICT competence was divided into three dimensions namely ability to use the computer application, electronic communication competence and internet skills. The average mean values for each of ICT competence constructs were also calculated. Of the three dimensions of ICT competence measured, Internet skills was rated highest ( 3.28, SD = 0.581) on a 4-point Likert-type scale, while electronic communication competence was rated lowest ( 3.14, SD = 0.687) on a Likert-type scale of 4 among the library personnel. This result suggests that library personnel in public libraries in South-South, Nigeria have a higher ability of ICT in internet surfing and computer application than electronic communication.

### Testing of Hypothesis

**H<sub>01</sub>:** ICT competence has no significant influence on library service delivery by library personnel in public libraries in South-South, Nigeria.

**Table 4. Simple linear regression analysis of ICT competence and library service delivery**

Predictors	B	Beta ( $\beta$ )	T	P	R <sup>2</sup>	Adj. R <sup>2</sup>	F	ANOVA (Sig.)
(Constant)	0.801		6.022	.000	0.550	0.549	310.914	0.000
ICT Competence	0.719	.742	17.633	.000				

**Dependent Variable: Service Delivery**

**Predictor: (Constant), ICT Competence**

**DF (F-Statistic) = 1, 255**

**DF (T-Statistic) = 254**

**Source: Field Survey Results, 2022**

Table 4 shows that ICT competence significantly influenced service delivery by library personnel in public libraries in South-South, Nigeria ( $R^2 = 0.550$ ,  $\beta = 0.742$ ,  $t(254) = 17.633$ ,  $p < 0.05$ ).

The model shows that ICT competence explains 50.0% ( $R^2 = 0.550$ ) variation in service delivery of library personnel in public libraries in South-South Nigeria. The established simple linear regression model is:

$$SD = 0.801 + 0.719 ICTC + u \dots\dots\dots \text{Model 1}$$

Where:

SD = Service delivery

ICTC = ICT competence

$u$  = Stochastic error term (Those variables that can influence SD but are not captured in the study).

The regression model 1 shows that holding ICT competence constant at zero, service delivery would be 0.801. This implies that in the absence of ICT competence, library service delivery would still be effective since other vital factors (denoted by  $u$ ) not investigated in the study can still improve service delivery without ICT competence. The model also shows that improving ICT competence by one unit on a measurement scale will increase job performance by 0.550 (50.0%). This result showed that ICT competence is a significant predictor of service delivery in public libraries in South-South, Nigeria. Therefore, the null hypothesis ( $H_{01}$ ) which states that there is no significant influence of ICT competence on service delivery of library personnel in public libraries in South-South, Nigeria was rejected. This result suggests that when public libraries in South-South, Nigeria provide library personnel the opportunities to develop their ICT competence, their service delivery will increase.

### SUMMARY OF FINDINGS

**RQ1:** Revealed that the level of service delivery by library personnel in public libraries in South-south Nigeria is high.



**RQ2:** Revealed that the level of ICT competence of library personnel in public libraries in South-south Nigeria was high. ICT competence was divided into three dimensions, namely ability to use the computer application, electronic communication competence and internet skills. Of the three dimensions of ICT competence measured, Internet skills was rated highest.

**H0<sub>1</sub>:** The hypothesis revealed that ICT competence significantly influenced service delivery by library personnel in public libraries in South-south, Nigeria.

## CONCLUSION AND RECOMMENDATIONS

The study concluded that ICT competence had a significant and positive influence on the service delivery of library personnel in public libraries in South-South, Nigeria. However, tangible indicator had the lowest rating for service delivery while reliability indicator had the highest service delivery.

Based on the findings of this study, the following recommendations are made:

1. The State Government in collaboration with librarianship professional organization and regulatory bodies such as Nigerian Library Association (NLA) and Librarians' Registration Council of Nigeria (LRCN) should ensure that policies for library personnel training and retraining in the area of ICT infrastructures and skill acquisitions be formulated and implemented as this was found lacking in most of the public libraries in this study.
2. Public libraries should ensure that training exercise is organized periodically to enlighten library personnel on current trends use of ICT for library service delivery with a view to improve service delivery.
3. The State Government should ensure adequate provision of ICT tools to the public libraries to encourage the library personnel be exposed and create room for growth.
4. This study focused on public libraries in South-South Nigeria, further studies should be conducted in other geopolitical areas in Nigeria Also librarians in other institutions like Universities, Polytechnics and Colleges of Education can be investigated.

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