

ELECTRONIC LIBRARY USE BY STAFF AND STUDENTS IN UNIVERSITIES IN SOUTH WEST NIGERIA

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Abstract

This study examined the electronic library use by students and staff of three Nigerian universities namely; University of Ibadan, Ibadan, Oyo State, University of Agriculture, Abeokuta, Ogun State, Obafemi Awolowo University, He Ife, Osun State. Stratified random sampling techniques and the data were analyzed using descriptive statistics. Two hundred and ninety-responses were returned and found usable out of 300 copies of questionnaire distributed. The main reason of using the electronic resources by both student and staff is for academic research. The major constraints identified by the respondents were lack of adequate power supply and limitation to speed of access. The study recommends adequate power supply and adequate training in the use of electronic library literacy for students and staff of universities.

Key Words: Electronic Library, Students, Use, Staff, ICT, Library, Digitization, Digital

INTRODUCTION

It is an acceptable fact worldwide that the library is at the heart of any education enterprise. In other words, without the library the school system could be said to be dead in terms of knowledge generation and dissemination.

Electronic libraries are seen as the new tools for achieving human goals by changing the way information is used in the world. Technology is dramatically transforming libraries.

Electronic libraries are organized collection of digital information. They are collections organized for a particular community of users, and they are designed to support the information needs of that community (Saracevic, 2000). Electronic libraries can offer resources from many sources and many formats, including audio and video. The item in these virtual collections does not have to reside in one server, but they share a common interface to assist the user in accessing the collection. The emphasis in virtual libraries is on organization and access, not on physical collection (Baldwin and Mitchell, 1996).

Increasingly, different efforts have been made to lunch African Universities into the digital society with different initiatives by both national and international bodies toward proving the required networked infrastructure that would enable them to have access to free or heavily discounted journal and database through program like AGORA, elfl, HINARI and PERI (Rosenberg, 2005).

Witten (2002) describes electronic libraries as focused collections of digital objects including texts, video and audio along with method for access and retrieval and for selection, organization and maintenance of the collection. Libraries of all sizes and types are embracing digital collections, although most libraries will continue to offer both print and digital collections for many years to come. New purchases and purchases of journal ,magazines and abstraction and indexing services are heavily weighted towards digital while digital books (e-books) are only beginning to show a presence in library collection (Tenopir,2003).

Aguolu and Aguolu (2003) reveal that efforts are being made worldwide to promote access to information in all formats. They lament the attendant features of under development such as power failure, machine breakdown, lack of spare parts and technicians which intermittently starve the performance of the modern gadgets of information storage and transfer in developing countries. There is a great need to study the use of electronic resources and investigate the factors that are a hindrance to their use. Students and staff of many universities now have access to e-brary and all the powerful research technologies offered through e-brary platform.

Despite these efforts, many universities are yet to harness the opportunities provided by these initiatives, due to inadequate facilities or lack of maintenance culture. In fact, even where these facilities are in place, the potential users of these new information sources are not making use of the available electronic resources owing to lack of awareness or lack of skills required to navigate the modern technology. Corroborating the assertion, Abdullah (2006) notes that most users are unaware of the existence of e-books in library collections and that they are willing to discover and use them more effectively, also unfriendly interfaces or usability problems tend to hinder their future use of electronic resources. This study investigated electronic library use by students and staff in three universities in South West Nigeria.

Literature review

According to Arm (2007) an e-library is a managed collection of information with associated services where the information is stored in digital format and accessible over a network. The term electronic library is diffuse enough to be applied to a wide range of collections and organizations, but to be considered an electronic library; an online collection of information must be managed by and made accessible to a community of users (Oketunji, 2002, Ondari- Okenwa 2003)-According to Daniel (2002) Nancy Schiller was one of the earliest writers to use the expression "virtual libraries" which she defined in 1992 simply as "libraries in which computers and telecommunication technologies make access to a wide range of information resources possible". Today this same concept is referred to variously as digital library "electronic library" "community network as simply as library without walls" It is called "virtual" because in a good electronic wide and networked library, the user enjoys the euphoria of being in distant libraries and yet has not physically moved (Daniel, 2002).

Aina(2004) defines electronic library as a library that consists of material and services in electronic formats rather than the print format. In-another-dimension, Shim, W. (2001) defines electronic-library as those electronic-information resources and services that users access electronically via a computing network form inside the library or remote of the library. Electronic-library resources are invaluable-research tools

which compliment print-based resources in any traditional-library. They provide access to information that might be restricted to the user because of geographical location of finances (Sabouri, 2010).The emergence of electronic-resources has cut the barrier to valuable information resources which until now were difficult to access especially by scholars in the developing nations of the world.

Tenopir (2003) in a major survey analyzed the findings of over 200 studies on the use of electronic-resources in libraries that were published 1995-2003.The results revealed that, electronic resources have been rapidly adopted in academic spheres; however behavior varies according to the discipline. According to Bar-Ilian, Peritz and Wolman (2003) the most active users of electronic journals are the younger members of the teaching and research staff. University students and staff-usually go to the library to research or look for learning or study materials .They use the Internet to boost their research and study abilities. Since the mid-1980s many scholars have been concerned about the state of ICT in Nigeria and the issue and challenges confronting its effective adoptions and utilization. (Oketunji, 2002, Ondari-Okenwa 2002). Ani(2005) investigated the need and feasibility of evolving and developing electronic (digital) libraries in Nigeria, He concluded that the evolution and development of electronic libraries in the country is real, but recommends increased levels of funding for university libraries as well as the development of relevant policies in ICT.

Harrison (1999) found that many students have embraced the computer age and others waiting for someone to guide them. Students in their study appeared to be pleased to have had the opportunity to explore new things with peers, which ultimately lead to utilization of e-resources. Graduate students particularly, doctoral students are often found to be heavy users of electronic journal. Most likely in their role as researchers as found in the super journal projects graduate students may be (binge) users, consulting electronic journals extensively for a short period when they are writing theses or dissertations(Montgomery and King (2000).

Montgomery and king (2002) revealed that some libraries inform their users of the e-resources that are available in the libraries and how to access this information. Electronic-libraries are constructed environment,

and the way they are constructed influences how they are used, to what extent they will be used and the type of learning that can take place in that environment. (Jasinski 1998, Saracevic, 2000).

Neuman (1997) cited numerous studies to demonstrate how electronic libraries are avenue for higher level thinking skills and higher level learning such as problems solving, decision making .critical thinking or creative thinking.

Watts and Ibegbulem (2006) examined some of the barriers to the use of electronic information resources available at the Medical Library of College of Medicine, University of Nigeria, Nsukka. Their findings revealed that lack of an adequate ICT (Information and Communication Technology) infrastructure and affordable online access, absence of in-depth ICT skills and Information-searching are barriers to the use of electronic resources .This corroborated Oduwole (2003) findings on use of electronic information resources at the University of Agriculture-Library, Abeokuta, Nigeria, his study also identified lack of ICT and power outage as constraints to use of electronic resources.

Statement of Problem

Nisonger (1997) observes, however that there are a number of generally recognized problems that hinder the effective utilization of electronic library resources. Be that as it may, there is generally paucity of information on the progress so far made in the establishment of electronic library by Nigerian-institutions of higher learning in general and information-centers in particular. The absence of an electronic library in tertiary institution is capable of thwarting planning and development efforts in the country since modern development on learning depends heavily on TT.

Research Questions

1. What is the purpose for electronic library use by students and staff in universities?
2. To what extent do students and staff use the electronic library for their academic pursuit?
3. What are the limitations of electronic library use by students and staff in South West Universities?

Objectives of the study

The main objective of the study is to assess the use of electronic library resources by staff and students of universities in Nigeria. The specific objectives of the study are:

1. To ascertain the purpose for electronic library use by students and staff,
2. To find out the extent of use of e library -resources among students and staff in the three Nigerian Universities
3. To determine the factors that hinder usage of electronic library by Students and staff in three universities in South West Nigeria

Scope of the study

The study covers the electronic library use by students and staff in three Universities in South West Nigeria. The essence of this work is to ascertain the extent of awareness and use of electronic resources by library clientele.

Methodology

The descriptive survey method was used in this study. The questionnaire was used for the data collection. A total of 300 copies of questionnaires were administered to respondents which were made up of students and academic staff at the three universities in South West of Nigeria, namely: University of Ibadan, Ibadan, Oyo State, University of Agriculture, Abeokuta, Ogun State and Obafemi Awolowo University Ile - Ife, Osun State, Nigeria.

Analysis and Interpretation of Data

The study captured data on the Academic level distribution of students thus presented in Table 1

Table 1: Distribution of Students by Academic

	Frequency	Percent
Undergraduate	145	69.7%
MSc	61	29.3%
PhD	3	1.4%
Total	209	100.4%

Table 1 depicts that 69.7% of the respondents who are students are undergraduates, 29.3% are Masters Students while only 1.4% are doctorates students. In all 69.7% undergraduates were interviewed and 30.3% post graduate students. The ratio of undergraduates to post graduate is 2:1.

Table 2: Distribution of staff by Academic Qualification

	Frequency	Percent
Diploma	16	17.8%
Degree	1	1.1%
Masters	42	46.7%
PhD	31	34.4%
Total	90	100.0%

Table 2, depicts that 17.8% of the respondents who are staff have diploma, 1.1% have first degree, 46.7% have masters and 34.4% have doctorate degree. Most of the staff is Master degree holders.

Table 3: Length of time students have used e-library

	Frequency	Percent
1 year	120	57.4%
Between 2 and 3yrs	60	28.7%
Between 3 and 4 years	20	5.6.%
More than 4 years	9	4.3%
Total	209	100.0%

Table 3 explains that 57.4% of the respondents who are students have been using the e-library resources in their university for a year, 28.7% have been using it between 2 and 3 years, 5.6% have been using it between 3 and 4 years while the remaining 4.3% have been using it more than 4 years now. The data collected revealed that the undergraduates have, used the e-library at least for a year.

Table 4: Length of time the staff have used e-library

	Frequency	Percentage
1 year	6	6.7 %
Between 2 and 3 years	20	22.2%
Between 3 and 4 years	43	47.7%
More than 4 years	21	23.3 %
Total	90	100.0%

Table 4, explains that 6.7 % of the respondents who are staff have been using the e-library resources in their university for a year, 22.2% have been using it between 2 and 3 years, 47.7% have been using it between 3 and 4 years while the remaining 23.3% have been using it for more than 4 years now. The information collected here shows that most staff has been using the electronic library for a period of two to three years.

Table 5: Students' assessment of the e-library in their institution

	Frequency	Percent
Very good	41	20.5%
Good	98	49%
Fair	50	25%
Poor	10	5.5%
Total	200	100.0%

Table 5, shows that 20.5% of the respondents that are students said the e-library resources in their institution is very good, 49 % said it is good, 25% said it is fair while 5.5% said it is poor. From the information collected, the assessment of the e-library according to students in their institutions is good.

Table 6; Staff assessment of the e-library in their institution

	Frequency	Percent
Very good	20	20.2%
Good	60	60.6%
Fair	19	19.1%
Poor	0	0
Total	99	100.0%

Table 6, shows that 20.2 % % of the respondents that are staff said the e-library resources in their institutions is very good ,60.6% said it is good,19.1 % said it is fair while 0% said it is poor. A cumulative of 100% meant it is okay. None of the staff agree that it is poor. The information collected here revealed that staff rated the assessment of e-library in their institution good.

Table 7: Purpose for Electronic Library Usage by Staff and students

	Yes	No	Total
For communication	50(58.8%)	35(41.2%)	85 (100%)
For research	71(83.5%)	14(16.5%)	85(100%)
To collect subject information	36(42.9%)	48(57.1%)	84(100%)
Upgrade general knowledge	45(52.9%)	40(47.1%)	85(100%)
For career development	51(60.7)	33(39.3%)	84(100%)

Table 7,shows the purpose for e-library usage by staff and students 58.8% use the e-library resources for communication .83.5 for research, 42.9% to collect subject information, 60.7% for career development and 52.9% to upgrade general knowledge. The findings revealed that electronic library use by staff and students are mainly for their research work.

Table 8: The Extent of students use of the Electronic Library for their academic pursuit?

	Frequency	Percent
Daily	30	15%
Twice a week	27	13.5%
Once a week	26	13%
Rarely	77	38.5%
Never	40	20%
Total	200	100%

Table 8, Indicates that 15% of the respondents use the e-library daily for their academic pursuit, 13.5% use it twice a week, 13 % at least use it

once a week, 77% rarely use it while 20% have never used it. A great amount of students rarely use the electronic library.

Table 9: The Extent to which the staff use the Electronic library

	Frequency	Percent
Daily	49	49.5%
Twice a week	22	22.2%
Once a week	7	7.1%
Rarely	12	12.12%
Never	9	9.1%
TOTAL	99	100%

Table 9 indicates that 49,5% of the respondents that are staff use the e-library daily for their academic pursuit, 22.2% use it twice a week, 7.1 % at least use it once a week ,12.1% rarely use it while 9.1% have never used it. The findings revealed that staff uses the e-library daily.

Table 10: Factors limiting the use of electronic resources by students and staff.

Limiting factors	Low extent	Average extent	Great extent	Very great Extent	Total
Lack of knowledge	24.2%	37,9%	22.1%	15.8%	240
Limited access to computer	21.8%	32.8%	30.5%	14.9%	262
Lack of training	21.1%	38.7%	25.8%	14.5%	256
Lack of time	39.3%	32.3%	16.7%	11.7%	257
Too much information retrieved	35.7%	41.8%	14.9%	7.6%	249
Speed of access is limited	23.5%	36,9%	22.4%	17.3%	255
Lack of efficiency of e-information	34.3%	30.2%	26.6%	8.9%	260
Health hazards nature of radiation from monitor	48.6%	30.9%	17.3%	3.2%	254
Lack of adequate powers supply	28.1%	26.2%	24.6%	21.2%	248
Not used to computer	44.1%	28.7%	18.9%	8.3%	249
Problem of remembering password	49.8%	28.7%	15.9%	5.6%	251
Limited scope and coverage of available archives	30,8%	29.6%	22.9%	16.6%	253
Restriction from vendors	37.7%	28.7%	20.2%	13.4%	247
Not every information is available	41.4%	27.3%	18.5%	12.9%	249
					100%

Table 10,shows that 4.2 % said lack of knowledge is one of the factors that limits their usage of e-library resources to low extent, 37.9% to average extent,22.1% to great extent and 15.8% to very great extent. Out of 262 respondents (students and staff) 21.8% said limited access to computer is one of the factors that limit their usage of e- library resources to low extent,32.8% to average extent,30.5 % to great extent and 14.(% to very great extent at 240 respondents (students and staff) . From the table lack of adequate power supply seems to be the highest

problem to the use of e-library 21.2%, followed by Limited scope and coverage of available archives 16.6%. The least Factor to the use of e-library resources by students and staff in universities is Limited access to computer 21.8%. . The limiting factor of the use of e-library is lack of constant power, lack of knowledge, lack of training/limited access to computers, and low speed of accessible internet facility. This corroborates with Oduwale (2003) findings on use of electronic information resources at the University of Agriculture, Abeokuta; his study identified power outage as constraints to use of electronic resources.

Summary of Findings

The findings explain that 6.7 % of the respondents who are staff have been using the e-library resources in their university for a year, 22.2% have been using it between two and three years, 47.7% have been using it between 3 and 4 years while the remaining 23.3% have been using it for more than 4 years now. While 57.4% of the respondents who are students have been using the e-library resources in their university for one year, 28.7% have been using it between two and three years, 5.6% have been using it between 3 and 4 years while the remaining 4.3% have been using it more than four years now. 17.8% of the respondents who are staff have diploma, 1.1% have first degree, 46.7% have masters and 34.4% have doctorate degree. Most of the staff is Master degree holders. While 69.7% of the respondents who are students are undergraduates, 29.3% are Masters Students while only 1% is doctorate students. In all 69.7% undergraduates were interviewed and 30.3% post graduate students. The ratio of undergraduates to post graduate is 2: 1. The findings also indicates that 15% of the respondents use the e-library daily for their academic pursuit, 13.5% use it twice a week, 13% at least use it once a week , 77% rarely use it while 20% have never used it. The findings also indicated that 49.5% of the respondents that are staff use the e-library daily for their academic pursuit, 22.2% use it twice a week, 7.1% at least use it once a week , 12.1% rarely use it while 9.1% have never used it.

From the findings the purpose for e-library usage by staff and students is for communication 58.8%. Eighty-three and half percent said it is for research, 42.9% use it to collect subject information, 60.7% said it is for

career development while 52.9% said they use it to upgrade general knowledge. 20.5% of the respondents that are students said the e-library resources in their institution is very good, 49 % said it is good, 25% said it is fair while 5.5% said it is poor while 20.2% % of the respondents that are staff said the e-library resources in their institutions is very good, 60.6% said it is good, 19.1% said it is fair while 0% said it is poor. A cumulative of 100% meant it is okay. None of the staff agree that it is poor.

Out of 262 respondents (students and staff) 21.8% said limited access to computer is one of the factors that limit their usage of e- library resources to low extent,32,8% to average extent,30.5 % to great extent and 14.(% to very great extent at 240 respondents (students and staff). Lack of adequate power supply seems to be the highest problem to the use of e-library 21.2%, followed by Limited scope and coverage of available archives 16.6%. The least factors to the use of e-library resources by students and staff in universities is Limited access to computer 21.8%.

Conclusion

The findings in this research showed that the respondents are aware and have good knowledge of the existence of electronic library, most academic staff are aware of the existence of electronic library and e-resources in the universities studied. The post graduate students and academic staff that use the e-library daily because of their designation. This corroborates with Bar-Ilian (2003) that the most active users of e-resources are the teaching and research staff i.e. academicians. However majority of users are of the opinion that e-library access is at least sometimes adequate. There is no doubt that e-resources would greatly facilitate and enhance learning and research among the students. E-library resources need to be judiciously utilized by students in order to meet the information and research needs.

The study also found out that students and staff use the e-library because of its usefulness towards the academic research activities. The limiting factor of the use of e-library is lack of constant power, lack of knowledge and low speed of accessible internet facility. This corroborates with Oduwale (2003) findings on use of electronic

information resources at the University of Agriculture, Abeokuta; his study identified power outage as constraints to use of electronic resources.

Recommendations

1. University library should train students and academic staff of the university on how to access the electronic resources /databases subscribed to by the university.
2. The internet facilities of the university should also be improved to facilitate easy access to the e-resources of the university.
3. Efforts should be made to solve problem of incorrect user name and password provided for students and staff as means of accessing the e-resources of the university,
4. Library parent institutions should allocate more funds to the library to enable them acquire relevant, up-to-date materials that is enough to meet the information needs of users.
5. Government should initiate policy towards computerization of all academic and research in addition boost globalization especially in the area of sharing resources.

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