Winter 12-31-2021

Format preference and utilisation of Library information resources by Undergraduates of Public Universities in a Nigerian State

Bosede Adebimpe Ajiboye
Federal University of Agriculture, Abeokuta, ajiboyeba@funaab.edu.ng

Rahman Olorunleke Arowolo
Federal University of Agriculture, Abeokuta, lekarowolo@gmail.com

Format preference and utilisation of Library information resources by Undergraduates of Public Universities in a Nigerian State

By

Ajiboye, B. A. (PhD)

Principal Librarian/Senior Lecturer,

Automation Department, 'Nimbe Adedipe Library /

Communication and General Studies Department

College of Agricultural Management and Rural Development

Federal University of Agriculture

PMB 2240, Abeokuta, Ogun State

And

Arowolo, R. O

lekarowolo@gmail.com

Communication and General Studies Department

College of Agricultural Management and Rural Development

Federal University of Agriculture

PMB 2240, Abeokuta, Ogun State

Abstract

The existence of an academic environment is incomplete without a functioning library, which forms the fulcrum of all academic institutions in knowledge development and information depository. Irrespective of the format, information must be protected and persevered for posterity. The study used a descriptive design method based on both qualitative and quantitative approaches. Structured Questionnaire was used to obtain data from 210 respondents while for the qualitative data the researcher interviewed the Heads of Automation and Readers' Services Units of the three universities studied. Data were analysed using descriptive statistics, frequencies, percentage, mean and standard deviation. The formats of information resources available and preferred by the undergraduates were text books ($\bar{x}$=2.84) for print information format and internet material ($\bar{x}$=2.65) for non-print information format. The respondents ranked textbooks ($\bar{x}$=3.52) and E-books ($\bar{x}$=3.47) as the highest accessible Print and non-print formats respectively. The study concluded by recommending that university libraries should invest more in the acquisition of current and updated textbooks and e-books that were found to be the preferred formats of library information resources by the respondents.

Keywords: Format preference, Library Information Resources, Undergraduates

Introduction

The emergence of the Internet and related technologies has positively affected and enabled the use of information resources at users' convenience. The Internet also continues to affect undergraduates' research behaviours and ways academic libraries provide access to information resources. Students are expected to find information materials that are reliable, current, timely and accurate for their research activities. Hence, the students focus more on online information sources enabled by search engines such as like Google, Ask.com, Bing or AOL Search.

These information providers give both accurate and inaccurate information materials (overload) which may be frustrating to the student, since they desire accurate information. Information and Communication Technologies (ICTs) have helped the library to provide current information resources in electronic form. The undergraduates' reliance on web-based search engines and easy-to-access sources might be because of the desire to obtain information resources for their class assignments and research.

Library consists of collection of books; printed and in other formats that are carefully organised and prepared according to some specific or definite plan, and made accessible for reading and consultation by all ages and interests.

With a view to meet the goal of information provision, libraries offer wide range of services to ensure that users get timely access to whatever kind of information that could meet their multifarious needs. Popoola and Haliso (2009) reported that library information resources are those information bearing materials in both print and electronic formats, such as textbooks, journals, indexes, abstracts, newspapers and magazines, reports, CD ROM databases, Internet/E-mail, video tapes/cassettes, diskettes, magnetic disk, computers, micro forms, etc. These information resources are the materials that libraries acquire, catalogue, stock, and made available to the patrons, as well as the provision of other services.

The emergence of non-print materials came as a result of the development in Information and Communication Technologies (ICTs) which brought about the emergence of electronic information resources and services in libraries such as Internet services, databases, Compact Disc Read-Only Memory (CD-ROM), online catalogue and web resources while traditional library resources are in prints; these are printed materials such as books and printed journals among others. Utilisation of information resources is important in the library, and libraries need their users if they hope to keep existing. Part of the strategy is to find out what the users need in terms of preferred

information formats. Identifying these will enable the library plan ahead and serve their users through an approach that meets their utilisation level. As a matter of fact, providing information resources to users is one of the core mandates of any library, and to achieve this, the users are considered in all the decisions taken by the library. The information resources in the library would be used frequently by clientele only if they are in their preferred formats and if they have smooth and unrestricted access to them. However, the library is affected by so many factors which have reduced the patronage of users, such factors include the use of the Internet, social media tools and search engines which are part of the rapid changes in the society brought about through the use of information communication technologies (ICTs).

Statement of the problem

For an academic library to be effective, it must meet the information needs of its users, ensuring that they make functional use of the information resources and services available at their disposal. However, it is strange when university pay huge amounts of money to acquire resources and records little or no patronage which might be due to the users' inability to access the resources in their preferred format. It might be frustrating on the part of the library users if the types/kinds of information needed is not available.

Despite the benefits of library information resources to undergraduates, studies have shown that the level of apathy displayed towards the utilisation of library information resources by undergraduates needs to be determined, as they seem to be satisfied with the use of search engines like Google and also reading of class notes, among others. It is against this background that this study investigated the format preference and utilisation of library information resources by undergraduates of public universities in a State in Nigeria.

Research questions

The study provided answers to the following research questions:

1. What is the relevance of demographic characteristics of the respondents on their utilisation of information formats they preferred?
2. What are the information formats preferred by the undergraduates in public universities of a State in Nigeria?

3. How often do undergraduates of public universities of Ogun State Nigeria utilise information resources in their preferred formats?

Objectives of the study

The broad objective of the study is to examine the format preference, accessibility and utilisation of library information resources by undergraduates in public universities in Ogun State, Nigeria. However, the specific objectives are to:

 i.   identify the relevance of demographic characteristics of the respondents in line with the utilisation of their preferred information formats.

 ii. establish the information formats that are preferred by undergraduates in public universities in a Nigerian State;

 iii. determine how often undergraduates of public universities in Ogun State, Nigeria utilise their preferred format of information resources;

Review of related Literature

Electronic resources are now used as complimentarily to printed information sources in university libraries. One of the main benefits of electronic resources is the ease of access to the needed information, access of electronic resources can be done remotely irrespective of users' locations without necessarily visiting the library physically. Hence, electronic resources goes beyond boundaries, it enhances accuracy, reliability and efficiency in dissemination of information for research and personal consultation purposes in the universities (Thanuskodi, 2012). The new generation of student who are referred to as the millennial student or digital natives, have changed the narratives as to the ways of selecting information resources in the last few years. Thus, contemporary undergraduates have used the internet from their lower levels and are more technologically skilled than previous generations (Zimerman, 2012).

The internet has transformed resource selection behaviours of those undergraduates; mostly, they rely on the web, using specific search engines like Google, to find their information. Students prefer using web search engines to libraries because of their convenience, speed, and reliability, while they observe library resources to be accurate and credible (Holman, 2011). Nwalo (2012) postulated that with the use of suitable technology, web resources are also part of the library's information resources. And as the library organised materials in its collection over the centuries,

so shall it also manage the resources on the web. Electronic resources are the major elements and they become a common part of most academic library resources today.

However, Fasola (2013) examined awareness of and constraints to the use of electronic resources by students and lecturers of Ajayi Crowther University. Oyo, Nigeria. The findings revealed that though there was a high (70.6%) level of awareness of the availability of electronic resources, constant power failure 67.6%, slow internet connectivity 56.4%, download delay 52.9% and unhelpful attitude of library staff 41.2% were constraints encountered by respondents in the use of the available electronic resources. For instance, Martin (2008) found that 72% of the respondents chose the internet for class-related research, Moreover, they recognised that library resources would be more reliable.

Kim and Sin (2011) observed in their study that, students considered the web to be accurate and the important means for accessing information resources and supposed library sources as accurate information. However, the result indicated that students did not necessarily choose those accurate library sources in practice because the web seems easier to use. Shelton (2011) studied the use of ICT facilities by academic staff in the UK universities, the findings of the research show that 87% of the respondents were using ICTs and e-resources for academic and research activities. The researcher concluded that, accessibility and utilisation of electronic resources by academic staff in the universities was influenced by change in cultures and contexts of research. In another study, Deng (2010) reported that electronic resources have been successfully integrated into learning, teaching and research in Australian universities. This has inspired him to explore the utilization of electronic resources amongst the staff and students of higher institutions in Australia. According to his findings, access and usage of electronic resources is common in Australian universities due to speedy advances in ICTs. Also the research indicated that more than 59% of the respondents accessed and utilised e-resources more than once a week. The importance of using e-resources by the respondents was easy accessibility, and not lack of time and location restricions.

In a related research, Bashorun (2011) found that frequency of use of electronic resources by academic staff of the University of Ilorin was low, with the major reason being lack of time. He also explained that teaching requires time and focus. He further found that, lack of awareness of electronic resources provided by the library; power outage, ineffective communication channels, slow network and inadequate searching skills among others were the issues that affect library usage. Okiki (2012) in a research explained that availability of electronic information resources in

the Library has had major impacts on users' behaviour on the way the academic environment uses, stores, disseminate and preserves information. However, scholars observed that the increased availability of high-quality electronic content is dramatically changing user behaviour. Attitudes of academic community towards the use of electronic information resources for study, teaching and research have improved tremendously, thus, the role of Libraries is to step up on their levels of sensitising the academic community's on the awareness and access to these resources.

Opeke and Odunlade (2011) found that Polytechnic lecturers as a group of educators who imparts knowledge are expected to be abreast in the aware of information resources available for teaching in their various disciplines and also possess the skills that would enhance the use of such resources. They went further to report that, the library should create awareness on the availability of various information resources for teaching and learning in Nigerian Polytechnics. Acquisition of necessary information resources by the library, teaching of literacy skills for searching and evaluating useful information resources; whether print or electronic. Ability to use these resources thus have the capacity of improving work performance, enhance learning, increase research output and support decision making.

Natarajan, K, Suresh, Sivaraman and Sevukan, (2010) studied the Use and user perception of electronic resources in Annalmalai University. It was discovered from the statistical interpretation of the study conducted that usage of electronic sources greatly enhances researches. However, reasons given by users for none use of the e-resources are non-familiarity with them, lack of skill, lack of confidence and lack of time. It was observed that more than 50 percent of the users were of the view that the relevance of the e-resources covered by e- journals resources of Annamalai University was satisfactory. The use of electronic resources is found to be significant among the users of the Annamalai University. Some of the resources such as e-books, e-encyclopedia and e-dictionaries were less used. Thus, to further maximize the use of e-resources, awareness and training were found to be necessary.

Munira, Nasreen. Ansari and Bushra, Adeeb-Zuberi (2010) studied the Use of Electronic Resources among Academics at the University of Karachi by exploring the University's facilities for using electronic resources and found that most of the academic staff possessed computer skills that could help with the use of electronic resources. It was also found that, electronics resources were used for research and for preparation of lecture notes. Lack of knowledge and lack of facilities were found to be the reasons for not using electronic resources.

Background Information of the Study Location

Ogun State is located in the South Western region of Nigeria with coordinates, 7◦000 N 3◦350 E, having an estimated area of 16,980.55 km2 and a population of 3,751,140, with a density of 220/km2 , according to the last census in 2006. It borders Oyo and Osun states to the North, Lagos state to the South, Republic of Benin to the West, and Ondo state to the East. (Olukanni, Pius-Imue and Joseph, 2020). Ogun State has the highest number of Universities in the country with 15 Universities, made up of one federal, two state and 12 private universities (Mogaji, 2019).

The Federal University of Agriculture, Abeokuta, Ogun State (FUNAAB) was established on January 1, 1988 by the Federal Government with nine Colleges and a Postgraduate School as follows: College of Agricultural Management, Rural Development and Studies (COLAMRUCS), College of Animal Science and Livestock Production (COLANIM), College of Environmental Resources Management (COLERM), College of Natural Sciences (COLNAS), College of Plant Science and Crop Production (COLPLANT), Colleges, College of Engineering (COLENG), College of Veterinary Medicine (COLVET), College of Food Science and Human Ecology (COLFHEC) and College of Agricultural Management and Rural Development (COLAMRUD). (Ajiboye and Bankole, 2013) and has since then metamorphosed into ten Colleges with the establishment of the College of Management Sciences (COLMAS) which is currently being considered to be scrapped. FUNAAB is the only federal-owned university in Ogun State, the only University of Agriculture in Southwest geopolitical zone of Nigeria and one of the 3 Federal Universities of Agriculture in Nigeria.

Tai Solarin University of Education, established in 2005 as the first university of education in Nigeria is located in Ijagun, Ijebu-ode, Ogun State Nigeria, the former site of the Tai Solarin College of Education (TASCE). TASUED is made up of five colleges and a Postgraduate College as follows: College of Specialised and Professional Education (COSPED), College of Science and Information Technology (COSIT), College of Humanities (COHUM), College of Social and Management Sciences (COSMAS), College of Vocational and Technology Education (COVTED), The Postgraduate College (TPC).

Olabisi Onabanjo University (OOU) formerly Ogun State University was founded in 1983 and was renamed in 2001 after Chief (Dr) Olabisi Onabanjo who was the first civilian governor of Ogun State (Bankole, 2013). OOU is the only conventional university in Ogun State and has ten faculties,

namely: Faculties of Agricultural Sciences, Art, Basic Medical Sciences, Clinical Sciences, Education, Engineering and Environmental Sciences, Law, Pharmacy, Science and Social Sciences. The OOU runs a multicampus system with its campuses spread across the state and the main campus located at Ago-Iwoye.

Research Methods

Descriptive research design of the survey type was adopted for the study. The population of the study consisted of undergraduates of public universities in Ogun State, Nigeria. The public universities studied were, the Federal University of Agriculture Abeokuta (FUNAAB), Tai Solarin University of Education (TASUED) Ijebu-ode, and Olabisi Onabanjo University (OOU) Ago-Iwoye.

The total population of the study was 54,945 students, Twenty-eight thousand, five hundred and fourty-three (28,543) were undergraduates of Olabisi Onabanjo University, Fifteen thousand, six hundred and eighty-nine (15,689) from the Federal University of Agriculture, Abeokuta and Tai Solarin University of Education with Ten thousand, seven hundred and thirteen (10,713) undergraduates, Source of the data is the Academic Planning of the three (3) Universities (2019). Multistage sampling technique was employed to select the sample for the study. The first stage was to restrict the study to public universities in Ogun State. Public universities were studied based on their years of establishment. At the second stage, the simple random sampling technique was adopted to select 200 students from the total population of 54,945 undergraduates in the three public universities.

The primary instrument used for data collection was a questionnaire. In addition, interview was conducted to obtain qualitative data for the purpose of triangulation. For the qualitative data the researcher interviewed the Heads of Automation and Readers' Services Units of the three universities studied.

Results and Discussions

Data collected were coded and analysed using descriptive statistics namely; tables, frequency counts, simple percentages, mean and standard deviation. The responses from the interview were transcribed and appropriately interpreted to complement the quantitative data.

Table 1: Demographic Data of Respondents: Frequency distribution of respondents by gender

Gender	Frequency	Percentage
Male	77	36.6
Female	133	63.3
Total	**210**	**100.0**

Source: Field Study 2020

Demographic Data of Respondents

Table 1 reports the demographic characteristic of respondents from the universities covered by the study. These Characteristic are their levels of study, gender and age. Analysis of result shows that 77 (36.6%) respondents were males and 133 (63.3%) were females. This shows that, there are more female undergraduates making use of library information resources than their male counterparts in public universities in Ogun State, Nigeria.

Research Objective One: Relevance of the demographic characteristics of undergraduates of public universities in Ogun State to the utilisation of information in their preferred formats

The demographic characteristics of the respondents in this study include, name of university, gender, age and level. Findings show that 70(33.3%) respondents were from Olabisi Onabanjo University, Ago Iwoye, 70(33.3%) were from Federal University of Agriculture, Abeokuta, and 70 (33.3%) were from Tai Solarin University of Education. The result on the gender of respondents' shows that 77 (36.6%) respondents were male and their female counterparts were 133(63.3%). This shows that Female are the highest category of library users.

These findings are in agreement with Cox and Jantti (2012) who observed in a study that there are gender differences in library electronic resource usage. They discovered that women used e-resources more than men. The results further confirmed the findings of Bamidele, Omeluzor and Amadi (2013) who carried out a study on Utilisation of Journal Publications by Undergraduate Students of Babcock University, Nigeria and found that out of the 815 respondents studied, 373 (45.8%) were males while 442 (54.2%) were females. This result indicated that there were more female respondents in the study than male.

Research Question two: Information formats preferred by undergraduates of public universities in Ogun State, Nigeria

Respondents were asked to indicate the information formats they preferred. This shows that the information formats preferred by undergraduates of public universities in Ogun state, Nigeria in order of importance are the Text book ranking highest by the mean score of ($\bar{x}$=2.87) this was followed by Journal ($\bar{x}$=2.68), and the Internet-website ($\bar{x}$= 2.65) respectively.

Abdulsalami and Salami (2013) stated that, the availability of books is an indicator of stock effectiveness, this result is also in line with the findings of Natarajan, Suresh, Sivaraman and Sevukan, (2010) who discovered from the statistical interpretation of the study they conducted that there was a high rate of the use of prints in form of books than that of electronic resources. This finding is also in line with that of Hammed and Osunrinade (2010) whose findings, revealed that 64.8% of undergraduate students studied preferred to use text books as against 22.1% who used journals. This confirms that students prefer information formats in form of textbooks and online search engines for their research works.

Research Objective Three: determine how often undergraduates of public universities of Ogun State, Nigeria utilise their preferred format of information resources;

To determine the frequency of utilisation of information resources in the respondents' preferred formats, the respondents were asked to indicate this against the information resources of different format which were listed. Text Books were rated highest as the most used print resources, with a mean value of ($\bar{x}$=4.23), this was followed by Dictionaries ($\bar{x}$=3.85) and Journals ($\bar{x}$=3.82). However, the finding showed that 214 (58.5%) respondents agreed to the use of text books daily which was the highest while 178 (48.6%) respondents agreed to the use of Internet on a daily basis. In the interview session it was explained that the print resources especially text books were well utilised by the undergraduates. The interviewees also added that, respondents resort to the use of E-books only when the needed textbooks had been loaned out. This finding is in line with that of Adeoye and Popoola (2011) who studied investigated the availability, accessibility and use of library and information resources and submitted that for effective learning process, users must have access to relevant information materials and resources. These resources might be documented (i.e., printed resources) and non-documented (i.e., electronic resources) format. Hence, it could be concluded that the frequency of use of information resources by undergraduates of public universities in Ogun state was on a daily basis. However, this finding is in contrast to Oluwatobi,

Ehiogbae, Aluko-Arowolo and Onasote (2014) who found that, the most frequently used library resources was online databases, thus followed by Dictionaries, books, encyclopedia these were found to be used on a basis daily while the least used materials was the CD-ROM database.

Summary of Findings

The following findings were made from the study:

1. The level of accessibility to prints and non-print information resources was found to be high.

2. The preferred format of information resources by undergraduates include: Textbooks (ranked highest), followed by Journal, Internet-website, and E-book in that order.

3. There is a high level of utilisation of information resources among undergraduates.

Conclusion

The study revealed that the preferred information resources by undergraduates examined in the order of descending order of percentages were Textbooks, Internet, newspaper/Magazines and E-books. In addition, self-study, preparation for exam, assignment purposes and updating of knowledge was the purpose of information resources utilisation by undergraduates of public universities in Ogun state; and the frequency of utilisation was also high.

Recommendations

Based on the findings of the study, the following recommendations were put forward:

(i) More attention should be paid to making the most preferred information resource formats by the undergraduates available, this would allow them to utilise the library information resources often.

(ii) University need to invest more in the Library. This would allow the library to purchase current information resources in the undergraduates' preferred formats. With this, more recent information resources would be available for utilisation.

(iii) More concentration should also be paid to the utilisation of library information resources by undergraduates as the pattern of utilisation for some information resources need to increase from a weekly to daily utilisation.

References

Ajiboye, B. A. and Bankole, O. M. (2013). User Survey of 24-hour library service during examination periods at Federal University of Agriculture, Abeokuta, Nigeria. *Journal of Access Services,* 10 (3): 172-185. Published by Routledge (Taylor & Francis Group), London, UK. Available at: http://www.tandfonline.com/loi/wjas20.   Bankole, O. M. (2013). The use of internet services and resources by scientists at Olabisi Onabanjo University, Ago Iwoye, Nigeria. Program, 47(1), 15–33. doi:10.1108/00330331211296295

Bashorun, M., Tunji, I. A. and Adisa, M.Y. (2011). User perception of electronic resources in the University of ilorin, Nigeria. Journal of Emerging Trends in Computing and Information Sciences 2(11)534-562.

Deng, H. (2010). Emerging Patterns and Trends in Utilizing Electronic Resources in a Higher Education Environment: An Empirical Analysis. New Library World 111 (3/4): 87-103.

Fasola, O. S. (2013). Use of Electronic resources in a private University in Nigeria: Awareness and constraints. An international journal of Information and Technology. The Information Technologist. 10(2).

Kim, K.S. and Sin, S.C.J. (2011). "Selecting quality sources: bridging the gap between the perception and use of information sources", Journal of Information Science, Vol. 37 No. 2, pp. 178-188.

Martin, J. (2008). "The information-seeking behaviour of undergraduate's education majors: does library instruction play a role?" Evidence Based Library and Information Practice, Vol. 3 No. 4, pp. 4-17.

Mogaji, E. (2019). Types and Location of Nigerian Universities. Research Agenda Working Papers. Volume 2019. No 7. pp 92-103.

Munira, Nasreen, Ansari, Bushra and Adeeb Zuberi 2010, 'Use of Electronic Resources among Academics at the University of Karachi', library Philosophy and Practice.

Natarajan, K, Suresh, B, P.Sivaraman and R. Sevukan 2010, 'Use and user perception of electronic resources in Annalmalai University', Annals of Library and Information Studies, vol. 57, p. 59-64.

Nwalo, K. I. N. (2012). Imposition of order on chaos: Cataloguing as a soul of librarianship, A Faculty lecture delivered at the University of Ibadan. University of Ibadan: Faculty of education.

Nwokocha, U., & Chimah, J. N. (2017). Library and information services for rural community development in Africa: Problems and prospects.

Okiki, O.C. (2012). Electronic Information Resources Awareness, Attitude and Use by Academic Staff Members of University of Lagos, Nigeria. Library Philosophy and Practice (e-journal)

http://digitalcommons.unl.edu/cgi/viewcontent.cgi?article=2110&context=libphilprac

Olukanni D.O., Pius-Imue B.F. and Joseph O.S. (2020). Public Perception of Solid Waste Management Practices in Nigeria: Ogun State Experience Recycling 5(8)

Opeke, R.O. and Odunlade, R.O. (2011). Awareness and Utilisation of Information Resources among Polytechnic Lecturers in Nigeria. Samaru Journal of Information Studies Vol. 11 (1 & 2)2011 http://www.ajol.info/index.php/sjis/article/viewFile/83660/73682

Popoola, S.O. and Haliso, Y. (2009). Use of library information resources and services as predator of teaching effectiveness of social scientists in Nigerian universities. African Journal of Library, Archives and Information Science 19.1:65-77.

Shelton, C. (2011). University Lecturers' Perceptions of the Technology they Use. A Paper Presented at CAL Conference 2011, held at Manchester Metropolitan University, Manchester, UK, 13-15 April.

Thanuskodi, S. (2012). Use of E-Resources by Post Graduate Engineering Students with Special Reference to Sona College of Technology, Salem: A Survey. In: DK Swain (ed.) Electronic Age Librarianship. New Delhi: Ane Books PVT Ltd. 323-338.

Zimerman, M. (2012). "Digital natives, searching behaviour and the library", New Library World, Vol. 113 No 3/4, pp. 174-201.

Traditional knowledge has been stored in the collective memrory of indigenous people for centuries and it is passed through somgs, folklores, proverbs, dances, myths, local language, community beliefs, normc and values