LEADERSHIP STYLE AND ICT USAGE AS DETERMINANTS OF STAFF PERFORMANCE IN UNIVERSITY LIBRARIES IN KWARA STATE, NIGERIA

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Abstract

University libraries play vital role in supporting teaching, learning, and research, yet staff performance is often shaped by leadership practices and use of information and communication

technologies (ICT). This study investigated leadership style and ICT usage as determinants of staff performance in university libraries in Kwara State, Nigeria. Three objectives guided the study: to examine the influence of leadership style on staff performance, to assess the effect of ICT usage on staff performance, and to evaluate their joint impact. A descriptive survey design was employed, with data collected from 114 library staff across three universities in Kwara State using a structured questionnaire. Analysis was conducted with descriptive statistics, ANOVA, pairwise correlation, and multiple regression. Results showed that while democratic and transformational leadership were most common, ICT usage, although constrained by inadequate infrastructure and limited training, emerged as the stronger predictor of performance, significantly enhancing efficiency and service delivery. The study concludes that improved library outcomes require a combination of context-sensitive leadership and sustained ICT investment. It recommends continuous leadership training, regular ICT capacity building, and clear institutional policies to strengthen staff productivity and service quality.

Introduction

University libraries are central to the academic enterprise, serving as knowledge hubs that provide resources and services to support teaching, learning, and research. They play a crucial role in knowledge management by ensuring that students, faculty, and researchers can efficiently locate, retrieve, and utilise information for academic and professional development (Abdulraheem, 2018). The effectiveness of these libraries is largely determined by the quality of their resources, services, and, most importantly, the performance of their staff.

Staff performance in university libraries refers to the capacity of personnel to execute their specialised duties in line with institutional goals. It is essential not only for meeting users' information needs but also for fostering professional growth and enhancing the overall academic experience. Effective staff performance encourages greater utilisation of library resources, thereby strengthening teaching, learning, and research outcomes (Saka, 2013; Fattah, 2017). The responsibilities of library staff generally include managerial functions such as policy development and supervision; practical duties such as cataloguing, classifying, and managing serials; and advisory services such as circulation, reference support, and user education. Achieving excellence in these roles requires motivation, a supportive environment, and effective leadership.

Leadership styles define how leaders interact with subordinates and shape organisational outcomes. In university libraries, common leadership approaches include transformational, transactional, autocratic, democratic, and laissez-faire styles (Bass & Riggio, 2014). Transformational leadership, centred on vision and staff development, has been associated with higher job satisfaction and improved performance (Akinwale & George, 2020). Transactional leadership, while effective for ensuring compliance, may hinder innovation (Ubogu, 2022). Autocratic leadership can discourage creativity, whereas democratic leadership promotes participation and innovation (Johnson, 2015). Laissez-faire leadership, characterised by minimal supervision, risks low accountability and performance inconsistencies (Oyovwe-Tinuoye,

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Omeluzor & Patrick, 2021). The style of leadership adopted in university libraries, therefore, has a direct impact on staff engagement, motivation, and productivity.

Alongside leadership, Information and Communication Technology (ICT) has become a defining factor in shaping library operations. The introduction of ICT has transformed libraries from spaces reliant on manual processes into digital knowledge hubs that provide seamless access to both print and electronic resources (Oyovwe-Tinuoye et al., 2021). Tools such as integrated library systems, automated catalogues, and electronic databases have simplified resource management and expanded access to scholarly content (Adeleke & Olorunsola, 2010; Ani et al., 2015). In addition, networking and resource-sharing initiatives such as library consortia have enhanced collaboration, reduced costs, and broadened access to resources (Gbaje, 2007). ICT adoption has therefore been shown to streamline operations, improve efficiency, and enhance service delivery in academic libraries.

The interplay of leadership and ICT, therefore, shapes the performance of staff in university libraries. Strong leadership provides the direction, support, and motivation required for staff to embrace ICT, while ICT adoption streamlines operations and equips staff to meet users' evolving needs. Conversely, poor leadership and resistance to technology can undermine performance and service quality (Krubu & Osawaru, 2010). As digital transformation deepens in higher education, the ability of library personnel to leverage ICT under effective leadership becomes increasingly critical for sustaining the relevance and effectiveness of university libraries (Ubogu, 2022).

Despite the importance of leadership style and ICT usage in influencing staff performance, there is a limited body of research that jointly examines these variables in the context of Nigerian university libraries, particularly in Kwara State. This study, therefore, investigates leadership style and ICT usage as determinants of staff performance in university libraries in Kwara State, to provide insights that can enhance productivity, service delivery, and the overall contribution of libraries to institutional development.

Statement of the Problem

University libraries are established to provide information resources and services that support teaching, learning, and research. Their effectiveness, however, depends largely on the productivity and commitment of library staff. In Kwara State, evidence suggests that staff performance in university libraries is hampered by ineffective leadership styles and inadequate use of Information and Communication Technologies (ICT). Leadership approaches that fail to motivate and inspire staff often result in low job satisfaction, weak collaboration, and limited adaptability to technological change (Odunewu & Haliso, 2019).

Although ICT has the potential to enhance library operations through automation, digital access, and efficient resource management, its application in many university libraries remains suboptimal. Common challenges include poor infrastructure, inadequate training, and resistance to technological adoption among staff. These shortcomings lead to delays in service delivery, inefficient use of resources, and declining user satisfaction, thereby undermining the libraries' capacity to meet their academic mandate.

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It is therefore imperative to investigate how leadership style and ICT usage jointly influence staff performance in university libraries in Kwara State. Understanding these dynamics will provide practical insights for improving staff productivity, enhancing service delivery, and ensuring that university libraries remain effective in supporting institutional objectives

Research Objectives

While the overall objective of this study is to examine leadership style and ICT usage as determinants of staff performance in university libraries in Kwara State, the Specific objectives of the study include to:

i. Investigate the influence of leadership style on staff performance in university libraries in Kwara State?
ii. Investigate the influence of ICT usage on staff performance in university libraries in Kwara State?
iii. Investigate the joint relationship among leadership styles, ICT usage, and staff performance in the university library in Kwara State.

Methodology

The study adopted a descriptive survey design with a total population of 139 library staff drawn from three selected university libraries in Kwara State, Nigeria: Kwara State University Library (32), University of Ilorin Library (94), and Al-Hikmah University Library (13). The table below shows the population of respondents

Table 1: Population Distribution

S/N	Universities	Professional	Para-Professional	Support Staff	Study Population(No of Staff)
1	KWASU	14	7	11	32
2	UNILORIN	27	26	41	94
3	AL-HIKMAH	4	6	3	13
	TOTAL				139

The total enumeration technique was used since the population was relatively small and possessed specific characteristics relevant to the study. A structured questionnaire was the main instrument for data collection, containing items designed to address the study objectives. Content validity was ensured through expert review by two lecturers from the Department of Library and Information Science, Kwara State University, while reliability was determined using the test–retest method over a three-week interval. The questionnaires were distributed by the researcher with the assistance of two research aides, ensuring that ethical standards were maintained. Data collected were analysed using the Statistical Package for the Social Sciences

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(SPSS) Descriptive and inferential statistical tools such as frequency tables, percentages, mean, standard deviation, ANOVA, correlation, and regression analyses were employed to examine the relationship between leadership styles, ICT usage, and staff performance in university libraries.

Review of Related Literature

Leadership Style and Staff Performance

Leadership style is a critical determinant of staff performance in university libraries, shaping motivation, job satisfaction, and service delivery (Arumuru, 2019). Autocratic leadership, marked by centralised control and limited staff input, may ensure discipline in the short term but often stifles creativity and reduces morale (Peterson, 2012; Dolly & Okpokwasili, 2018). In contrast, democratic leadership fosters participation and collaboration, creating a supportive environment where staff feel valued and are more motivated to contribute (Johnson, 2015; Dolly & Okpokwasili, 2018).

Transformational leadership has been identified as particularly effective in academic libraries, as it inspires innovation, enhances adaptability, and strengthens commitment to organisational goals in technology-driven contexts (Wilson, 2020; Usman, Abdulraheem & Eromosele, 2018). Transactional leadership, with its reliance on rewards and sanctions, may sustain procedural compliance but is less effective in encouraging creativity and long-term staff engagement (Peterson, 2012; Quadri, Obaseki & Bakare, 2023). Laissez-faire leadership, though granting autonomy, often results in inefficiency and low morale where guidance is lacking (Segun-Adeniran, 2015; Dolly & Okpokwasili, 2018).

Scholars emphasise that effective leadership extends beyond fixed styles to adaptive, communicative approaches. Empathetic leadership, grounded in consistent communication and emotional intelligence, promotes loyalty and reduces turnover (Fatokun, Salaam & Ajegbomogun, 2010). In the digital age, adaptive leadership is necessary to navigate change and align library services with user needs (Germano, 2010). Comparative evidence further suggests that transformational and democratic leadership foster collaboration and innovation across African university libraries (Kwanya & Stilwell, 2018; Ogada, Kwanya & Mwai, 2024), though institutional contexts may necessitate situational approaches (Northouse, 2018; Sulaiman & Akinsanya, 2011).

ICT Usage and Staff Performance in University Libraries

The integration of Information and Communication Technology (ICT) has fundamentally reshaped the operations of university libraries, directly influencing staff performance. ICT tools such as Integrated Library Systems (ILS), Online Public Access Catalogues (OPACs), digital repositories, plagiarism detection software, and online databases automate routine processes, enhance access to information, and expand the scope of library services (Tella, 2022; Ntui et al., 2023). By streamlining tasks like cataloguing, circulation, and classification, these tools reduce staff workload, minimise errors, and enable personnel to focus on higher-level services such as user education and digital scholarship. In this way, ICT enhances efficiency and improves overall job satisfaction among library staff.

Beyond automation, ICT fosters collaboration and communication, which are crucial to library service delivery. Digital platforms, including email, cloud services, and virtual reference systems, allow staff to engage more effectively with colleagues and users, enabling timely responses to enquiries and real-time resource sharing (Anunobi, 2023). Studies indicate that ICT competencies are now essential requirements for librarians, not only to sustain daily operations but also to facilitate user-centred innovations. For instance, during the COVID-19 pandemic, ICT ensured continuity of services through remote access and virtual collaboration, highlighting its role in staff adaptability and resilience (Ntui et al., 2023).

However, the benefits of ICT to staff performance depend largely on adequate training, infrastructure, and institutional support. While modern technologies such as AI-driven catalogues, self-checkout kiosks, and mobile applications have expanded opportunities for personalised services (Azolo, 2019), their successful adoption requires continuous professional development to bridge digital skill gaps. Where staff lack ICT proficiency, efficiency is reduced, and digital tools are underutilised (Amusa, Iyoro, & Ajani, 2013; Anunobi, 2023). Thus, investment in ICT infrastructure, ongoing training, and leadership commitment are essential for ensuring that technology fulfils its potential to improve the productivity, confidence, and effectiveness of university library staff.

Review of Related Empirical Literature

Several empirical studies have investigated the relationship between leadership styles, ICT usage, and staff performance in university libraries. Akor (2009) and Arumuru (2019) observed that leadership styles such as transformational, democratic, transactional, autocratic, and laissez-faire remain common in academic institutions, each with different implications for staff performance. Their findings highlight that while transformational and democratic leadership often promote inclusivity and motivation, autocratic and laissez-faire leadership tend to limit staff participation and morale. In a similar vein, Mgbodile (2012) and Onwubiko (2013) reported that autocratic leadership persists in Nigerian universities, sometimes providing structure but also discouraging creativity.

Other studies point to the effectiveness of participatory approaches. Bhatti et al. (2012) and Germano (2010) showed that transformational leadership inspires staff towards institutional goals, while Johnson (2015) confirmed that democratic leadership encourages communication and creativity among staff. On the contrary, Diebig and Bormann (2020) as well as Puni, Mohammed, and Asamoah (2016) found that laissez-faire leadership generally reduces productivity and supervision, leading to inefficiencies in library operations. Mehmood and Arif (2011) also noted that autocratic styles often discourage staff involvement in decision-making, which in turn lowers job satisfaction.

Empirical work on ICT usage similarly underscores its importance in university libraries. Ekaterini (2010) and Mwesigwa, Mugisha, and Dawa (2020) identified digital cataloguing, electronic databases, and automated circulation systems as some of the key ICT tools enhancing efficiency and service delivery. Singh, Verma, and Mehta (2012) further found that ICT facilities such as Koha, OPAC, e-journals, and digital repositories improve staff productivity by streamlining library services. Yet, challenges persist. Segun-Adeniran (2015) observed that despite an increase

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in ICT usage in Nigerian libraries, infrastructural gaps and limited ICT skills among staff hinder effective adoption. Okenwa (2020) supported this view, noting that leadership approaches strongly determine how successfully ICT tools are integrated into library operations.

The link between ICT utilisation and staff performance has also been highlighted by Fiaz, Su and Saqib (2017) and Usman et al. (2018), who reported that ICT enhances efficiency, reduces workload, and improves the speed of information retrieval. Similarly, Hughes, Williams, and Ren (2012), together with Yi, Wang, and Chang (2019), concluded that ICT-driven services improve staff responsiveness and streamline tasks. However, Nanjundeswaraswamy and Swammy (2014) and Ogbah (2013) cautioned that poor ICT literacy and lack of training opportunities among staff reduce the potential benefits of technology. These findings show that while ICT has great potential to enhance staff performance, real outcomes depend on adequate training, infrastructural investment, and supportive leadership.

Overall, the reviewed empirical studies establish that leadership style and ICT usage are significant determinants of staff performance in university libraries. Democratic and transformational leadership tend to improve morale, creativity, and staff satisfaction, while autocratic and laissez-faire leadership can weaken motivation and engagement. ICT tools such as OPAC, digital repositories, and electronic databases improve efficiency, but their effectiveness depends on adequate staff training and institutional support. These insights provide a strong empirical basis for examining leadership and ICT usage in relation to staff performance in university libraries in Kwara State.

Theoretical Framework

This study is guided by Douglas McGregor's Theory X and Theory Y (1960, as cited in Mat, 2008), which explains how managerial perceptions shape leadership styles. Theory X assumes staff are inherently unmotivated and require strict supervision, aligning with autocratic and transactional leadership. Theory Y posits that staff are self-motivated and capable of self-direction, aligning with transformational and democratic leadership. In the context of university libraries, Theory Y-oriented leadership fosters staff engagement, innovation, and effective ICT use, whereas Theory X may hinder technology adoption and reduce performance. Applying this framework allows the study to examine how leadership perceptions influence staff motivation, ICT utilisation, and overall performance in university libraries in Kwara State, Nigeria.

Data Analysis

This section presents the results of the analysis done. Out of a total of 139 respondents to whom the questionnaire was sent across the selected universities, 116 completed the survey, representing a response rate of approximately 83.5%. After data screening and cleaning, including the removal of incomplete responses and those with blank entries, a total of 114 (82.0%) valid questionnaires were retained for final analysis.

Demographic Characteristics of Respondents

Table 2: Demographic Profile of Respondents

Variable	Categories	Frequency	Percent

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Gender	Female	57	50
	Male	57	50
Age	20 – 30	11	9.60
	31 – 40	38	33.30
	41 – 50	54	47.40
	51 and above	11	9.60
Highest Educational Qualification	Bachelor's Degree	53	46.50
	Diploma	30	26.30
	Doctorate (PhD)	7	6.10
	Master's Degree	24	21.10
Professional Status	Assistant Librarian	23	20.20
	Librarian	55	48.20
	Library Officer	36	31.60
Years of Work Experience	1-5 years	21	18.40
	11-15 years	43	37.70
	16 years and above	9	7.90
	6-10 years	41	36
Type of University	Federal	77	67.50
	Private	10	8.80
	State	27	23.70
Name of University Library	Al-Hikmah University Library	10	8.80
	Kwara State University Library	27	23.70
	University of Ilorin Library	77	67.50

Source: Field work summary, 2025

The summary of the demographic and personal attributes of the respondents is presented in Table 2. From the table, there is a 50 – 50 distribution of the respondents between the male and female genders. Meanwhile, library staff aged 41 – 50 make up the larger part of the respondents (47.4%). On the educational level, the majority of the library staff from the three university libraries have a bachelor's degree (46.5%), while only 6% have a doctoral degree. 48% of the total respondents are Librarians, higher than the number of Assistant Librarians and Library Officers. More so, mid-to-early career library staff (those with 6 – 10 years of work experience) make up the bulk of the sample (36%), while the most experienced staff (16 years and above) make up the smallest group (7.9%). The bulk of the respondents (67.5%) represent a federal university, which is consistent with reality, since they are larger in size and workforce than state and private universities.

Research Objective 1: Investigate the influence of leadership style on staff performance in university libraries in Kwara State

Table 3: ANOVA Results for Staff Performance by Leadership Style

	Sum of Squares	df	Mean Square	F-statistics	Sig.
Between Groups	1.60	4	0.40	2.52	0.045

Within Groups	17.25	109	0.16		

Source: Field work summary, 2025

The result shows an F-statistic of 2.52 with a significance value of 0.045. Since the p-value is less than 0.05, the result is statistically significant. This means there is a significant difference in staff performance across the different leadership styles in university libraries in Kwara State.

Research Objective 2: Investigate the influence of ICT usage on staff performance in university libraries in Kwara State

Table 4: Correlation Analysis between Staff Performance and ICT Score

	Staff Performance	ICT Usage
Staff Performance	1	0.30 (p=0.001)
ICT Usage	0.30 (p=0.001)	1

Source: Field work summary, 2025

From the correlation matrix in Table 4, a statistically significant positive correlation exists between ICT usage and staff performance (r = 0.30, p = 0.001). This indicates a moderate, direct relationship: as ICT usage increases, so does staff performance.

Research Objective 3: Investigate the joint relationship among leadership styles, ICT usage and staff performance in the university library in Kwara State

Table 5: Multiple Regression Results

Variable	Coefficient	Std. Error	t-statistic	P-value	Tolerance	VIF
Constant	2.07	0.38	5.51	**0.00**		
Leadership Style	-0.03	0.03	-0.90	0.37	1.00	1.00
ICT usage	0.36	0.11	3.28	**0.001**	1.00	1.00
F-statistic = 5.81 (**p-value = 0.004**)						
R^2 = 0.10						
Adj. R^2 = 0.08						
Durbin Watson = 1.78						

Source: Field work summary, 2025

From the multiple regression results (Table 5), the joint model was statistically significant with an F-statistic of 5.81 and a probability value of 0.004. ICT usage shows a significant positive influence on staff performance with a coefficient of 0.36 and a probability value of 0.001, while leadership style had no significant independent effect with a coefficient of -0.03 and a probability value of 0.37. The model explains 10% of the variance in staff performance as demonstrated by an R^2 of 0.10, indicating a modest combined predictive power.

Discussion of the findings

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This study examined leadership styles and ICT usage as determinants of staff performance in university libraries in Kwara State. Specifically, it investigated the influence of leadership styles on staff performance, the influence of ICT usage on staff performance, and the joint relationship among leadership styles, ICT usage, and staff performance in university libraries across the state. The findings of the study are discussed under the following subheadings:

Research question one, the findings suggest that effective leadership styles foster higher staff morale and improved service delivery. Consistent with this, (Kwanya & Stilwell 2018) as well as (Kwanya & Mwai 2024) observed that leaders who flexibly adjust their leadership approach to meet staff needs tend to achieve better performance outcomes. Similarly, Adogbeji, Ghenekohwoya, and Adigwe (2022) emphasised that when library leaders communicate institutional goals clearly and align them with individual roles, staff commitment and performance are enhanced. Such alignment cultivates a shared vision and motivation, ultimately improving organisational results.

Nevertheless, the selection of an appropriate leadership style must consider contextual factors such as institutional characteristics, staff maturity, and organizational culture. Supporting this view, Ogar and Nanu (2022) highlighted that the effectiveness of 21st-century university libraries largely depends on the leadership competence of librarians in managing personnel and executing policies. Leadership style therefore remains a critical determinant of staff performance, shaping motivation, satisfaction, morale, and service efficiency. Arumuru (2019) further maintained that leadership should reflect organisational norms, values, and staff capacities, noting that adaptable leadership significantly enhances the productivity and quality of work in university libraries.

Research question two, supports the theoretical and empirical arguments of Tella (2022), Ntui et al. (2023), and (Afolabi & Abioye 2021), who found that the integration of ICT into library services enhances efficiency, streamlines workflows, and improves job outcomes. The correlation implies that staff who frequently use ICT tools, such as integrated library systems, cataloguing software, digital repositories, and automation tools, are more likely to perform well in key service areas. This reflects Haliso (2011) and Oladapo and Ajibola (2021), who argued that ICT enables faster, more accurate delivery of services like circulation, user support, and digital literacy instruction.

However, the moderate strength of the correlation suggests that ICT is not the only factor influencing performance. As Messick and Krammer (2004), and (Johari & Yahya (2009) noted, other elements, like work environment, motivation, leadership, and training, interact with ICT to determine actual performance outcomes. The significant relationship reinforces that investment in ICT infrastructure must be matched by active, daily usage to realise performance gains; continuous digital literacy training is essential to unlock the full potential of ICT for performance improvement; ICT should be viewed as an enabler, not a stand-alone solution; its benefits emerge when embedded in a supportive leadership and institutional framework.

Research question three, the result confirm that ICT usage is a stronger determinant of staff performance than leadership style in the studied libraries. This supports earlier claims by Ntui et al. (2023) and Azolo (2019), who argued that in contemporary academic environments,

technology adoption has a more immediate and measurable impact on service delivery and productivity. While leadership style alone may influence performance under certain conditions, its lack of statistical significance in the joint model suggests that in the presence of strong ICT adoption, leadership's effect becomes less direct. This aligns with Messick and Krammer (2004) and Anunobi (2023), who noted that leadership's impact is often mediated through infrastructure availability, staff motivation, and operational policies.

It may also reflect inconsistencies in the actual implementation of leadership approaches (e.g., leaders may claim to be democratic or transformational, but fail to translate those ideals into measurable staff outcomes, as Odunewu and Haliso (2019) warned). Additionally, the relatively low adjusted R^2 of 0.08 implies that other variables not included in the model, such as motivation, workload, institutional support, and professional development, may significantly shape performance, as emphasised by Adeyemi and Ogunleye (2022) and Popoola (2017).

In university libraries, Theory Y-oriented leadership encourages innovation, professional development, and effective ICT use, whereas Theory X may hinder staff autonomy and technology adoption. Applying this framework helps explain how leadership perceptions influence staff motivation, ICT utilisation, and overall performance in the libraries studied.

This result implies that ICT use is both a direct and dominant driver of performance in the present context; leadership style may matter more indirectly, e.g., through ICT implementation, training support, and motivational leadership; university libraries should prioritise ICT investment and digital training, while also working to align leadership strategies with performance-driven implementation; and broader institutional reforms, including clear policy direction and resource allocation, are also essential to boost overall performance beyond the 10% explained by the current model.

Conclusion

This study examined the influence of leadership styles and ICT usage on staff performance in university libraries in Kwara State. Drawing samples of 114 library staff from the University of Ilorin, Kwara State University Al-Hikma University, the findings showed that while different leadership styles exist, their effects on performance are uneven. Laissez-faire leadership, often seen as inactive, was unexpectedly linked with higher performance, suggesting that experienced and self-motivated staff thrive under greater autonomy. By contrast, transformational leadership, though theoretically ideal, did not yield the strongest outcomes, likely due to challenges in practical application.

ICT, on the other hand, demonstrated a more consistent and positive impact, improving efficiency, reducing manual workloads, and enhancing service delivery. Despite persistent barriers such as limited training, poor power supply, and unreliable internet, the statistical evidence confirmed ICT as the stronger predictor of staff performance. The implication is that sustained progress in university libraries will require not only leadership that adapts to staff and institutional realities but also deliberate investment in ICT infrastructure and capacity building to unlock its full benefits.

Recommendations

From the findings, the following recommendations are made:

- Library administrators should undergo continuous leadership training that emphasises communication, supervision, and staff motivation. Rather than adopting leadership styles in theory, leaders should apply them meaningfully to suit institutional contexts and staff characteristics, ensuring that autonomy, participation, and accountability are balanced.
- Libraries should prioritise investment in ICT infrastructure and capacity building. Regular digital skills training, peer mentoring, and integration of ICT competencies into staff evaluations are necessary to ensure that available technologies are effectively utilised to improve service delivery and efficiency.
- Institutions should pursue a dual strategy that strengthens leadership practices while simultaneously expanding ICT facilities. Clear policies should be introduced to guide both areas, with performance-based incentives to encourage innovation and sustained improvement in staff productivity.

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