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Accessibility and Utilization of Information Resources by Academic Staff of Federal University Gusau amid Telecommunication shutdown in Zamfara State.

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Abstract

The study investigates accessibility and utilization of information resources by academic staff of Federal University Gusau amid telecommunication shut down in Zamafara state. The researchers adopted quantitative research method using cross sectional survey design. Simple random sampling was adopted for the study and the Sample size of 169 was determined using Krejcie and Morgan table. Data was collected using questionnaire and the data collected was analyzed using descriptive statistics with the help of statistical package for social science (SPSS). The finding revealed that majority of the respondents strongly agreed that visiting libraries and offline databases in the electronic library served as opportunity of accessing information during the internet shut down in the state. The study further found that books materials, newspaper and journal are the available and most utilized resources by the academic staff of the university during the shutdown. Similarly, the study found out that information accessed and utilized by the staff during the period was for manly lecture note preparation, research purpose, knowledge sharing and personal communication. the study also revealed that the staff encountered some challenges while accessing and utilizing the information during the period that include time constraint, insufficient information richness of the alternative source compared to the internet, poor personal communication, inadequate information for preparing lecture note and inadequate information for research. The study recommended that academic staff of the university be encouraged to access and utilize information from various sources, library in the university should double its efforts of creating awareness of the existence of various sources of information in the library and lastly the need for the academic staff of the university to keep themselves abreast with the various technique of accessing the alternatives sources information.

Keywords: Accessibility; Utilization; Information resources; Telecommunication shutdown

INTRODUCTION

Information can be seen as the meaning that human assigns to data by means of the known conventions used in its representation. It's a data that has been organized and communicated in manner understandable to the recipients. According to Aina, Mutula & Tiamiyu (cited in Adeniran, Issa & Bakare, 2015) information is a multi-disciplinary concept, which means different thing to different people, group, culture, concerns, needs, functions and environment. Information is processed and organized data for meaningful purpose, which could be in different forms or sources. These forms or sources of information in their totality could be regarded as information materials or resources that could be either print or non-print or even digital/electronic resources. (Nwegbu and Ezema, 2009)

Accessibility could mean authorization, opportunity, or right to access records or retrieve information from different sources of information such as internet, radio, posters, bulletins, newspapers, journals and libraries and information centers. Availability of these resources does not always translate to their accessibility. With the advent of information and communication technology, there is significant shift in accessing information from traditional source of libraries and information centers to modern source of internets. According to shehu, Urchebe, & Promise (2015) The Internet provides several opportunities for the academia in research, lecturing or teaching. It is a mechanism for information dissemination and a medium for collaborative interaction between individuals and their computers without regard for geographic limitation of space. Banning or shutting down an internet services could have significant effect on academic staff effort to meet their research and teaching information needs.

Utilization of information refers to the practical and adequate use of information resources or the purpose of solving problem. (Emasaclu, 2014 cited in Adeniran, Issa & Bakare 2015). Prior to the

advent of information and communication technology, students and researchers utilized information resources domiciled in their respective university libraries for their learning and research activities. However, with the availability of internet services in university campuses the world is reduced to the hand and lap of students and researchers resulting to immediacy of information. The mode of acquiring and disseminating of information for university education changed from physically available prints to e- materials with virtual reality. Thus any academic communication can only be successful by the use of ICT which presents information in real time and space. Oladimeji & Olufunmilola (cited in Akintunde 2002; Carbo, 2003). Access and use of information is therefore highly crucial to the enhancement of academic activities and therefore should not be hindered in any manner.

Statement of problem

With the advent of information and communication technology (ICTs) particularly the internet, there is significant shift in access and utilization of information from traditional source of Libraries and information centers, Radio, television, journal, bulleting to the modern sources of internet. The Internet serves as a useful tool in support of the various educational activities that ranged from research to teaching. Ogunjobi and Fagbami (cited in Suleiman & Joshua, 2019) confirm that Internet resources and services enable lecturers to update their knowledge, prepare up-to-date lecture notes, communication and collaboration with colleagues.

However, with the recent telecommunication shut down that resulted to barely complete internet blockade in Zamafara state, none wonders how academic staff in Federal University Gusau continue to have unhindered access and utmost utilization of information resources for teaching, learning and research activities. It's in this vain that the study intend to investigate the extend of

information accessibility and utilization during the internet blockade by academic staff of Federal University Gusau

Research questions

1. What is the extent of information accessibility during the internet shutdown by academic staff of Federal University Gusau?
2. What are the alternative sources of information resources during the blockade by the academic staff of the institution?
3. What is the extent of information utilization by during the internet shutdown by academic staff of Federal University Gusau?
4. What are the purpose of using the information by the academic staff of the institution during the internet shutdown?
5. What are the likely challenges encountered for accessing and utilization of information by the academic staff of the institution?

Promise (2015) findings that (96%) of academic librarians accessed info

Review of related literature

Academic staff is key drivers in the production and consumption of information. Timely access to such information could enhance the overall teaching and learning activities of any academic environment. According to Suleiman & Joshua (2019) internet and data bases are the most accessed and utilized information resources by academic staff. This is also in tandem with shehu, Urchebe & rmation through the internet. In the same vein, Adeniran, Issa & Bakare (2015) revealed that library did not feature prominently as source of information on HIV/AIDS as preference is been given to other sources of internet, workshop, seminars and bulletins. Prior to the advent of internet, access to information is rather relatively cumbersome through traditional method of

accessing libraries and information centers information resources. Internet and its services have revolutionized library services thereby making access to information more reliable, fast and less cumbersome.

Information must be available, adequate and accessible in order to be presented in a way that is acceptable to facilitate its acceptability, hence utilization. (Adeniran, Issa & Bakre 2015). Internet facilities contributed to the increases in teaching and research outputs of academic staff of universities. This was evident in Ekafor, Imhonopi & Urim (2011) work that investigated utilization of internet on the impact of teaching and research output by academic staff of private universities in south western Nigeria. The study further revealed that most academic staff uses internet services to meet the requirements for career advancement, especially promotion. Similarly, Ajayi (2015) found out an encouragement level of utilization of e- resources most especially internet and data bases among academic staff of faculties of Agricultural sciences.

On contrary note, Madu (2019) reported a rather low utilization of internet services by academic staff of Federal polytechnic Ede. This low patronage of the internet could not be unconnected with myriads of challenges such as poor internet connectivity, erratic power supply and inadequacy of the internet resources in their library.

Internet is regarded as the largest global connections of computer network, making it the network of networks. The Internet is also known to be an important and major source of information and a medium through which communication, dissemination, and storage of information is facilitated. Ogunjobi and Fagbami (cited in Suleiman & Joshua, 2019) confirmed that the Internet resources and services enable: lecturers to update their knowledge, prepare up-to-date lecture notes for their students, download free e-books and e-journals, use e-mail for communication and collaboration with colleagues. Through the use of the Internet resources and services, lecturers keep abreast with

research and development in their fields of study, bringing them fame, recognition improving their institutional ranking and ensure regular promotions to higher academic positions.

Thus according to Shehu, Urchebe & Promise (2015) the Internet is a vital tool that will propel University education to greater heights as the world move further into the knowledge-based economy. Universities worldwide now invest a lot on internet access because it reduces the time between the production and utilization of knowledge; improves co-operation and exchange of ideas with fellow researchers in other institutions, regions or countries, furthers the sharing of information; and promotes multidisciplinary research. However, with the recent case of internet shut down in Zamfara State, information accessibility and utilization for enhancement of academic activities might likely suffered unprecedented record low access and utilization by the academic staff of Federal University Gusau. Hence the need to investigate the preferred source of information by the academic staff during the lockdown.

Methodology

Quantitative research method was adopted for the study using cross sectional survey design. The choice of this design is because the survey design gives room for studying both large and small population. The research covered Federal University Gusau, Zamfara State. The respondent consisted all academic staff working in the University. The total number of the respondent were 317. Simple random sampling was adopted for the study and the Sample size of 169 was determined using Krejcie and Morgan table.

The questionnaire was used to collect data for this study and the data collected was analyze using descriptive statistics with the help of statistical package for social science (SPSS)

Results of the study

Table 1

Perceived opportunity for accessing information	Strongly agree	Agree	Disagree	Strongly disagree
Visiting libraries serve as an alternative way to access the information required	(128) 78.5%	(31) 19.0%	(2) 1.2%	(2) 1.2%
Using offline databases in the electronic libraries	(107) 65.6%	(53) 32.5%	(1) 0.6%	(2) 1.2%
Traveling to the neighboring state is an opportunity to get access to both online and offline information resources	(21) 12.9%	(53) 32.5%	(77) 47.2%	(12) 7.4%
Information available on CD ROM and Audio record	(23) 14.1%	(103) 63.2%	(32) 19.6%	(5) 3.1%
Listening to radio and watching TV for information	(39) 23.9%	(121) 74.2%	(1) 0.6%	(2) 1.2%

The results of table 1 shows that, 128 (78.5%) of the respondents perceived visiting libraries as an opportunity of accessing information in the event telecommunication shut down. The results also show that offline databases in the electronic libraries can serve as alternative sources of information by the academic staff with 107 (65.6%) respondents strongly indicated. Similarly, 121 (74.2%) respondents agree that listening to radio and television is another opportunity for accessing information while 103 (63%) of the respondents agree with information available CD ROM and audio record as alternative source of the information. However, 77 (47%) of the respondents ruled out the possibility of traveling to neighboring states for access to information amid internet shut down in their state.

Table 2

Perceived Alternative information materials	Adequately available	Available	Fairly available	Not available
Books	(117) 71.8%	(43) 26.4%	(2) 1.2%	(1) 0.6%
Newspapers	(86) 52.8%	(74) 45.4%	(1) 0.6%	(2) 1.2%
Journals	(72) 44.2%	(87) 53.4%	(3) 1.8%	(1) 0.6%
Dearies	(16) 9.8%	(93) 57.1%	(53) 32.5%	(1) 0.6%
Encyclopedias/ dictionaries	(62) 38.0%	(73) 44.8%	(23) 14.1%	(5) 3.1%
CD ROM	(17) 10.4%	(20) 12.3%	(71) 43.6%	(55) 33.7%
TV, Radio and audio records	(7) 4.3%	(118) 72.4%	(35) 21.5%	(3) 1.8%
Bulleting	(13) 8.0%	(122) 74.8%	(27) 16.6%	(1) 0.6%
Research monograph	(36) 22.1%	(117) 71.8%	(9) 5.5%	(1) 0.6%
Offline Databases	(51) 31.3%	(105) 64.4%	(6) 3.7%	(1) 0.6%
Research report	(34) 20.9%	(112) 68.7%	(16) 9.8%	(1) 0.6%

That book materials are considered as adequately available alternative information material in the event of internet shut down as 117 (71.8%) respondents indicated. Newspapers are also considered by the respondents to be adequately available with (86) 52.8%. The results also show the availability of journal as alternatives information materials source in the University as 83 (53.2%) of the respondents indicated. So was also the Dearies with 93 (57.1%), encyclopedia/ dictionaries with 73 (44.8%), Bulleting with 122 (74.8%), Research monograph with 117 (71.8%), offline data bases with 105 (64.4%), TV, radio and audio records with 118 (72.4%) and research report with 112 (68.7%). However, CD ROM was considered fairly available by the respondents with 71 (43.6%) responses.

Table 3

Extend of information utilization	Very higher extent	High extent	Moderate extent,	Low extent
Books	(123) 75.5%	(34) 20.9%	(5) 3.1%	(1) 0.6%
Newspapers	(120) 73.6%	(38) 23.3%	(3) 1.8%	(2) 1.2%
Journals	(119) 73.0%	(40) 24.5%	(3) 1.8%	(1) 0.6%
Dearies	(21) 12.9%	(98) 60.1%	(42) 25.8%	(2) 1.2%
Encyclopedias/ dictionaries	(65) 39.9%	(85) 52.1%	(8) 4.9%	(5) 3.1%
CD ROM	(8) 4.9%	(18) 11.0%	(45) 27.6%	(92) 56.4%
TV, Radio and audio records	(17) 10.4%	(105) 65.6%	(39) 23.9%	(2) 1.2%
Bulleting	(27) 16.6%	(107) 65.6%	(27) 16.6%	(2) 1.2%
Research monograph	(44) 27.0%	(109) 66.9%	(8) 4.9%	(2) 1.2%
Offline Databases	(49) 30.1%	(104) 63.8%	(9) 5.5%	(1)0.6%
Research report	(33) 20.2%	(122) 74.8%	(7) 4.3%	(1)0.6%

Results of table 3 show that the extend of utilization of book as sources of information materials during the telecommunication shut down by academic staff of the University was very higher with 123 (75.5%). The results also show very higher extent of utilization of Newspaper 120 (73.6%) and journal 119 (73.0%), but only high extent the utilization of Dearie 98 (60.1%), encyclopedia/ dictionaries 85 (52.1%), TV radio and audio records 105 (65.6%), Bulleting 105(65.6), research monograph 109 (66.9%), offline data bases 104 (63.8%) and research report 122 (74.8%). However, CD ROM utilization was low extent.

Table 4

Purpose of using the information	Very appropriate	Appropriate	Fairly appropriate,	Not appropriate
Prepared lecture note	(73) 44.8%	(44) 27.0%	(35) 21.5%	(11) 6.7%
For personal communication	(65)39.9%	(72) 44.2%	(19) 11.7%	(6) 3.7%
For Research purposes	(104) 63.8%	(56) 34.4%	(3) 1.8%	(0) 0.0%
For Knowledge sharing	(69) 42.3%	(87) 53.4%	(3) 1.8%	(4) 2.5%

Results of table 4 show the purpose of using information during the telecommunication shut down in the state by the academic staff of the university with majority of respondents 73 (44.8%) considered their level of using information for lecture note preparation very appropriate while 44 (27.0%) of the respondents considered it only appropriate and 35 (21.5%) indicated fairly appropriate and only 11 amounting to (6.7%) considered it not appropriate. The results also indicated that majority of the respondents 72 (44.2%) considered utilizing information during the shutdown for personal communication appropriate while 65 (39.9%) of the respondents reported their level of using information or personal communication during the period as very appropriate and only 19 (11.7%) and 6 (3.7%) considered it fairly appropriate and not appropriate respectively. On research purpose, the results show that majority of the respondents 104 (63.8%) indicated very appropriate while 56 (34.4%) recorded appropriate and only 3 (1.8%) indicated it as fairly appropriate. Similarly, the results also show that 69 (42.3%) of the respondents utilized information during the period for knowledge sharing as they indicated very appropriate while majority of the respondents 87 (53.4%) considered it only appropriate and 3 (1.8%), 4 (2.5%) indicated fairly appropriate and not appropriate respectively.

Table 5

Challenges encounters for accessing the information	Strongly agree	Agree	Disagree	Strongly disagree
Difficulty in accessing library resources	(9) 5.5%	(11) 6.7%	(77) 47.2%	(66)40.5%
High cost of alternative information resources	(11) 6.7%	(52) 31.9%	(78) 47.9%	(22)13.5%
Insufficient information richness compared to internet	(45) 27.6%	(99) 60.7%	(14) 8.6%	(5) 3.1%
Time constraint	(61) 37.4%	(88) 54.0%	(11) 6.7%	(3) 1.8%
Poor personal communication	(59) 36.2%	(70) 42.9%	(25) 15.3%	(8) 4.9%
Inadequate information for preparing lecture note	(26) 16.0%	(62) 38.0%	(53) 32.5%	(22) 13.5%
Inadequate information for research activities	(37) 22.7%	(73) 44.8%	(41) 25.2%	(12) 7.4%
Others	(10) 76.9%	(3) 23.1%	(0) 0.0%	(0) 0.0%

Results of table 5 shows that majority of respondents 77 (47.2%) disagree of encountering any difficulty in accessing library resources as alternative to internet resources during telecommunication shutdown, so was also high cost of the alternative information resources as 78 (47.9%) disagree. However, the results also show that majority of the respondents 99 (60.7%) reported insufficient information richness of the alternatives compared with internet. The results also show that time constraint is one of the challenges faced by the respondents when using the alternatives sources or materials as indicated by the 88 (54.0%) of the respondents. Poor personal communication also was encountered by the respondents as evidently agreed by 70 (42.9%) of the respondents. The results also show that inadequate information for research activities was another challenge encountered by the staff during the period as 73 (44.8%) simply agreed. Similarly, majority of respondents 62 (38.0%) reported of inadequate information for preparing lecture notes.

Discussion of findings

The study investigates accessibility and utilization of information resources by academic staff of federal University Gusau amid telecommunication shut down In Zamafara state. To carry out the investigation, five research objectives were raised and questionnaire was adopted as instrument of data collection Out of 169 questionnaire distributed a total of 163 were completed and returned, this gave a respond rate of 96.4% which considered adequate for the analysis.

The results show that males are the majority academic staff working in the university with (124) 76.1% where Female respondents recorded (39) 23.9%. The age bracket 36-45 recorded the highest number of respondents with (81) 49.7% followed by 46-above with (65) 39.9% and lastly 20-35 age bracket with (17) 10.4%. These indicated that the majority respondents were between the age brackets 36-45.

PhD hold the highest respondents with (86) 52.8%. Followed by Master's degree with (60) 36.8% and lastly First degree with (17) 10.4% respectively. These shows that PhD are the majority Qualification of the respondents. Senior lecturers hold the highest response of (68) 41.1% followed by Lecturer I with (27) 16.6%, Lecturer II with (20) 12.3% where Associate professor hold (18) 11.0%, followed by graduate assistant with (17) 10.4%, Assistant lecturer recorded (8) 4.9% and lastly the rank of professor recorded (6) 3.7%. This indicated that senior lecturers are the majority respondents of this research.

The findings revealed that, majority of the respondents strongly agreed that visiting libraries and offline databases in the electronic library served as opportunity of accessing information during

the internet shut down in the state. This could be attributed to the easiness of access to the resources compared to other alternatives as observed by the researchers. The finding also shows That, majority of the respondents considered book materials and newspapers as adequately available alternative information material during the internet shut down. This is in line with Suleiman and Joshua (2019) study that discovered high level of awareness of usage of internet resources and service for academic activities by academic staff of tertiary institutions in Adamawa state, an achievement attributed to the availability of awareness sources such as library. On the extent of the utilization of the alternatives sources during the shutdown, the study revealed that books, journals and newspapers are the alternatives information resources highly utilized by the respondents during the shutdown. This was in tandem with Ani, Ekeh, Ezemoyih, Okpara and Igu (2022) that discovered that books materials are mostly utilized by library resources for academic activeness by undergraduate students in Nigerian tertiary institutions.

Another major finding of the study is that, information accessed and utilized by the academic staff of the university during the internet shut down were for the purpose of lecture note preparation, research purpose, knowledge sharing and personal communication, which confirm the finding of shehu, Urchebe & Promise (2015) that find out that certified librarians use internet services in library for research purpose, update for knowledge and current awareness services.

The study further found out challenges encountered by the academic staff of the university while accessing and utilization of information through internet alternatives sources. The majority of the respondents strongly agreed that, insufficient information richness of the alternative source compared to the internet, time constraint, poor personal communication, inadequate information for preparing lecture note and inadequate information for research as the constraints of accessing and utilization of internet alternatives source.

Conclusion

The paper focused on accessibility and utilization of information resources by academic staff OF federal university Gusau amid telecommunication shut down in Zamafara state and it of very important this kind of study be conducted to find out the alternative sources of information during the telecommunication shutdown in the state, the extent of information accessibility, information utilization, purpose of accessing and utilization of the information as well as challenge associated with the use of the information during the period **of information**. Lastly, the study concluded that, academic staff in the university should be encourage to access and utilize various sources of information apart from internet, library also to continue creating awareness on the existence of the various sources of information in the library and the need for the staff to be inculcated with technique of accessing and utilizing alternatives sources of information.

Recommendations

Academic staff of the university should be encouraged to access and utilize information from various sources rather than to depend on internet.

Library of the university should double its efforts of creating awareness of the existence of various information sources in the library.

Academic staff in the university should keep themselves abreast with technique of accessing information in libraries and other sources so as to save their time when using the sources.

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