

University of Nebraska - Lincoln

DigitalCommons@University of Nebraska - Lincoln

Library Philosophy and Practice (e-journal)

Libraries at University of Nebraska-Lincoln

April 2007

Users' Perceptions of the Use of Academic Libraries and Online Facilities for Research Purposes in Nigeria

S. Chiemeké

University of Benin, Nigeria

O.B. Longe

University of Benin, Nigeria, olubabs@excite.com

S.S. Umar

Federal Polytechnic, Edo State, Nigeria

I.O. Shaib

Federal Polytechnic, Edo State, Nigeria

Follow this and additional works at: <https://digitalcommons.unl.edu/libphilprac>



Part of the [Library and Information Science Commons](#)

Chiemeké, S.; Longe, O.B.; Umar, S.S.; and Shaib, I.O., "Users' Perceptions of the Use of Academic Libraries and Online Facilities for Research Purposes in Nigeria" (2007). *Library Philosophy and Practice (e-journal)*. 116.

<https://digitalcommons.unl.edu/libphilprac/116>

Users' Perceptions of the Use of Academic Libraries and Online Facilities for Research Purposes in Nigeria

S. Chiemeké

O. B. Longe
Department of Computer Sciences
University of Benin
Benin City, Nigeria

S.S. Umar

I.O. Shaib
Dept. of Statistics & Computer Science
The Federal Polytechnic
Auchi, Edo State, Nigeria

Learning in the Modern World

In each society there are facilities other than classrooms that can contribute in no small measure to the teaching and learning process. For learning to take place, learners must have access to necessary materials, information and resources. They have to interact with tangible and intangible resources and institutions to ensure some level of performance (Obanewa, 2002). Dewy (1983) posited that, "libraries are schools and the librarian in the highest sense a teacher." Oyedéji (1980) describes a library as having "a machinery" for the use of the collection. In the modern world, a wide range of information is disseminated through the printed word, yet it is impossible to have access to all forms of information and knowledge through wide reading alone. Other facilities and agencies thus exist that emphasize audio-visual learning. They include electronic media such as radio, television, cable satellite, the Internet. These media give wide publicity to events, objects, discoveries, scientific findings, new products, and new services.

The Use of Modern Libraries

Libraries developed as a result of the need to preserve valuable records of events. These records might be in the form of written scrolls, papyrus kept in jars, written clay tablets, manuscripts kept in monasteries, and printed materials such as books, letters, statutes, and laws. Only a few people, such as kings, nobles, renowned scholars, and ecclesiastical orders had access to these libraries. Modern libraries have taken on additional new roles because of changing demands and new technology. They are currently regarded as agents for educational, social, economic, and political change, and their doors are open to all. The United Nations Educational Scientific and Cultural Organisation (UNESCO 1976) views the library as "an organised collection of published books and periodicals and of other reading and audio-visual materials and the services of staffs able to provide and interpret such materials as are required to meet the information, research, educational or recreational needs of users." The UNESCO definition touches on every aspect of what a library in the modern sense stands for.

Computerization in Nigerian Libraries

Nigerian libraries, documentation and information centers are yet to fully adopt modern information technology for information handling. Studies have examined the advantages of the use and application of computers to organizational work (Brown, 1975; Akinyotu, 1977; Edoke, 1983). The benefits of computers for library operations cannot be overemphasized. Their value includes speed, storage capacity, links resources, and accuracy of record management. Computer literacy has become part of many public curricula; however, not all people receive their computer training in public schools. In recent years there has been increasing emphasis on adult computer training, often through community education programs or in-service training (Rogers, 2005). Other adults receive their initial computer experience as part of their post-secondary education, which in most cases is mandatory. This includes undergraduates in Nigerian Polytechnics, Colleges of Education, and universities. Introductory computer courses are a mandatory part of the General Studies requirements for graduating.

Old and New Technologies

At its inception, new technology seems to pose a threat to the survival of older ones. It is very rare at such points to appreciate the complementary roles and constructive interplay that can result from the co-existence of old and new ways of doing things. The revolution in Information and Communications Technology is threatening the very existence of a number of highly regarded institutions such as publishing, scientific societies, and academic libraries. In the same vein, print media faces challenges as digital and online services such as the Internet, MP3 players, cell phones, and online versions of newspapers have led news consumers to rely increasingly on information from online and digital sources.

Categories of Library Users

Obanewa et al. (2002) classified library users into four groups: general readers, creative readers, adult students, and readers with specialist interests. General readers are those who read for information and general enlightenment. They consult newspapers, encyclopedias, general works, and related documents. The library offers this group of users excellent opportunity to update themselves and be very current about national and international affairs. The library serves as a powerful means of developing individual readers in their varied interests. Creative readers are read novels, magazines, fiction, and fantasy. The library resource offers these users materials which are interesting, entertaining, and educative. Adult students' interests centre on information for serious academic pursuits. They consult textbooks and reference works. The last group of library users are people with specialist interests, including scientists, medical doctors, engineers, undergraduate, and post-graduate students.

Library Use for Research Purposes

This last category of library users concentrates on textbooks and journals that are relevant to their profession or calling. They may conduct research as part of the requirements for completing a degree, for laboratory activities, to report findings, and review existing literature in different subject areas. It is this category of users that these paper seeks to evaluate on the basis of their perception of the academic library system and the Internet for research purposes.

Research Methodology

Research Questions

1. What is the level of usage of Internet and formal library facilities for research purposes in Nigeria?
2. Are the facilities complementary?
3. Does the facilities provide equal satisfaction?
4. What are their discrepancies?

Hypotheses

The following null hypotheses were formulated for the purpose of this research

- There is no significant difference in users' perception of staff efficiency in the use of academic library and online facilities for research purposes in Nigeria.
- There is no significant difference in users' perception of the conduciveness of academic library and online facilities for research purposes in Nigeria.
- There is no significant difference in users' perception of the speed of access to needed materials in the use of academic library and online facilities for research purposes in Nigeria.

- There is no significant difference in users' perception of the availability of current materials in the use of academic library and online facilities for research purposes in Nigeria.
- There is no significant difference in users' perception of the cost of access to materials in the use of academic library and online facilities for research purposes in Nigeria.
- There is no significant difference in users' perception of the ease of use of library facilities in the use of academic library and online facilities for research purposes in Nigeria.
- There is no significant difference in users' perception of the level of distractions experienced in the use of academic library and online facilities for research purposes in Nigeria.

Research Design

The survey method employed in this project is a questionnaire which solicits information from library users actively engaged in research activities.

Population

The population consists of 250 persons stratified into three groups: Lecturers, Undergraduate and Postgraduate students from five institutions in South Western Nigeria. 223 Questionnaires were returned, of which 200 were selected to satisfy the stratification for research purposes.

Sampling Technique

The sampling technique used in this research work is the stratified sampling method in combination with simple random sampling.

Research Instruments

The research instrument titled "Users' Perception of the Use of Academic Libraries and Online Facilities for Research Purposes in Nigeria" uses a three-point Likert Scale, and was administered to evaluate users' views of the use of these two media for research purposes.

Administration of Instrument

The research instrument was partly administered by the researchers and partly distributed to respondents through the Internet.

Validation of the Instrument

The face-validity and content-validity of the instrument were verified by experts in the subject area. The various suggestions made were used to modify the instrument.

Data Presentation and Analysis

Table 1.1: Purpose for Which Facilities Are Visited Most

FACILITY	RESPONSES		
	General reading	Preparation for examination	Research purposes
LIBRARY	54	70	76
INTERNET	61	50	89
Total	115	120	165
Average	58	60	82

Table 1.2: Frequency of Visit of Facilities

FACILITY	RESPONSES		
	Very often	Often	Not often
LIBRARY	32	68	100
INTERNET	105	72	33

Table 1.3: Requirements Before Admittance into Facilities

FACILITY	RESPONSES		
	Registration	Payment of Fees	Nothing
LIBRARY	180	Nil	20
INTERNET	None	180	20

Table 1.4: Location of Internet Access

FACILITY	RESPONSES		
	Home	Office	Cyber cafés
INTERNET	10	25	165

From Table 1.1 above, taking the average to the nearest whole number, more users visit the two facilities for research purposes than all the other reasons specified. However, the Internet enjoys more patronage for the purpose of research. Table 1.2 compares the frequency of visit to the two facilities. Results show that users visit the Internet more often than academic library facilities for research purposes.

Table 1.3 revealed that registration is a requirement in Nigeria for admittance into academic libraries. The exceptions are visitors at conferences, workshops, and seminars at some university libraries who are allowed access to Internet facilities and library resources free of charge. From table 1.4, it can be deduced that rudimentary Internet access in Nigeria is mostly at cyber cafés. Most users cannot afford computers at home. Few postgraduate students who are also working-class citizens however have access to Internet facilities at their offices.

TABLE 2.1: Decision Based on Observed and Computed Chi Square Analysis

	Hypothesis	Computed χ^2 value	Table Value (T) at 3 df	Comparison	Decision at 0.05 level of significance
Hypothesis 1	There is no significant difference in users' perception of staff efficiency in the use of academic library and online facilities for research purposes in Nigeria.	6.635	9.21	$\chi^2_{cal} < \chi^2_{table}$ (3, 0.05)	Accept the Null Hypothesis
Hypothesis 2	There is no significant difference in users' perception of the conduciveness of academic library and online facilities for research purposes in Nigeria.	55.9	9.21	$\chi^2_{cal} > \chi^2_{table}$ (3, 0.05)	Reject Null hypothesis
Hypothesis 3	There is no significant difference in users' perception of the speed of access to needed materials in the use of academic library and online facilities for research purposes in Nigeria.	152.6	9.21	$\chi^2_{cal} > \chi^2_{table}$ (3, 0.05)	Reject the Null hypothesis
Hypothesis 4	There is no significant difference in users' perception of the speed of access to needed materials in the use of academic library and online facilities for research purposes in Nigeria.	38.11	9.21	$\chi^2_{cal} > \chi^2_{table}$ (3, 0.05)	Reject the Null Hypothesis
Hypothesis 5	There is no significant difference in users' perception of the availability of current materials in the use of academic library and online facilities for research purposes in Nigeria.	12.5	9.21	$\chi^2_{cal} > \chi^2_{table}$ (3, 0.05)	Reject the Null hypothesis hence accept the alternative
Hypothesis 6	There is no significant difference in users' perception of the ease of use of library facilities in the use of academic library and online facilities for research purposes in Nigeria.	6.635	9.21	$\chi^2_{cal} < \chi^2_{table}$ (3, 0.05)	Accept the Null hypothesis hence accept the alternative
Hypothesis 7	There is no significant difference in users' perception of the level of distractions experienced in the use of academic library and online facilities for research purposes in Nigeria.	153.3	9.21	$\chi^2_{cal} > \chi^2_{table}$ (3, 0.05)	Reject the Null hypothesis

Findings

The analysis of the data collected revealed that there is no perceived significant difference in staff efficiency, and ease of use of facilities in academic libraries and online environment. However, there is significant difference in users' perception of speed of access to needed research materials, availability of current and up to date materials, cost of access, and distractions within the facilities.

In major libraries in Nigeria users are left to find their way through library resources usage. The experience is also the same in most cyber café. This is closely related to the ease of use of both facilities for research purposes. On the other hand, users feel that library environments are more serene than café environments. This is as a result of the fact that people come to cafés in Nigeria for other extraneous and dubious reasons. It is not uncommon therefore to see café environments being rowdy and very noisy. This is not the case in academic libraries where silence is an ethic.

The issue of cost is very obvious as it costs more to access materials on the Internet. Money has to be paid to obtain tickets before access is granted in most cyber cafés. In most libraries registration is all that is required for the use of library facilities. Since online facilities have a pool of resources, it is not surprising that the analysis shows that most users agree that current materials and resources for research are most common on the Internet.

Recommendations

Based on the findings of the study, the following recommendations are made:

- Academic libraries in the country should begin to occupy a pride of place in institutional budgets. The need for full interconnectivity for our libraries can no longer be ignored.
- Provision should be made in providing training programmes for the librarians in order to update their knowledge with new information technology applications and usage.
- The government should as a matter of urgency provide technical and human infrastructures aimed at reducing Internet access costs across the country.
- Computers should be made available at reduced costs so that researchers can have the privilege of accessing the Internet in the comfort of their homes. This will enable them to work at their own pace.
- Our electric power providers and communication networks will have to improve their services, since they remain the backbone for effective use of information technology applications, especially the Internet.
- Academic libraries should be stocked with up-to-date materials in order to encourage researchers to use their facilities.

Conclusion

This study has serious implications for libraries in Nigerian higher education institutions. The line between the use of academic libraries and the use of the Internet for research is still very obvious. In more developed countries these lines are virtually non-existent, because most academic libraries enjoy full Internet connectivity. Manpower training in the use of technology is another issue that is being raised here. Librarians must be trained in the use of current technologies to aid them in the discharge of their duties.

References

Akinyotu, F. A. (1977). Library Automation: A State Of The Art Review. Paper presented at The NLA Seminar, "Library automation: in Nigeria Libraries", 7-9 March.

Brown, P. (1975). Computers in University Libraries. Proceedings of a Conference held by ASLIB with the cooperation of the ASLIB Computer application group in London, 19-20 May.

Edoka, B. E. (1983). Prospects of Computer-Based Circulation System in Nigerian University Libraries. *Nigerian Library & Information Science Review*, 1(2), 109-116.

Oketunji, I. (2001). *Computer Applications to Libraries*. A Compendium of papers presented at the 39th National Annual Conference and AGM of the Nigerian Library Association held at Owerri, Imo State, pp. 2-4.

Obanewa, O., Lere, Adewale, L. and Asokhia, D. (2002). *Introduction to Adult Education Practices*. Lagos ; Samtos Publishers.

Rogers, K. (2005). *Computer Knowledge for Self Reliance*. National Directorate of Employment (NDE) Enlightenment Programme on Self-Employment. Benin City, Nigeria (July, 2005).

Dewey, M. (1983). Libraries As Related To The Education Work Of The States. *Library Notes* 3rd Sept. 1983. pp 333-340. Encyclopedia Britannica.

Oyededeji, L. (1980). Urban Problems Affecting the Use of Libraries Services in Metropolitan Area of Lagos : Background and Sociological Framework. *Journal of Library Services*. In Obanewa et al. (2002). *Adult Education Practices in Nigeria*. Lagos : Samtos Publishers.

UNESCO Recommendations No. 47.1958: Facilities for Education and Rural Areas.

Appendix

Questionnaire

USERS' PERCEPTION OF THE USE OF ACADEMIC LIBRARIES AND ONLINE FACILITIES FOR RESEARCH PURPOSES IN NIGERIA

Dear respondent

This questionnaire is aimed at evaluating users' perception of the use of academic libraries and online facilities for research purposes in Nigeria.

Your response will be highly appreciated.

Thank you.

SECTION A - BIO-DATA

Name : _____ [Optional]

Sex : _____

Occupation : _____

Educational Status : OND or Eq[] NCE[] B.Sc/HND[] PGD[] MSc [] PhD[]

Sex: Male[]

Female []

AGE BRACKET :

18yrs - 25yrs [] 26yrs - 30yrs [] 31yrs - 35yrs [] 36yrs - 40yrs[] Above 40yrs []

SECTION A

For what purpose do you visit the Library most

General reading [] Preparation for examination [] Research purposes []

For what purpose do you visit Online facilities most

General reading [] Entertainment (Including sports/news etc) [] Research purposes [] []

How often do you visit the Library? Very often [] Often [] Not Often []

How often do you visit the Internet? Very often [] Often [] Not Often []

What are the requirement before admittance into the library you normally visit

Registration [] Payment of stipulated fees [] Nothing []

What are the requirement before admittance into the Online facilities you normally visit

Registration [] Payment of stipulated fees [] Nothing []

Where do you access the Internet? Home [] Office [] Cyber cafés []

SECTION B

It is easy to obtain materials on current research areas in Nigerian Libraries

Agreed [] Not agreed [] Indifferent []

Obtaining needed (or required) information for research from libraries is very fast

Agreed [] Not agreed [] Indifferent []

It is very fast and easy to order for materials not in the libraries

Agreed [] Not agreed [] Indifferent []

Libraries in Nigeria are well located and easily accessible

Agreed [] Not agreed [] Indifferent []

Nigerian libraries have environments conducive for research purposes you visit the

Agreed [] Not agreed [] Indifferent []

(6) The library staff efficiency is relatively satisfactory

Agreed [] Not agreed [] Indifferent []

(7) There are usually no distractions that constitute a nuisance when using libraries

Agreed [] Not agreed [] Indifferent []

SECTION C

Online facilities are readily available for use for research purposes in Nigeria

Agreed [] Not agreed [] Indifferent []

I consider the payment for online facilities access affordable

Agreed [] Not agreed [] Indifferent []

The Online facilities are very efficient in meeting my research needs

Agreed [] Not agreed [] Indifferent []

The speed of access on the Internet to research materials is satisfactory enough

Agreed [] Not agreed [] Indifferent []

The Online facilities are easy to use for my research purposes.

Agreed [] Not agreed [] Indifferent []

Materials obtained from the Internet are very relevant and useful

Agreed [] Not agreed [] Indifferent []

It is very conducive to browse and get research information from the Internet

Agreed [] Not agreed [] Indifferent []