

Full Length Research

Influence of Educational Qualification and ICT Skills on Personnel Productivity in Polytechnic Libraries in South-East and South-South, Nigeria

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This study seeks to investigate the influence of educational qualification and ICT skills on personnel productivity in polytechnic libraries in South-East and South-South, Nigeria. In carrying out the study, two research questions were formulated to guide the study. The correlational survey research design was adopted for the study and a total of 284 respondents drawn from personnel of the 19 polytechnic libraries in South-East and South-South Nigeria were studied. The instrument used for collecting data was a self-structured questionnaire which was duly validated and the result justified its use. The findings showed that; educational qualification and ICT skills influence personnel productivity in polytechnic libraries in South-East and South-South, Nigeria. The study recommended that in determining the educational qualification of candidates for employment, there should be a synergy between paper presentation and paper defense; between label and content. Libraries should not rely completely on resumes and CVs because eligibility is not always the same as suitability. We should aim at hiring the best person for the job, and not the best resume/CV writer or designer. Even though this study does not advocate for removal of resumes/CVs from our hiring processes, we need to give them less significant role in determining who gets hired, as they are not always the best means of identifying the most qualified candidate for the job. Again, that today's work environment requires ICT skills. So, possession of ICT skills should be a precondition for the recruitment of personnel of polytechnic libraries in South-East and South-South Nigeria.

Key Words: Educational Qualification, ICT Skills, Personnel, Productivity and Polytechnic Libraries

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INTRODUCTION

Educational qualification is also known as academic qualification. It refers to the knowledge and skills obtained from a school (college, university etc) through instruction and training. It can also be defined as a pass of an examination or an official completion of a course, especially one conferring status as a recognized practitioner of a profession or activity such as librarianship. It is the official requirement or condition that must be fulfilled before one can occupy a given office or position. For librarians, educational qualification is the action or fact of becoming qualified as a recognized practitioner of librarianship. Web Finance Inc. (2020) defines qualification as capacity, knowledge, or skill that makes someone eligible for a given duty, office, or status. It denotes fitness for purpose through fulfillment of necessary conditions such

as completion of required schooling or training, or acquisition of a degree, diploma or certificate. (It has to be noted here that qualification does not necessarily imply competence).

The popular maxim, 'you are either informed or deformed' greatly captures the importance of information to mankind. Information is the pivot or the fulcrum around which the economic, social, industrial, political and technological development of any nation revolves. Certainly, no individual or nation can develop without making effective use of information. According to Aina (2004), and Emenyonu and Unegbu (2022), information is a crucial agent of change, a conveyor of knowledge and reinforcement of ideas and opinion. It is the life wire of any organization. Emenyonu and Unegbu (2022) further state that information is meant to change or increase understanding of something. It is something that changes a person's state of mind and knowledge of a subject. It is crucial in every research work and it is vital to the development of any society. Timely, accurate and current information is therefore imperative at every state of research endeavor. Information and Communications Technology (ICT) skills refer to one's ability to converse with people through various technologies. Just like Information Technology (IT), ICT deals with the use of technological devices for regular, everyday tasks: sending an email, making a video call, searching the internet, using a tablet or mobile phone, and more (Doyle, 2020). ICT skills basically include the ability to use computer operating systems, to access software programmes and manage the basic functions of a computer, being able to confidently use core computer programmes to produce common digital information such as Word documents and PowerPoint presentations, organize and analyze information with the help of computer spreadsheet and database software, the ability to communicate and interact with other ICT users through the use of internet and email and to create and engage with digital information for a specific task. According to Unegbu, Amaechi, Njoku & Opara (2015), information Technology (IT) and Information and Communication Technology (ICT)) are the most recent and modern technological tools and resources used to communicate, create, organize, gather, retrieval, disseminate, store and manage information.

According to Unegbu (2015), the emergence of ICT has brought about a tremendous technological revolution in the world. This revolutionary impact has affected all aspects of human endeavours, including library services. Unagha and Ugocha (2012) enumerate networking skill, library software developing skill, search skill, security/encryption technology skill, and hardware maintenance skill as ICT skills needed by library personnel to function effectively in the 21st Century. According to Panopto (2019), ICT skills are about understanding and applying a range of computer programmes, software and other applications which include word processing, spreadsheets, databases, power points and search engines. Productivity refers to the ability to produce goods and services or the efficiency of an organization measured by comparing the amount of goods or services produced with the time taken or the resources used to produce it (Crowther, 1992). According to Unegbu, Ogugua, Nnadimele and Nse (2019), with the computer, more options are open to library personnel to make library services more realistic and productive. Nwizu (2007) defines productivity as the amount of goods that a worker can produce in a given space of time. Sharma and Sadana (2011) argue that productivity is the relationship between physical output and one or more of the associated physical inputs used in the production process. The authors further posit that productivity is broadly conceived as a systems concept which means that it can be applied to various entities, ranging from an individual or machine to an organization, industry or national economy. The definitions of Nwizu (2007), Sharma and Sadana (2011) limit productivity to tangible and visible items alone which is difficult to determine in a polytechnic library whose products are more of services rather than tangible goods. According to Daft (2000), productivity simply refers to an organization's output of goods and services divided by its inputs. This means that productivity can be improved by either increasing the amount of output using the same level of inputs or reducing the number of inputs required to produce the output. From the above definitions, it can be deduced that productivity is a measure of how well an organization functions. For the polytechnic librarian, productivity is an indicator of the efficiency and competitiveness of his or her library. Productivity is significant because it influences the wellbeing of society as well as organizations such as libraries. Therefore, one major way to increase the output of goods and services to society is to increase organizational productivity.

Library personnel are employees, workers, staff, or persons employed to work in a library for the purposes of collecting and managing all types of information and information carrying materials in addition to ensuring that the information needs of library users are duly satisfied. That is to say that the concepts; library personnel, library staff, library workers and library employees all mean one and the same thing and can be used interchangeably. According to Nworie, Unegbu and Opara (2022), personnel in the libraries are saddled with the responsibility of developing and managing collections of books and journals (both print and electronic), as well as websites, databases, e-contents and other types of information carriers. There are three categories of library personnel; professional librarians, para-professional librarians and technical/ support staff. In Nigeria, polytechnics are institutions of higher learning which offer courses at National Diploma (ND) and Higher National Diploma (HND) levels especially in vocational subjects. Every polytechnic has a library which serves as the nucleus of its academic activities. These polytechnic libraries are organized collections of information resources established in polytechnic institutions to satisfy the information needs of members of that polytechnic community. However, the satisfaction of the information needs of the patrons lies to a very reasonable extent on the polytechnic's ability to resolutely search for and recruit the right caliber of staff.

A polytechnic library is a library established, maintained and administered by a polytechnic to meet the information needs of its students, college and staff in order to carry out their administrative and academic responsibilities. The polytechnic library occupies central and primary place because it serves all the functions of the academic community such as teaching, learning, research and community services (Onwubiko and Uzoigwe, 2004). Polytechnic libraries play an indispensable role in the fulfillment of the functions of an academic community. Information management practices have moved from the traditional era where information related issues were handled manually to technological era where information technology is used, which has improved information management activities beyond expectation. In the light of the foregoing, this study therefore, seeks to investigate the influence of educational qualification and ICT skills on personnel productivity in polytechnic libraries in South-East and South-South, Nigeria.

Research Questions

The following research questions were formulated to guide the study:

- i. What is the influence between educational qualification on personnel productivity in polytechnic libraries in South-East and South-South, Nigeria?
- ii. What is the influence between ICT skills on personnel productivity in polytechnic libraries in South-East and South-South, Nigeria?

Literature Review

Kasika (2015) used a mixed approach of quantitative and qualitative methods mainly descriptive statistics (i.e. frequencies) to determine the extent to which employees' productivity reflects the educational qualifications attained. The aim of the researcher was to ensure/make certain that there is synergy between educational qualifications and competencies of employees to ultimately improve job performance. Overall, the findings of the study confirm that educational qualifications have a significant bearing on job performance. The higher the qualification, the more are the effects of competencies and skill on job performance. The author further holds that workers' ability to understand and use advanced technology is determined by the level of their qualification. Better qualified workers tend to be more responsive in receiving instructions and doing new tasks and easily adopt new technology which increases their ability to innovate and improve productivity. Adeola (2007) surveyed educational qualification and job performance of primary school teachers in Ogun State, Nigeria using simple percentage and chi-square to test hypotheses. The result reveals significant difference between the job efficiency and work patterns of Grade II and NCE teachers. In another development, Salwa and Kristiawan (2019) carried out a survey entitled 'The effect of academic qualification, work experience and work motivation towards primary school principal performance' which was aimed at determining the influence of academic qualifications, work experience and work motivation of teachers towards the principals' performance. The survey was carried out in primary schools in Kalidoni, Palembang, a city in Northern Sumatra, Indonesia. The study used the partial correlation method on 28 primary school head teachers in Kalidoni. The results of the study indicate that there is significant effect of the principal's academic qualifications on the head teachers' performance.

Ariss and Timmins (2014) also agree that there is significant correlation between qualification and productivity. They examined the relationship between the type of college degree, level of college degree, and superiors' perceptions of managers' attributes and their work performance and found that more schooling is equivalent to better performance and better jobs. Thomas and Feldman (2009) agree with the authors above that there is connectedness between qualification and productivity. Results from their study show that in addition to positively influencing core task performance, an employee's qualification (education level) is also positively related to creativity and citizenship behaviors in the workplace. Uwaebuka (2016) examined 'Appropriate staffing in Nigerian academic libraries: the personality traits to avoid and adopt' aimed at emphasizing the need to adopt productive, proactive, progressive, and practical employees in staffing academic libraries in order to ensure effective service delivery. From the findings, the paper submits that even though both professional librarians, para-professionals and the support staff are required for the smooth functionality of every academic library system; that academic qualification is not enough determinant of employees' efficiency in the workplace. It recommends that the problematic, passive, pessimistic, prodigal, parasitic and psychologically imbalanced employees be avoided during recruitment exercises and where they already exist, training, counseling implementation of punitive measures should be adopted to put them on check. Nevertheless, whether educational qualification has influence on the productivity of polytechnic library personnel in South-East and South-South Nigeria or not, will be determined by the findings of this study.

Information and communications technology (ICT) emerged as a general-purpose technology in the late 1980s and early 1990s, akin to the steam engine and electricity in earlier epochs. This means that ICT can be used in widespread and generic applications across different organizations which use it as platforms to undertake their own cost-saving and value-adding innovations. Roztocki, Soja and Weistrotter (2019) assert that Information and Communication Technologies (ICT) play a significant role in all aspects of modern society. They have changed the way we communicate with one other, how we find and communicate needed information, how we work, the way we conduct business, interact with government agencies, and how we manage our social lives. The Australian Government Productivity Commission (2010) posits that there are three key technological developments that helped to establish ICT as a general-purpose technology: technological advances that combined computing power with compact size (mini-computers and desktops) at widely affordable prices; the convergence of information technologies and communications technologies (to form what is now known as ICT), notably in the form of the Internet and other networks; and software advances that not only expanded the range of general and specific applications but also made computers more user-friendly and brought them within the operational reach of a much larger proportion of the workforce. According to Unegbu, Amaechi, Njoku and Opara (2015), people with higher educational background are more likely to be dissatisfied with tasks which do not allow for application of their skills such as ICT/computer skills. Unegbu, Amaechi, Njoku and Opara (2015) reported that users' educational levels influence access to ICT and use of information in the library. The Australian Government Productivity Commission (2010) carried out a synthesis survey of studies from Australian firms entitled 'ICT Use and Productivity: A Synthesis from Studies of Australian Firms' with a view to ascertaining the relationship between ICT skills and workplace productivity. Findings from that study reveal that advances in ICT have progressively reduced the costs of gathering, storing, retrieving, processing, analyzing and transmitting information. In these ways, they have enabled library personnel with adequate ICT skills to provide library clients with cheaper and readier access to more accurate, timely and useful information. David (2012) investigated the impact of information and communication technology proficiency on labour productivity in University of Ilorin. He used Multinomial logit (MNL) and Binary Logit Model (BLM) techniques to measure the functional relationship between ICT proficiency and labour productivity, and other explanatory variables such as work experience, educational qualifications, average monthly income of the worker, access to the Internet, availability of electricity in University of Ilorin and non-financial benefits. The study found that work experience, educational qualifications, average monthly income of the worker, ICT training in the last three months and availability of electricity are statistically meaningful to labour productivity in University of Ilorin, Nigeria. Thus, the study recommends that in order to attain targeted productivity level, well managed programs on ICT skills acquisition, appropriate recruitment process and attractive take home package have to be put in place.

Oni and Koko (2020) investigated the influence of ICT skills on office managers' performance in private industries in Port Harcourt Metropolis. The study adopted a descriptive survey design. The population for the study consisted of 234 oil and Gas private industries in Port Harcourt Metropolis, in Rivers State. The sample for the study was 145 respondents' male and female office managers. Purposive simple random sample technique was used to get 145 office managers as sample size. Two research questions were posed while four null hypotheses were formulated. Structured questionnaire was used to elicit data from the respondents. Test re-test method was used to obtain and to establish coefficient of stability of 0.77. The data collected for the study were analyzed using frequency, percentage, mean and standard deviation to answer the responses of the research questions, while the null hypotheses were tested using z-test. The findings revealed that ICT skills, database management skills greatly influence office managers' performance in private industries in Port Harcourt. Based on the findings, the authors recommended that training in the use of ICT devices should be carried out on a quarterly basis to increase the knowledge level of managers and subsequently their performance. The study also recommended that other staff of the industry should be equipped with ICT skills for easy communication with management personnel.

Lawal and Olawale (2020) carried out a study entitled 'Information and Communication Technology and research productivity of librarians in Bowen University, Iwo, Osun State' aimed at identifying the impacts of ICT skills and use on research productivity of librarians in Bowen University Library, Iwo, Osun State from 2017-2019. The study adopted a survey method. The population of the study consisted of 10 librarians. Questionnaire was adopted as research instrument to collect data from the 10 librarians in the Library through a total enumeration method. Data collected from the respondents were analyzed using descriptive statistical method. Findings revealed that the research productivity of the librarians was low as a result of poor ICT skills and utilization. Consequently, the study recommended among others that librarians should receive trainings and necessary skills on the use of new technologies for research purposes. Even though the general understanding that there is a strong tie between ICT and personnel productivity has driven many libraries into acquisition of various ICT devices according to their various abilities.

The National Academies of Sciences, Engineering and Medicine (2017) notes that economic and societal changes occasioned by technological developments are shaped, not just by the availability of new technological devices and their features, but also by ideologies, power structures, and human aspirations and agendas. According to them, technologies are not exogenous forces that roll over societies like tsunamis with predetermined results. Rather, our skills,

organizations, institutions, and values shape how we develop technologies and how we deploy them once created, along with their final impact. In other words, possession or availability of technologies at whatever proud a scale without concomitant, concurrent, incidental or associated skills and aspirations to shape how we develop and deploy them to our benefits, will amount to exercise in futility. That is why this study intends to highlight the influence of ICT skills on productivity of personnel of polytechnic libraries in South-East and South-South Nigeria.

Idhalama (2018) carried out an empirical survey on problems of polytechnic libraries in Nigeria. The study decries the spate of underdevelopment in polytechnic libraries as it affects the aim of establishing polytechnics as institutions for manpower development and notes among other things that lack of qualified staff is one of the factors that mitigate against the development of polytechnic libraries in Nigeria. Onaolapo (2017) examined the use of polytechnic libraries in Nigeria focusing on the Federal Polytechnic Offa library, Kwara State, Nigeria and used stratified random sampling technique to select 250 respondents from 1000 registered library users. The study analyzed data with frequency counts, percentages, mean score and confidence interval. Based on the findings which exposed underperformance, the study recommends that services offered in the Nigerian polytechnic libraries should be improved upon to further enhance teaching, learning and research activities of the institution. Nwalo (2007) surveyed measures of library effectiveness in Nigerian polytechnic libraries with emphasis on user satisfaction. In conducting the investigation, the survey research design was adopted with the questionnaire as the main instrument of data collection. The study comprised fourteen polytechnic libraries. Research data was analyzed mainly by t-test, step-wise multiple regression analysis and correlation analysis at 0.05 level of significance. A major finding of that study is that Nigerian polytechnic libraries' are ineffective in meeting the information needs of polytechnic communities. However this study is yet to unravel how educational qualification and ICT skills influence personnel productivity in polytechnic libraries in South-East and South-South Nigeria.

METHODOLOGY

Research Design

This study adopted Correlational Survey Research method. The survey method was preferred because the study involves a population that is diverse in nature. According to Obodoeze (1996) and Uhegbu (2009), when a study involves a large population or sample that is heterogeneous in location, occupation, gender and even in social status which would involve the collection of standardized information from the respondents based on the same criteria and conditions by using the same type of instrument to collect data from them, survey design is the most appropriate method to use. The questionnaire is titled "influence of educational qualification and ICT skills on personnel productivity in polytechnic libraries (IEQICTSPPL)". Moreover, survey research design reduces the influence of the researcher on the research outcome. The total population of the study is five hundred and thirty-seven (537) drawn from the nineteen (19) polytechnic libraries studied in South-East and South-South, Nigeria. The sample size for this study is two hundred and eighty-four (284). The figure was obtained using the Godden (2004) formula for deriving appropriate sample size from a known population. Owing to unequal number of personnel in the various libraries, proportionate sampling method as propounded by Uzoagulu (1998) was used to distribute the sample size population of 284 among the personnel in polytechnic libraries South-East and South-South, Nigeria. Out of the two hundred and eighty four (284) copies of the questionnaire distributed, two hundred and thirty-four (234) representing 82.4% were returned and found valid for analysis. Out of the other fifty (50) representing 17.6%, thirty six (36) were not returned at all because the respondents could not be found on their seats again to submit the filled questionnaires. Some had gone on leave while others were simply absent from work. Worse still, fourteen (14) of them were simply apathetic; eleven (11) returned the copies of the questionnaire unfilled while three (3) lost the copies of the questionnaire given to them. Simple random sampling technique was adopted to select the sample size population from the total population of each of the personnel in polytechnic libraries South-East and South-South, Nigeria. This allowed all the elements that made up the population equal opportunity to be selected.

Analysis

Research Question 1: What is the influence between educational qualification on personnel productivity in polytechnic libraries in South-East and South-South, Nigeria?

Table 1: Influence of Educational Qualification on Personnel Productivity in Polytechnic Libraries.

S/No	Variables	SA	A	D	SD	Total	\bar{X}	Remark
1.	Qualification enhances productivity in my library	113	87	32	2	234	3.33	S
2.	Qualification enhances proficiency in job performance	109	91	33	1	234	3.32	S
3.	More qualified personnel in my library are more productive than less qualified personnel	93	92	38	11	234	3.14	S
4.	Less qualified personnel in my library are less productive than more qualified personnel	99	101	27	7	234	3.25	S
5.	In my library, both personnel with higher qualification and those with lower qualification are equally productive	6	37	103	88	234	1.83	NS

*Significant mean = 2.97

With a significant mean of 2.97 as shown on Table 1, educational qualification has positive influence on personnel productivity in polytechnic libraries in south-east and south-south, Nigeria because educational qualification enhanced the productivity of workers ($X = 3.33$), enhanced the proficiency of workers in their jobs ($X = 3.32$), more qualified personnel were more productive than the less qualified personnel ($X = 3.14$), and vice versa ($X = 2.63$). In spite of the fact that the less qualified workers also generated output, their work output in relation to educational qualification was insignificant compared to those of the more qualified workers because their mean value of 1.83 was lower than the significant mean value of 2.97.

Research Question 2: What is the influence between ICT skills on personnel productivity in polytechnic libraries in South-East and South-South, Nigeria?

Table 2: Influence of ICT Skills on Personnel Productivity in Polytechnic Libraries.

S/N o	Variables	SA	A	D	SD	Total	\bar{X}	Remark
1.	ICT skills enhance job performance in my library	34	91	93	16	234	2.61	S
2.	Employees with ICT skills are more efficient in the performance of their duties than those without ICT skills	35	90	87	22	234	2.60	S
3.	Increase in ICT skills leads to increase in productivity of personnel in my library	43	84	80	27	234	2.61	S
4.	In my library, employees that possess ICT skills are more productive than those that do not possess ICT skills	24	108	94	8	234	2.63	S
5.	In my library, both skilled and unskilled staff members in terms of ICT are equally productive	3	76	129	26	234	2.24	NS

*Significant mean = 2.54

With a significant mean of 2.54 as shown on Table 2, ICT skills have positive influence on personnel productivity in polytechnic libraries in south-east and south-south, Nigeria because ICT skills enhanced the performance of the workers ($X = 2.61$), employees with ICT skills were more efficient on their various duties and tasks ($X = 2.59$), increased the productivity of the workers ($X = 2.61$), and the output of those with ICT skills was greater than that of those without ($X = 2.63$). Although ICT helped those without the requisite skills and knowledge, their performance in relation to ICT skills was insignificant because their mean value of 2.24 was lower than the significant mean value of 2.54.

FINDINGS

Finding as shown in table 1 indicates that educational qualification influence productivity because it enhanced the productivity of polytechnic library personnel in South-East and South-South Nigeria. More qualified personnel were more productive against less qualified personnel who were less productive. The finding is in agreement with the outcome of the research report of Thomas and Feldman (2009) that there is connectedness between qualification and productivity. Results from their study show that in addition to positively influencing core task performance, an employee's qualification (education level) is also positively related to creativity and citizenship behaviors in the workplace. The finding also agrees with the finding from the study of Little (2011) that the truism that qualification is related to productivity is so apparently self-evident that few have thought to question it. According to the author, the influence of human capital theory on education and manpower planners for close to half a century in all corners of the globe perpetuated (and perhaps even created) the belief that more qualification leads to increased productivity. However, based on the finding of this study and those of earlier scholars which nullify the notion held by Peterson (2020) that educational qualification does not enhance productivity, this research investigation insists that educational qualification has impact on personnel productivity. The opinion of this paper therefore is that polytechnic libraries and other libraries in general that want to succeed in the delivery of satisfactory library and information services must insist on recruiting academically qualified personnel.

From the results as shown on Table 2, ICT skills has significant influence on the productivity of personnel of polytechnic libraries in South-East and South-South Nigeria. Results reveal that employees that possess ICT skills are more productive than those that do not possess ICT skills meaning that increase in ICT skills leads to increase in productivity of library personnel. The finding ratifies the unity among several research findings that positive relationship exists between ICT skills possession and personnel productivity. The Australian Government Productivity Commission (2010) for instance carried out a synthesis survey of studies from Australian firms with a view to ascertaining the relationship between ICT skills and workplace productivity. Findings from that study reveal that advances in ICT have progressively reduced the costs of gathering, storing, retrieving, processing, analyzing and transmitting information. In these ways, they have enabled library personnel with adequate ICT skills to provide library clients with cheaper and readier access to more accurate, timely and useful information. David (2012) investigated the impact of information and communication technology proficiency on labour productivity in University of Ilorin. He used Multinomial logit (MNL) and Binary Logit Model (BLM) techniques to measure the functional relationship between ICT proficiency and labour productivity and found like this study that ICT skills are statistically meaningful to labour productivity in University of Ilorin, Nigeria. The finding also confirms the finding of Oni and Koko (2020) who investigated the influence of ICT skills on office managers' performance in private industries in Port Harcourt Metropolis and discovered that ICT skills greatly influence office managers' performance in private industries in Port Harcourt. The finding further agrees with the finding of Lawal and Olawale (2020) who posit that ICT skills enhance personnel productivity. These findings are clear indications that polytechnic library personnel who possess ICT skills are relatively more productive than those who do not. This study posits summarily that possession of ICT skills enhances productivity and should therefore be a quality to watch out for while recruiting for polytechnic libraries.

CONCLUSION

Aside from speculations, this study has empirically revealed that educational qualification and ICT skills have significant roles to play in the productivity of personnel of polytechnic libraries.

RECOMMENDATIONS

In line with the findings, the study recommended as follows:

- In determining the educational qualification of candidates for employment, there should be a synergy between paper presentation and paper defense; between label and content. Libraries should not rely completely on resumes and CVs because eligibility is not always the same as suitability. We should aim at hiring the best person for the job, and not the best resume/CV writer or designer. Even though this study does not advocate for removal of resumes/CVs from our hiring processes, we need to give them less significant role in determining who gets hired, as they are not always the best means of identifying the most qualified candidate for the job.
- Today's work environment requires ICT skills. So, possession of ICT skills should be a precondition for the recruitment of personnel of polytechnic libraries in South-East and South-South Nigeria.

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