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COVID-19 PANDEMIC OUTBREAK: IMPACT ON LECTURERS' JOB PERFORMANCE AT UNIVERSITY OF PORT HARCOURT

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ABSTRACT
This study investigated COVID-19 pandemic outbreak: Impact on lecturers' job performance at University of Port Harcourt. Two research questions guided the study. A descriptive survey design was used for the study. The population of the study comprised 3000 academic staff at the University of Port Harcourt. The sample size for this study was 180 lecturers who were randomly selected from all the faculties at the University of Port Harcourt. Lecturers' ICT Competence Questionnaire (LICQ) was constructed by the researchers for the collection of data. The instrument was validated by three experts in the Measurement and Evaluation department at the University of Port Harcourt. Cronbach Alpha reliability test method was applied to ascertain the internal consistency of the instruments and 0.86 was obtained as the reliability coefficient for the study. Data were analyzed using mean and standard deviation. The findings of this study revealed that the level of ICT competence of lecturers at the University of Port Harcourt was low during the COVID–19 pandemic outbreaks. It was recommended that constant ICT training and retraining programs should be organized for lecturers at the University of Port Harcourt as a way to improve their ICT competency level.

Keywords: COVID-19, ICT Competence, Job Performance

Introduction
The world experienced the pandemic of a novel infectious disease called coronavirus disease, otherwise known as COVID-19. The pandemic, according to the United Nations (2020) touches every aspect of society, constituting inevitable social disruptions. Therefore, being able to work was difficult or impossible. Consequently, the global spread of the COVID-19 virus informed the action of World Health Organization (WHO) to mandate learning institutions to close. For instance, UNESCO (2020) reported that governments of about 146 countries

spreading across the globe have ordered the closure of educational institutions; thereby throwing about 1.37 billion learners as well as about 60.2 million teachers out of schools and classrooms. This resulted in educational stakeholders and education service providers seeking means of teaching to avoid the complete collapse of the education sector. While some governments have temporarily instructed the use of public television stations for teaching primary and secondary schools, some tertiary institutions moved to virtual teaching platforms to reach out to their students (UNESCO, 2020). On this note, diseases are highly infectious and transmitted through human contact making it invariably incompatible with the physical contact setting of learning and teaching. This incompatibility has brought about a paradigm shift in the traditional practices, processes, and concepts of brick and mortar to the application of information and communication technology in teaching and learning in many nations of the world and Nigeria is not an exception. There is no doubt that the interference of the COVID-19 pandemic had caused so many challenges to the job performance of lecturers in Nigerian Universities.

Job performance is a concept commonly used in industrial and organizational psychology. It refers to how people perform their job. Job performance is the ability to carry out statutory functions which are based on the field of specialization or areas of development as well as an organization's goals. Job performance is the successful completion of tasks within a designated period and effective delivery of services, the ability to render good quality work, high quantity tasks performed in interpersonal relationships, as well as the ability to work with minimal supervision (Igbinovia & Popoola, 2016). It is a means to reach a goal or set of goals within a job role in an organization. It is viewed as the work-related activities expected of an employee and how well those activities were executed. Many top management personnel and directors assess the job performance of each employee on an annual or quarterly basis to help them identify suggested areas for improvement. Job performance assesses whether a person performs a job well because performance is an important criterion for organizational outcomes and success (Sani & Musa, 2019).

Successful tertiary education needs employees who do more than the usual tasks and also perform beyond expectations. To maintain its survival efforts in unstable conditions, an organization is required to have high capabilities, survive every kind of challenge, and achieve its competitive advantage. For this reason, strategies that are relevant to the goals that have been set should be formulated, and the implementation should be consistent to increase performance. People need support and understanding in all aspects of life even at work (Edmondson & Lei, 2014). Performance has been interpreted as the level of achievement of the implementation of activity in realizing the goals, objectives, vision, and mission of the organization as outlined in the strategic planning of an organization. The performance here is related to job performance which means the work performance achieved by a person in carrying out the tasks and jobs assigned (Muttaqin, et al, 2020). For university, lecturers to carry out their job efficiently and effectively, especially in this age of knowledge-based

technology and globalization, the use of Information and Communication Technology (ICT) becomes imperative. Interestingly, universities all over the world are rapidly incorporating Information and Communication Technology (ICT) into all facets of teaching, research, and management. Lecturers who succeed in making use of ICT in their work processes not only contribute to improved learning outcomes in their students, but also benefit personally from enhanced work productivity.

Tolorunleke et al, (2022) defined ICT as any communication device or application, encompassing radio, television, cellular phones, computer, network hardware and software, satellite systems, as well as the various services and applications associated with them, such as video conferencing and distance learning. ICT involves the process of creating, processing, storing retrieving, and disseminating information and data using computers and telecommunications (Akpan, 2014). Tertiary education involves the application of digital equipment to all aspects of teaching and learning to meet academic needs. Thus, ICT encompasses a combination of technologies for collecting, storing, processing, communicating, and delivering information related to teaching and learning processes. The institution of ICT in the delivery of the core services of teaching and research by universities changed the way higher education is executed (Ololube et al, 2015). Onajite and Aina (2017) defined ICT competency as lecturers' ability to use various ICT applications and gadgets to deliver instructions in their respective subject areas. ICT competence is also the ability of university lecturers to make use of various ICT tools such as e-mail, facsimile, internet, World Wide Web, intranets, extranets, online databases, and, other networking technologies in the performance of their job. It is lecturers' confidence in their abilities and capabilities to produce quality outcomes in the performance of their job. An effective and efficient lecturer does things right, attempts to solve job-related problems, avoids resource waste, and ensures quality output. Lecturers' ICT competence can help in this direction.

Akpan (2014) observed that teacher ICT competence in Nigeria is below expectation and access to ICT resources like the internet and computer is mostly limited on campuses of various higher institutions. Akpan (2014) also reported that lecturers' perception of the role of ICT in the management of university education was significantly low. These findings imply that the level of university teachers' ICT competence could greatly have an impact on their job efficiency in classroom teaching, communication, students' record keeping, research and publications. The presence of infrastructural orientation influences the virtual orientation of lecturers in universities (Ojo et al, 2021)

Kayode et al (2019) revealed that the availability of ICT facilities, in-service training, and constraints were significantly related to the use of ICT effectiveness and the job performance of staff in the universities. Wordu et al (2021) found that the use of ICT in education can bring about an increase in productivity and efficiency in terms of global educational service delivery among nations of the world. Global trends and experiences have shown that using ICT in teaching and learning cannot be entirely exonerated from some observable internal and external

encumbrances, especially in this era of COVID-19 that has brought about the introduction of social and medical restrictions; although, information technology greatly influences positively the educational spectrum.

Tella et al. (2011) who investigated teachers' self-efficacy in implementing computer education in Nigerian secondary schools found that most teachers in Federal Government Colleges in Nigeria do not have the needed experience and competences in the use of computers or in basic computer operations either for educational or industrial purposes. Villanueva et al. (2022) determined the Educational Technology Competencies (ETC) of teachers and factors that affect their ETC to contribute to the elementary education sector's inputs to their training program. The findings revealed that only the greatest educational attainment and the type of school where they teach have an impact on their ETC. Sex, years of teaching, and age had no significant effect on their ETC. Hence, the research presented recommendations for what should be considered in teacher training, particularly in terms of improving teachers' ETC. Similarly, Sani and Musa (2019) revealed that the level of ICT competence of library staff significantly enhanced their job efficacy and performance. Akpan (2014) stated that ICT increases the skills and status of lecturers for job performance. Premised on this background, the study investigated ICT competence in the COVID-19 pandemic outbreak: Impact on lecturers' job performance in University of PortHarcourt

Statement of the problem

The issue of competency in the use of ICTs for effective academic delivery became very worrisome among university lecturers. Today, nearly all departments are going digital and demand a great deal of ICT competency to enhance job performance effectively. Most academic staff in the University of Port Harcourt are working so hard to become digital compliant. Even though some of the personnel possess basic computer skills, many personnel in these institutions are still inefficient in ICT skills necessary for the 21st-century academic delivery, as many of them continue to carry out the usual traditional method of teaching which is supposed to be gradually fading away. Without ICT competency, such lectures are incapable of performing maximally in the changing work environment and become irrelevant in the system, especially during the COVID-19 pandemic outbreak. In as much as being ICT competent is important, how it translates to the job performances of lecturers in terms of academic delivery during the COVID-19 pandemic outbreak was very important. Hence, the need to acquire and continually upgrade the ICT skills of the lecturers for effective academic delivery in the 21st century becomes very imperative. This paper, therefore, explores COVID-19 pandemic outbreak: Impact on lecturers' job performance at University of Port Harcourt.

Research Questions

The following research questions guided the study:

1. What is the level of ICT competency in the job performances of lecturers in University of Port Harcourt during the COVID-19 outbreak?

2. What are the factors contributing to inefficient ICT competencies for effective job performances of lecturers in University of Port Harcourt during the COVID-19 outbreak?

Research Method

The study adopted descriptive survey design. The population of the study was about 3000 academic staff at the University of Port Harcourt. Source. Ten (10) faculties were selected through a stratified sampling technique and eighteen lecturers were randomly selected from the faculties which make up 180 lecturers. Lecturers' ICT Competencies Questionnaire (LICQ) constructed by the researchers was used for the collection of data. The Lecturers' ICT Competencies Questionnaire (LICQ) was validated by Experts from Measurement and Evaluation to look at the contents and coverage, whether they are in line with the stated objectives of the study, and measure that it was designed to measure. Items were adjusted and corrected according to experts' feedback. Cronbach Alpha Reliability test method was applied to ascertain the internal consistency of the Lecturers' ICT Competencies Questionnaire (LICQ) and 0.86 was obtained as the reliability coefficient for the study. Data collected were subjected to mean and standard deviation to answer the research question

Presentation of Results

Research Question 1: What is the level of ICT competence in the job performances of lecturers at University of Port Harcourt during the COVID-19 outbreak?

Table 1: Mean and standard deviation on the level of ICT competency on job performances of lecturers in the University of Port Harcourt during the COVID-19 outbreak

S/N		Mean	SD	Decision
1	Ability to use a word processor in teaching topics.	2.67	0.86	High
2	Accuracy in the use of video conferencing and zoom application	1.86	0.85	Low
3	Accuracy in the use of mobile phone browsing as search engines to gather information	2.62	1.00	High
4	Accuracy in presenting lessons in the classroom using PowerPoint	1.88	0.86	Low
5	Accuracy in sharing slides in the zoom application	1.90	0.89	Low
6	Precision in preparing slides using a computer	1.83	0.84	Low
7	Ability to connect the hotspot to the laptop for internet connection	1.72	0.79	Low
8	Accuracy in the use of e-mails for communication	1.61	0.81	High
9	Accuracy in the use of social network applications to form a class group for discussions	2.78	0.83	Low
10	Ability to supervise students' projects online using ICT tools.	1.74	0.76	Low
	GRAND MEAN	**2.06**	**0.85**	Low

Table 1 showed that the lecturers at the University of Port Harcourt are competent in the ability to use word processors in teaching topics, accurate in the use of mobile phone browsing as search engines to gather information, and accurate in the use of e-mails for communication. However not competent in the accurate use of video conferencing and zoom application, accuracy in presenting lessons in the classroom using PowerPoint, accuracy in sharing slides in zoom application, precision in preparing slides using a computer, ability to connect the hotspot to the laptop for internet connection, the curacy in use of e-mails for communication, accuracy in the use of social network applications icon to a form group for discussion and the ability to supervise projects online using ICT tools. The grand mean of 2.06 and standard deviation of 0.83 showed that the level of ICT competency in job performances of lecturers at the University of Port Harcourt during the COVID-19 outbreak was low.

Research Question 2: What are the factors contributing to inefficient ICT competencies for effective job performances of lecturers in the University of Port Harcourt during the COVID-19 outbreak?

Table 2: Mean and standard deviation of factors contributing to inefficient ICT competencies for effective job performances

S/N		Mean	SD	Decision
1	Inadequate ICT facilities	2.58	0.82	Agree
2	Inaccessibility to ICT facilities	1.89	0.93	Disagree
3	Lack of training and retraining programs	2.89	0.96	Agree
4	The negative attitude of academic staff	2.96	0.89	Agree
5	financial incapability for private training	1.99	0.76	Agree
6	Inconsistency of power supply	1.94	0.84	Disagree
7	Poor exposure to ICT-related jobs	2.57	0.90	Agree
8	Poor internet network	1.91	0.93	Disagree
	GRAND MEAN	**2.34**	**0.88**	

Table 2 showed that the major factors responsible for inefficient ICT competencies for effective job performances include lack of training and retraining programs and inadequate facilities, poor exposure to ICT-related jobs, financial incapability for private training, and negative attitude of lecturers. The grand mean of 2.34 and standard deviation of 0.88 showed that the factors identified in the instrument have a negative impact on competencies of ICT among lecturers at University of Port Harcourt during the COVID-19 outbreak

Discussion of Findings

The finding in Table 1 showed that the ICT competency level in job performances of lecturers at University of Port Harcourt was at a low level (minimal), there is no competency, inaccuracy in the use of video conferencing and zoom application, accuracy in presenting lessons in the classroom using PowerPoint, accuracy in sharing slides in

zoom application, precision in preparing slides using a computer, ability to connect the hotspot to the laptop for internet connection, accuracy in the use of e-mails for communication, accuracy in the use of social network applications to form class groups for discussions and the ability to supervise students' projects online using ICT tools was low. The findings of this study agree with Akpan (2014) in his work on ICT competence and lecturers' job efficacy in universities in Cross River State, Nigeria. Akpan's study reported that teacher ICT competence in Nigeria is below expectations and access to ICT resources like the internet and computer is mostly limited in campuses of various higher institutions. However, the finding of this study is at variance with that of Villanueva et al. (2022)) in their work which determined the educational technology competencies of elementary teachers: Inputs towards the development of a training program. Their study reported that teachers were competent in the use of ICT facilities in instructional delivery. The result findings of this present study also generally revealed that academic staff in University of Port Harcourt did have the ICT competence required for the job performances of lecturers during the COVID-19 outbreak. This included: the ability to use a word processor in teaching topics; accuracy in the use of mobile phone browsing as search engines to gather information, accuracy, and the use of e-mails for communication. Also in agreement with Nwankwo et al.(2020) work on the aassessment of digital literacy skills of 21st-century librarians in college libraries in Anambra State. It was also found that college librarians possess some digital literacy skills like turning on computers, downloading files from databases, and PowerPoint, presentations, opening a computer file, and word processing.

The findings also revealed that lack of training and retraining programs, inadequate ICT facilities, poor exposure to ICT-related jobs, financial incapability for private training, and the negative attitude of some staff contributed to the inefficient ICT competency of some staff. These responses to factors contributing to inefficient ICT competencies for effective job performances of lecturers in the University of Port Harcourt during the COVID-19 outbreak showed low efficiency. This finding is consistent with Emiri (2015) in his work on Digital Literacy Skills among Librarians in University Libraries in the 21st Century in Edo and Delta States, Nigeria; which shows that librarians acquired DLS through colleagues' assistance, trial and error, IT programs, and formal education while librarians' level of use of DLS is low. Ojo et al. (2021) in their work on COVID-19 pandemic: Nigerian University lecturers' response to virtual orientation, also reported that the presence of infrastructural orientation influences the virtual orientation of lecturers in universities.

Conclusion

The findings of this study empirically revealed that lecturers ICT competence rated low and incompetent showing their ineffectiveness in the use of ICT during the COVID-19 pandemic outbreak. There is no competence, inaccuracy in the use of video conferencing and Zoom application, accuracy in presenting lessons in the classroom using PowerPoint, accuracy in sharing slides in Zoom application, precision in preparing slides using a computer, ability

to connect the hotspot to the laptop for internet connection, accuracy in the use of e-mails for communication. Accuracy in the use of social network applications to form class groups for discussions and the ability to supervise students' projects online using ICT tools was low

It is also empirically proven that the responses to factors contributing to inefficient ICT competencies for effective job performances of lecturers in the University of Port Harcourt during the COVID-19 outbreak showed low efficiency. It showed that the major factors responsible for inefficient ICT competencies for effective job performances include lack of training and retraining programs and inadequate facilities, poor exposure to ICT-related jobs, financial incapability for private training, and negative attitude of lecturers.

Recommendations

1. University management should organize constant ICT training and retraining programs for lecturers in the universities as a way to improve their ICT competence level.
2. ICT facilities should be provided for the lecturers by the government in order to improve their competency in the classroom and likewise possess the basic ICT knowledge and skills to teach.
3. Leadership at the various universities should adequately provide ICT internet facilities for lecturers to have access and become competent to carry out research.
4. Institution management at the various universities in collaboration with the State Government and Federal Government should encourage lecturers' ICT competency to guide learners in searching for information for sustainability in instructional delivery by rendering financial assistance for procurement of ICT facilities.

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