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Availability and Accessibility of Internet Facilities in Nigerian University Libraries: A Case Study of Two Federal Universities in South West Nigeria

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Introduction

The traditional library is gradually becoming a thing of the past as cheaper and more up-to-date information materials become available on the Internet. Libraries are faced with immense challenges. Access to information can stimulate change and create an environment that makes learning more meaningful and responsive.

Oketunji (2001) states that Internet gives us access to a vast wealth of knowledge and access to tools that facilitate research. The Internet offers the opportunity to conduct remote classes, allow access to remote libraries, and create an environment innovative and cooperative learning experiences.

Internet connectivity is no longer a luxury, but a necessity. It allows tertiary institutions to leverage the teaching and learning process. This will ensure a brighter future for students by providing access to IT and helping close the global information gap (Omagbemi, Akintola, and Olayiwola, 2004).

Oketunji (2004) submits that the Internet and other ICTs provide a golden opportunity for the provision of value-added services by libraries. The indexing, abstracting and publication of local research and their digitization are a means of facilitating learning. Digitization is a window of opportunity to libraries that can strengthen Nigerian academic research libraries' contribution to the Web. This will

be a boost to the Open University System in Nigeria as well as the conventional tertiary education.

The Internet provides challenges to the formal educational system. It has fostered a collaborative approach to learning that differs from the more solitary learning of traditional methods. Odenewu and Olasore (2009) citing Adebisi (2004) submit that it is useful for the following:

- as an expert system;
- as reference resource;
- allow communication with any professional colleague around the world[;
- permits access to libraries and library catalogs around the world;
- valuable information in electronic libraries, books, journals, magazines and newsletters is made available.

Odunewu, et al.(2009), observe that the Internet has become an important and reliable tool for information retrieval. Daly (2000) provides comparative analysis with the situation in the US, where in 1998, 44% of university library patrons used the Internet and one third of all courses used the Internet as part of the syllabus. Moreover, high-speed networks are rapidly emerging; Internet will link the institutional libraries at speeds 45 times faster than the best telephone modems now in use in African universities.

Objectives of the Study

Internet availability in a university library plays an important role in enhancing teaching, learning, and research. Its also assists the library to achieve its objectives. This study assesses availability and accessibility. It also assesses the quality of services rendered to both staff and students.

Research Questions

1. Is Internet access readily available to the staff and students?
2. Do staff and students have Internet accessfacility in their offices, hostels, and library?
3. Are staff and students provided effective and timely service in the area of accessing e-books, e-journals, information on the web, and virtual libraries?

Methodology

Survey research was adopted for this study. A questionnaire was used to collect data from 300 respondents who were randomly selected from two federal universities in southwest Nigeria,the University of Ibadan and the University of Lagos. These comprise academic staff, non-teaching staff, and students. A total of 280 (93.3 %) respondents duly completed the questionnaire, and all were found usable. The questionnaire had two sections. Section A collected background information and Section B contains items on availability, accessibility, and services provided by the university libraries. The data collected for the study were analyzed using simple percentage and t-test analysis at 0.05 levels of significance.

Analysis and Discussion

Table 1: Distribution of Respondents by gende

Gender	Frequency	%
Male	174	62.14
Female	106	37.86

Total	280	100

Table 1 indicated that 174 (62.14%) of the respondents are male while 106 (37.86%) are female.

Table 2: Distribution by Educational Qualification

Educational Qualification	Frequency	%
OND/NCE	24	8.57
HND/First Degree	132	47.14
Masters Degree	96	34.29
PhD	28	10.00
Total	280	100.00

A majority of the respondents had first degree 132 (47.14%) followed by respondents with Masters' degree 96 (34.29%), and PhD respondents with 28 (10.00%).

Table 3: Distribution by Designation/ Rank

Status	Frequency	%
Academic staff	101	36.07
Non-Teaching staff	47	16.79
Students	132	47.14
Total	280	100.00

Table 3 indicated that 132 (47.14%) of the respondents are students, 101 (36.07%) are academic staff while 47 (16.79%) are for non-teaching staff. The majority of the respondents are students.

Table 4: Availability of Internet facilities

Statements

SA (%)

A (%)

D (%)

SD (%)

Online public access catalogue (OPAC) is available in the library

20.0

63.3

6.7

10.0

OPAC is available on the campus network

26.7

46.7

13.0

13.7

OPAC is available on the Internet

33.3

26.7

20.3

19.7

Adequate provision of computers for students/Staff

13.7

23.0

43.3

20.0

Library subscribe to electronic databases

23.3

60.0

13.3

3.3

Table 4 presents the distribution of respondents by the availability of Internet facilities. More than 80 percent indicated that an OPAC. Nearly three-quarters indicated that the OPAC is available on the campus. Sixty percent indicated that the OPAC is available on the Internet. In addition, more than one-third responded that there is adequate provision of computers for students/staff. More than 80 percent indicated that the library subscribes to electronic databases.

Table 5: Accessibility of Internet facilities

Statements

SA (%)

A (%)

D (%)

SD (%)

Library is linked to the Internet and campus network

39.7

37.0

16.7

6.7

Staff and students access information in their offices classrooms and hostels

20.3

57.0

22.7

-

Access to virtual libraries

13.3

63.3

20.0

3.3

Access academic information through campus network

63.0

27.0

10.0

-

Access library materials outside the campus

33.0

30.0

20.0

17.0

The table 5 presents the distribution of respondents by the accessibility of Internet facilities. More than three-quarters indicated that the library is linked to the Internet and campus network. An equal number indicated that staff and students access Internet in their offices, classrooms, and hostels and that there is access to virtual libraries. At the same time, nearly three-quarters indicated that there is access to academic information through the campus network. More than 60 percent indicated that library materials can be accessed outside campus.

Table 6: Services provided by the library

Statements

SA (%)

A (%)

D (%)

SD (%)

Library provides adequate information e.g. 0nline journals, e-books and CD ROMs

50.0

40.0

3.3

6.7

Provide electronic documentary delivery to its users

13.3

63.3

23.3

-

Assist staff and students in using subject based information gateway

43.0

43.7

3.3

10.0

library provides enough printers /training for its users in retrieving information on the web

20.7

9.7

50.0

19.7

provide timely current and accurate information for her users

40.0

43.3

16.7

-

The table 4.8 presents the distribution of respondents by the services provided by the academic libraries of tertiary institution. Nearly all respondents indicated that the library provides adequate information, with more than three-quarters receiving electronic documentary delivery. More than 85 percent indicated that libraries assist staff and students in using subject based information gateways. Nearly three-quarters indicated that the library provides enough printers/training for its users in retrieving information on the Web while 28.6% indicated that it does not.

Table 7: t-test showing significant differences in the perception of staff and students on the availability, accesibility, and services provided by the library

Variables	Parameter	N	Mean	STD	t-cal	P	Remark
Availability	Students	240	13.17	2.17	4.44	<	Significant
	Staff	60	14.66	2.89			
Accessibility	Students	240	14.51	1.79	0.04	>	Not Significant
	Staff	60	14.50	2.65			
Services	Students	240	14.88	2.81	1.15	>	Not Significant

	Staff	60	15.33	2.07			

The table presents a t-test showing significant differences in the availability, accessibility, and services provided by the library to staff and students. The result of the descriptive analysis shows a mean score for students' perception of the availability of Internet access is 13.17 while that of staff is 14.66 with standard deviation of 2.17 and 2.89, respectively. The mean differences were significant at both 0.05 and 0.01 levels of significance. Thus, there is a significant difference in the perception of students and staff on the availability of Internet access in the library. Nevertheless, the t-value of 4.44 whose probability is close to zero shows statistically that at 0.01 and 0.005 level of significance, there is a significant difference in the perception of staff and students on the availability of Internet access in the library. The results also indicated that the mean score for student perception is 14.51 while that of staff is 14.50 with standard deviation of 1.79 and 2.65, respectively. The mean differences were not significant at either 0.05 and 0.01 levels of significance. There is no significant difference in the perception of students and staff on the accessibility of the Internet in the library. Nevertheless, the t-value of 0.043 whose probability is close to one percent shows statistically that at 0.01 and 0.005 level of significance, there is no significant differences in the perception of students and staff on the accessibility of the Internet in the library. Furthermore, the results also indicated that the mean score for student perception is 14.88 while that of staff is 15.33 with standard deviation of 2.81 and 2.07, respectively. The mean differences were not significant at either the 0.05 and 0.01 level of significance. Thus, there is no significant difference in the perception of students and staff on the services provided by the library to its users. Nevertheless, the t-value of 1.152 whose probability is close to one percent shows statistically that at 0.01 and 0.005 level of significant, there is no significant differences in the perception of staff and students on the services provided by the library to its users.

Conclusion and Recommendations

The findings indicate that a majority of respondents found that there are not enough computers. This is something the administrators of those institutions should note. Academic, non-teaching staff, and students use the Internet for teaching, learning, study, research, and decision-making. Lecturers encourage students to search for materials and resources on the Internet. Each university aims to provide adequate and uninterrupted access to the Internet in campus. There are also privately-owned cybercafés around two campuses. The libraries studied are living up to the expectations of their users, especially in the provision of Internet access and other e-resources, but this does not mean that they do not have shortcomings. The Macarthur Foundation, USA, donated a virtual library to the University of Ibadan, and Mobile Telecommunication Nigeria (MTN) donated a virtual library to the University of Lagos, which has enabled these university libraries render effective service to users.

Recommendations

The following recommendations are made:

- The universities should enjoy a constant power supply, so that Internet services in the library can be stable.
- Universities should partner with Non-governmental organization (NGOs) through Public Private Partnership (PPP) to provide virtual libraries for them.
- Librarians should train users in accessing Internet and e-resources provided by the library.
- Government and university management should increase funding coming to the so that users can enjoy full Internet service.

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