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Electronic Information Resources Awareness, Attitude and Use by Academic Staff Members of University of Lagos, Nigeria

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Abstract

This paper is an attempt to study the issues of Electronic Information Resources Awareness, Attitude and Use by Academic staff members of University of Lagos, Nigeria with a view to survey the exposure of Academics to electronic information resources. Also, it aims to highlight the challenges faced by the users and suggests some corrective measures for its improvement. A test-retest reliability method of two weeks interval was conducted, response obtained were subjected to Pearson Product Moment Correlation method and a reliability co-efficient of 0.81 was obtained. The Random Sampling Technique together with a Questionnaire was used for data collection on 120 out of a population size of 1,200 academic staff members and only 113 responded giving a response rate of 94.1 percent.

Descriptive Statistics including Frequencies count and Percentages were used in reporting the findings. The study confirmed that 55% of academic staff members indicated that the level of awareness of the subscribed electronic information resources by the Library Management is rather low. The paper records that the reasons why academic staff members of University of Lagos use electronic information resources are; research activity, Paper writing for publication, and teaching. It suggests further for an improvement in the access facilities with high Internet speed and subscription to more e-resources by the University Library.

Introduction

Roberson (2005) defined a library as an institution that manages the intellectual products of society and processes them in such a manner that the individual can readily gain access to them. Access to information through Internet has changed the role of libraries. Libraries now have both printed document as well as electronic information resources in their collection. The electronic documents can be stored, accessed, and delivered as and when required; therefore the services of libraries are not confined within the four walls but are integrated into local, regional, national, and international networks. It is common knowledge that virtually all scholarly and academic journals, electronic databases, online library catalogues, grey literature and other relevant scholarly materials in all fields of knowledge are now accessible on the internet.

Information explosion via Internet connectivity has greatly increased the amount of electronic information resources available on the web. E-information resources have enhanced accessibility, increased usability, effectiveness and established new ways for information users in using information for more productivity in their endeavors.
The value and use of information resources, particularly e-resources, have increased with the time. Therefore, the use of e-resources by users, especially by the Academic staff members of Academic institutions generally depends on skills of each user to locate discrete knowledge elements. According to the Final Report of the American Library Association Presidential Committee on Information Literacy, the information literate user skill is being able to recognize when information is needed and have the ability to locate, evaluate, and use information resources effectively (ALAPCIL, 2001).

In Nigeria, the National Universities Commission (NUC) has subscribed to a number of international and local journals and made them accessible in Nigerian Universities through its URL link @www.nigerianvirtuallibrary.com on the internet. In addition, NUC (National Universities Commission), NULIB (Nigerian University Libraries Consortium) and EIFL.NET (Electronic Information for Libraries Network) are partnering to provide electronic resources on the internet towards qualitative teaching/research in Nigerian Universities.

To date, almost all the Library functional areas and services have a touch of IT; however, the depth of application varies. The University of Lagos Library is 75% networked with a total of 211 nodes within the Main Library, 124 nodes at the MTN Foundation Universities Connect Project and 68 nodes recently put in place at Education Library. In order to expand access to reading materials, the Library has adopted distributed access to information resources which include: Integrated Library Systems (ILS), Online Databases, Web-Based Resources, Digital Library Collections, e-Books and e-Journals.

The Library currently subscribes to about forty databases which included some open sources and some fee-based sources. The databases currently available include: AGORA, EBSCOHost, Oxford Journal Online, JSTOR, OARES, Law Pavilion, Legalpedia, Laws of the Federation of Nigeria (LFN) MetaPress, Ebrary and HINARI. The databases can be accessed on computer systems in the Libraries and on the Library website. The Library has a database room at the old Media Room for the purpose of searching subscribed databases. In addition to 14 networked computers and a dedicated printer, students are allowed to bring in their personal laptops into the room. The service here is provided free except for printing which attracts a token fee.

However, no survey has been undertaken to know the level of awareness and use of these e-resources. Thus, the study is an attempt to evaluate e-resources awareness, attitude and usability by the academic staff members of University of Lagos and to find out problems encountered by the users in accessing the e-resources.

Literature Review

Several studies on use of electronic information resources (EIS) have been carried out by students, research scholars, and teachers of various institutions all over the world. Maunissamy and Swaroop (2005) in their study, 'Evaluation of usage and usability of electronic journals' identified the usage and usability of e-journals by the users of the NIT, Tiruchirapall. Appleton (2006) in his study, perceptions on electronic library resources in further education, expressed personal experiences on the use of e-resources and their impact on teaching and learning activity.

According to Bar-Ilan, Peritz, and Wolman (2003) the most active users of electronic journals are the younger members of the teaching and research staff. In a related study, Bush (2004) showed that age was not an influential factor in whether the respondents read articles on paper or in electronic format. Brennan et al (2002) in studies that centered on how the adoption of electronic information resources has affected academics' information behaviour revealed that academics make fewer visits to the library and read more e-journals than the print era.

In Nigeria, Ehikhamenor (2003a) conducted a study to investigate the use and non-use of the internet facilities by Academic Scientists in Ten Nigerian Universities. The findings of the study indicated that, "the scientists are still heavily dependent on printed sources", although about 50.4per cent of them "have access to, and are using, the internet" in their teaching/research. The study attributed non-use of the internet "to the problems of accessibility, ease of use, analysis of internet use by academic staff and cost". In furtherance of research on impact of internet resources, Ehikhamenor (2003b) conducted a study on the impact of the internet on scientific communication

process and productivity of the scientists in Nigerian Universities. He observed that very few of the scientists agreed that the use of the internet had greatly facilitated their research work.

In related study, Azubogu and Madu (2007) did a survey "on the use of computer and internet technology among the teaching staff of Imo State University", Nigeria and reported a high level of use of information technology by the respondents. They gave reasons for the use of internet by teaching staff to include: ease of use, convenience, free access to the internet, access to free information on the internet among others. In another study, Ojedokun and Owolabi (2003)explored and "assessed the impact of internet competence on the use of the internet for teaching/research activities among academic staff of the University of Botswana". The findings of the survey had shown that most academic staff in the University of Botswana are using the internet in their research/teaching activities.

Bayugo and Agbeko (2007) reported on a survey of convenient access to, and use of, electronic databases (CD-ROM and online) with full-text journals and their effect on information seeking behavior of health sciences academics at the College of Health Sciences of the University of Ghana. The survey documented academics preferences of print and electronic resource, and the specific databases and full-text journals. The results showed that Academics were unaware of the two full-text journal databases (HINARI and PERI) available at the Library. Hence they resorted to PUBMED as their source of access to full-text articles. They concluded that most academics now prefer using electronic access to information (CD-ROM/online) to traditional print indexes and abstracts. Herring (2002) studied the use of electronic information resources in 12 scholarly peer-reviewed electronic journals. The journals represented areas of active interdisciplinary research available through the Web without subscription or registration. A total of 175 articles published from 1999 to 2000 were examined. The 175 articles had a total of 4289 unique references. Over 55% of the articles (97) cited electronic resources. In addition 658 citations, or 16% of the total, were to electronic resources. The 97 articles that referenced electronic information resources had a total of 2584 unique citations, 26.5% of which were to electronic information resources.

Oduwole and Akpati (2003) carried out a study on use of electronic information resources at the University of Agriculture Library in Abeokuta, Nigeria, his study also identified lack of ICT and power supply outage as constraints to use of electronic resources. In the same vein, Watts and Ibegbulam (2006) surveyed 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 exposed that lack of an adequate ICT (information and communication technology) infrastructure and affordable online access, absence of in-depth ICT skills and information searching skills among library staff, and cost of using the cybercafé are barriers to the use of electronic resources.

Objectives of the Study

The Objectives of the study are:
1. To assess the current use of electronic information resources by the academic staff members.
2. To find out the level of awareness of electronic information resources among the academic staff.
3. To examine the attitude of the academic staff members towards use of electronic information resources.
4. To find out the main reason(s) behind the use of electronic information resources by the academic staff members.
5. To find out constrains encountered by academics on the use of electronic information resources.

Methodology

This study is based on Survey (questionnaire) Method. A structured Questionnaire was designed to collect data from the Academic Staff members of University of Lagos, Nigeria, keeping in mind the basic objectives of the study. The researcher being a staff of the university personally distributed and retrieved the Questionnaire from the academic staff members. According to Nwana (1981) if a population is in many hundreds, one needs a sample size of 20%. But if a population is in few thousands, one needs a sample size of 10%. Based on the foregoing recommendation, a sampling fraction of 10% is used to select a sample size out of the one thousand two hundred (1,200) academic staff in the University, a total of one hundred and twenty (120) representing 10% of academics were randomly sampled, using the simple random technique (SRT). 113 (90%) questionnaires were properly completed and returned.

To ensure the reliability of the instrument, it was administered on twelve participants out of the envisaged population of the study. A test-retest reliability method of two weeks interval was conducted, response obtained were subjected to Pearson Product Moment Correlation method and a reliability co-efficient of 0.81 was obtained.

Analysis and Discussion of Data

Descriptive Statistics including Frequencies count and percentages were used in reporting the findings.

Table 1: Profiles of Respondents

Gender	Frequency	Percentage (%)
Male	74	65%
Female	39	35%
Total	**113**	**100%**
Educational Qualification	**Frequency**	**Percentage (%)**
M.SC, MA etc.	48	42%
Ph.D	65	58%
Total	**113**	**100%**
Teaching Experience	**Frequency**	**Percentage (%)**
1 – 5 years	46	41%
6 - 10 years	33	29%
11 -15 years	10	9%
16 – 20 years	17	15%
21 above	7	6%
Total	**113**	**100%**

Table 1 shows that there are more male respondents (65%) than female respondents of (35%).This suggests that there are more male academics than female across the surveyed faculties in the University. The table also shows that out of 113 respondents, 48 (42%) respondents were Master Degree holders while 65 (58%) were holders of PhD. With regards to teaching experience of Academic Staff members, 46 (41%) were having 1-5 years; 33 (29 %) 6-10 years; 10 (9%) 11-15 years, 17 (15%) 16-20 years; and 7 (6%) 21 years and above years of teaching experience.

Table 2: Level of Computer Skill

Level	No. of respondents	Percentage
Excellent	30	27%
Good	45	40%
Satisfactory	22	19%
fair	16	14%
Total	**113**	**100%**

The analysis of Table 2 shows that 30 respondents, representing 27% of total respondents had 'excellent' computer skill. Further, the computer skill of 45 respondents (40%) was 'good', followed by 17 respondents (19%) with 'satisfactory' level computer skill, and 16 respondents with (14%) were 'fair' in their computer skill. The results show that University of Lagos Academic Staff members to certain degree were computer literate as a result of compulsory computer training program organized by the University Centre for Information Technology and Systems (CITS).

Table 3: Frequency of Electronic Information Resources Use

Variables	Frequency	Percentage (%)

4

Daily	72	63%
Weekly	7	6%
Fortnightly	4	4%
Monthly	1	1%
Occasionally	29	26%
Total	**113**	**100%**

The table above clearly reveals that most of the academic staff members 82 (73%) use Internet information resources on daily basis. Furthermore, 6% respondents were using it on weekly basis, 4% per cent were using it on monthly basis, and 16% were using it occasionally.

Table 4: Level of Awareness on Electronic Information Resources

Response	**No. of responses**	**Percentage**
Yes	52	46%
No	61	54%
Total	**113**	**100%**

Table 4 shows that out of 113 respondents, 61 (54%) indicated No the level of awareness of e-resources when compared to 52 (46%) who agreed with level of awareness of EIRs. This implies that the level of awareness of subscribed to e-resources is quite low. This goes to show that the University Library has not done enough in creating awareness to the user's community.

Table 5: Reason for Using Electronic Information Resources

Reasons	**No. of responses**	**Percentage**
Research activity	113	37%
Paper writing for publication	104	34%
Teaching	46	15%
Seminar/Workshop presentation	30	10%
Leisure	14	4%

The major reasons of using electronic information resources by the Academic staff members of University of Lagos are research activity, Paper writing for publication, and teaching as shown from the table above. The Respondents were asked to tick as many reasons that applied to their using electronic information resources. From the table it shows that all the respondent of 113 which represent 37% indicate research activity followed by 104 response of (34%) for Paper writing for publication, 46 (15%) for teaching, while 30 (10%) for presentation in seminar/ conference/workshops, and 14 (4%)is for Leisure.

Table 6: Type of Electronic Information Resources Frequently Used

Electronic Information Resources	**No. of responses**	**Percentage**
E-journals	103	28%
E-books	66	18%
E-data bases i.e. OPAC	96	27%
E-articles/e-reprints	64	17%
E-newsgroups/magazine	34	9%
All of the above	5	1%
Total	**368**	**100%**

Respondent were allowed to tick as many that applied. The analysis of the data above shows that e-journals and e-databases were the most used electronic information resources by the respondents as seen from their responses which are 103 (28%) and 96 (27%), respectively. It is followed by use of e-books (18%), E-articles/e-reprints (17%),

e-newsgroups/magazines (9%). Furthermore, 1% responses indicate the use of all mentioned e-resources by the respondents.

Table 7: Criteria for Selecting and Using Electronic Information Resources

Criteria	No of responses	Percentage
Authenticity	43	13%
Currency	78	23%
Objectivity	89	7%
Reliability	101	30%
Usability	22	27%

Respondents were asked to select various methods used for evaluation of electronic information resources. The Table shows the various aspects on which academics of University of Lagos depend, while selecting and using electronic information resources. From the table it was revealed that majority of academics of 101 responses representing (30%) depend on reliability criteria while selecting and using EIR. followed by usability of the material (27%), currency (23%), authenticity (13%) and objectivity (7%).

Table 8: Constrains To the Use of Electronic Information Resources

Variables	YES Frequency	Percentage YES (%)	NO Frequency	Percentage NO (%)
I'm not computer literate	0	0%	113	33%
Slow internet connectivity	98	29%	15	4%
Too much of information overload	76	23%	37	11%
Erratic power supply	102	30%	11	3%
Dislike reading from computer screen	43	13%	70	21%
Non-availability of relevant electronic information resources to my information needs	17	5%	96	28%

Table 8 shows constrain faced by Academics while using electronic information resources. Slow internet access (29%), erratic power supply (30%) and too much of information overload (23%) were major factors. Other less constrain factors were dislike reading from computer screen (13%) and non-availability of relevant electronic information resources to my information needs (5%). Though, some respondents remarked that the Library supposed to provide more Internet access ports as well as wireless environment.

Conclusion and Recommendation

Electronic Information Resources have taken a firm root in the collection policy of University of Lagos Library and this has necessitated a remarkable shift of choice from print information resources to electronic information resources have taken place by users for information. The Library is investing heavily on e-resources. But effective use of e-resources lies solely on awareness. The explosion of electronic information resources in the Library has had a significant impact on user's behavior in the way the Academic community uses, stores, disseminate and preserves information. In the same vein, scholars believe that the increased availability of high-quality electronic content is dramatically changing user behavior. Academic staff members' attitudes seem to be very positive towards electronic information resources for their study and research and the role of Libraries as gateway to provide assistance in term of awareness and accessing these resources.

The findings show that a large number of users have started using electronic information resources (EIR). The impact of EIR is visible and has led to decrease in the collection of print journals. The users access EIRs more from their offices as compared to the Library. The use of Library has decreased because information is easily available to the users through Internet and Intranet connectivity provided in the institute. The decrease in the collection of print

journals and increase in the e-journals indicates that the University of Lagos Library is making all its efforts to provide the benefits of EIR s and services to its users.

This corroborates the finding of Brennan et al (2002) in studies that centered on how the adoption of electronic information resources has affected academics' information behavior. The finding revealed that academics make fewer visits to the library and read more than in the print era across a broader number of journals which are accessible via internet. Only 29% of the respondents indicated slow internet and 30% indicates erratic power supply as factors that prevented them from using the EIRs, while 5% indicated non availability of relevant electronic information resources to their information needs. The respondents remarked that the Library should provide more Internet access ports as well as create a wireless enable environment.

It was observed that a large number of academic staff members reported that level of awareness of the existence of electronic information resources in the Library is relatively low. Hence the result of its usage is not encouraging. However, it is important for the library to improve the awareness of electronic information resources in the library to the academic community so as to increase the use of this service.

Awareness and orientation should be a continuous effort, since the University recruits new staff on a regular basis. The University Library should re-orientate the Academic staff members of the University on how to access the electronic information resources subscribed to by the University. The University Library should find an alternative way to generate power supply such as a standby generator, inverter or solar energy system. Finally, the Internet facilities of the University should also be improved to facilitate easy access to the EIRs of the University

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