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The Extent of History Lecturers' Use of Virtual Libraries for Teaching and Research

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Abstract

Virtual libraries are essential sources of information in universities teaching and research among lecturers. For the aims of imparting knowledge to students and self-development, history lecturers require various information resources for teaching and research. The purpose of the research was to ascertain the extent that history lecturers use virtual libraries for teaching and research in Nigerian universities. One hundred and five (105) history lecturers were the respondents for this study. The study data were collected using a questionnaire. The study data were analyzed using descriptive statistics and t-test. The results revealed a moderate extent of use of virtual libraries among history lecturers for teaching and research. The results also showed that there is no significant difference between the male and female history lecturers' use of virtual libraries for teaching and research. It is recommended that university libraries assist these lecturers in learning more about virtual libraries and the required skills for practical use in teaching and research.

Keywords: History Lecturers, Research, Teaching, Universities, Virtual Libraries

Introduction

In today's information and knowledge-driven culture, the usage of virtual libraries is necessary and imperative for research among lecturers in institutions of higher learning. A virtual library is essential to research and the global information network. In the recent decade, there has been a significant increase in research activity and an increase in interest in monitoring and evaluating research performance, and libraries continue to play an essential part in these changes (RIN and RLUK, 2011). The library's subscriptions to journal databases, e-books, cataloging, and reference management have all been hastened by the advent of digital technology. These online database resources expand the range of electronic materials available and broaden the scope of academic research (Montenegro et al., 2016).

Virtual libraries are being researched across disciplines with a strong technology focus (Borgman, 1999). A virtual library is a collection of electronic library resources, primarily textual documents, databases, media, and catalogs; it is a digital repository that stores and organizes virtual books and the documentation that go with them (Gonzales, 2022; Roussel et al., 2001; Johnson, 2003). When a digital library is contained within a building, it is referred to as an electronic library; when it is not contained within a structure, it is referred to as a virtual library, and it is more or less in space (Okebukola, 2002). Furthermore, according to Okebukola (2002), these libraries improve the quality of teaching and research in institutions by providing current electronic books, journals, and other library resources, improving academic libraries' access to global libraries and information resources, enhancing scholarship research and lifelong learning by establishing permanent access to share virtual archival collections, and providing guidance to academic libraries.

Virtual libraries have had a significant impact on scientists' and scholars' research outputs (Ani et al., 2015). According to Ramayah (2006), the virtual library enables users to obtain vital information regardless of time or location. A virtual library has the advantage of

holding a large number of books in a small amount of space. Lecturers can access their whole personal libraries in one place, on either a computer or a mobile device, by using a virtual library (RIN and RLUK, 2011). According to Rafi et al. (2019), the ultimate usage of virtual database resources can stimulate higher academic research to produce novel ideas and increase researchers' cognitive capacities.

Over the last two decades, researchers have preferred electronic resources over printed materials, according to Deans and Durrant (2016). The findings of Kiana and Mabeifam (2020) demonstrated that most users were aware of the virtual library; nonetheless, awareness was higher than use. In addition, most respondents thought the virtual library was beneficial and simple to use, according to the research. Effective ICT skills have a major impact on electronic information resources used by professors in higher institutions, according to Akwaowo and Enyioko (2021). According to Sivathaasan and Velnampy (2013), the use of e-resources has a significant impact on teachers' academic achievement. Ansari and Zuberi (2010) researched the use of electronic resources by academics, using professors, associate professors, assistant professors, and lecturers from the faculty of Arts as participants. They discovered that the majority of them have computer skills that enable them to use e-resources primarily for research and the preparation of lecture notes. According to Nwachukwu and Asom (2015), the roles of university lecturers are centered on achieving the university's goals as outlined in the National Policy on Education. These goals include research, teaching, disseminating existing and new information, providing community services, and serving as a knowledge repository. To achieve these tasks require the right and appropriate information. Hence, university lecturers must maintain constant contact with current material in order to successfully and confidently boost students' learning. To satisfy lecturers' expanding information demands, Edem and Egbe (2016) asserted that the twenty-

first century saw a considerable expansion in electronic databases, greatly benefiting academics' information-seeking globally.

Research Purpose

Virtual libraries are important sources of information in universities for history lecturers. To impart knowledge on students and self-development, history lecturers require a variety of information resources for teaching and research. History lecturers are trained and competent teachers of national and world histories who are licensed to teach students. They work with other colleagues to deliver history lectures, conduct history examinations, grade history examination papers and conduct research on their chosen historical topic. Virtual libraries are a relatively recent phenomenon, with no research about how much history lecturers use them in Nigeria for teaching and research. Therefore, the study aimed to determine the extent of history lecturers' use of virtual libraries for teaching and research in Nigerian universities. Specifically, the study seeks to:

1. Ascertain the extent of difference between male and female history lecturers in the use of virtual libraries for teaching and research.

Research questions

The following research question was posed to guide the study

1. What is the extent of use of virtual libraries for teaching and research between male and female history lecturers?

Research hypothesis

The following null hypothesis guided the study and was tested at 0.05 level of significance.

HO₁: there is no significant difference between male and female history lecturers' use of virtual libraries for teaching and research.

Research Method

The research is a descriptive survey design. The study's participants include a convenient sample of history lecturers from both Nigerian state and federal universities. The sample consisted of 105 history lecturers. A self-developed questionnaire was used for the study titled history lecturers' use of virtual libraries questionnaire (HLUVLQ). The questionnaire has 20 items on a five-point Likert-type scale with the response options of Strongly Agree (S.A.), Agree (A), Disagree (D), and Strongly Disagree (S.D.), having a numerical value of 4, 3, 2 and 1 points in this order. The clarity, suitability, appropriateness of the language, and logicalness of its organization were the four criteria used to determine its face validity by three history experts. The internal consistency reliability of the instrument was 0.78. The study data were analyzed using mean and standard deviation to answer research questions and t-test to test the null hypotheses at the 0.05 level of significance.

Results

Research Questions

R.Q. 1: What is the extent of use of virtual libraries for teaching and research between male and female history lecturers?

Table 1: Mean extent of use of virtual libraries teaching and research between male and female history lecturers

Gender	N	Mean	Std. Deviation	Std. Error of Mean	Kurtosis	Skewness
Male	45	3.07	.41	.061	-2.042	.117
Female	60	3.12	.41	.053	-2.049	-.057

Concerning the extent of use of virtual libraries for teaching and research as shown in Table 1, male history lecturers had mean score of 3.07 and standard deviation score of .41 while female history lecturers had mean score of 3.12 and standard deviation score of .41. This

suggests a moderate extent of use of virtual libraries for teaching and research between male and female history lecturers.

H0₁: there is no significant difference between male and female history lecturers' use of virtual libraries for teaching and research.

Table 2: T-test analysis on the significant difference between male and female history lecturers' use of virtual libraries for teaching and research.

	t	df	Sig. (2-tailed)	Mean Difference	Std. Error Difference	95% CI
HLUVLQ	-.199	103	.843	-.01611	.08094	-.17665, .14442

HLUVLQ=history lecturers use of virtual libraries questionnaire

Table 2 show the t-test analysis testing the significant difference between male and female history lecturers' use of virtual libraries for teaching and research. The results revealed that there is no significant difference between the male and female history lecturers' use of virtual libraries for teaching and research, $t(103)=-.199$, $p=.843$. Thus, the null hypothesis of no significant difference was accepted.

Discussion

This study aimed to investigate the extent to which history lecturers use virtual libraries for teaching and research in Nigerian universities. The findings show a moderate extent of use of virtual libraries for teaching and research between male and female history lecturers. Eiriemiokhale (2020) showed that while most university lecturers are aware of the utility of most electronic databases for teaching and research, the lecturers' frequency of using electronic databases is not high. Edem (2016) and Abubakar and Akor (2017) assertion is that university teachers' use of computerized databases is not high. In a similar vein, Ani and Edem (2012) found that while the vast majority of lecturers were accessing and using

relevant online databases for teaching and research, the frequency of use was not high, with the majority of respondents only using these databases on occasion. Baro et al., (2011) discovered that their respondents were more aware of online resources than usage. The findings support Barfi et al., (2018) assertion that lecturers visit the virtual libraries mostly to consult reference materials and research purposes.

The findings also showed no significant difference between male and female history lecturers in the use of virtual libraries for teaching and research. This finding supports Unegbu et al. (2019) who found that both male and female lecturers use information technology tools. Koohang (2016) found no significant difference between lecturers' gender and their use of information technology tools. The result contradicts Edem (2014) who discovered that males were more productive while using electronic resources than female counterparts in academic publications. Drup (2015) showed that males use information technology resources more than females. Iseolorunkanmi et al. (2021) noted that university lecturers might differ in virtual orientations.

While the findings of this study are promising, they should be interpreted in the light of some limitations. Other employees in the higher education sector were excluded from the study because it focused on history lecturers alone. Other personnel in the educational sector should be examined in future studies. This research is also confined to history lecturers' use of virtual libraries for teaching and research. Future research should consider the perspectives of postgraduate history students in the use of virtual libraries for learning and research. The following recommendations were given based on the study's findings: more history lecturers' in higher education institutions should be encouraged to use virtual libraries for teaching and research. Seminars and workshops for both male and female history lecturers should be organized on the use of virtual libraries and other online repository resources for teaching and research. In particular, university libraries should assist these lecturers in learning more about

virtual libraries and the required skills for practical use in teaching and research. This will help increase their awareness of the potential that virtual libraries have in the field of history teaching and research and pique their interest in the use of virtual libraries for teaching and research.

Conclusion

The goal of this study was to determine the extent that history lecturers use virtual libraries for teaching and research in Nigerian universities. The findings show a moderate extent of use of virtual libraries for teaching and research between male and female history lecturers. The results revealed that there is no significant difference between the male and female history lecturers' use of virtual libraries for teaching and research. It is recommended that university libraries assist these lecturers to learn more about virtual libraries and required skills for effective use in teaching and research.

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