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PERCEPTION AND CONTRIBUTION OF LIBRARIANS TO OPEN ACCESS RESOURCES IN TERTIARY INSTITUTIONS IN EKITI STATE, NIGERIA

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Abstract

The study investigated the perception and contribution of Librarians to Open Access Resources in tertiary institutions in Ekiti State, Nigeria. The study adopted the expo-facto descriptive design. The sampled for the study comprised 100 Librarians who were randomly selected through simple random sampling. The Role of Librarians to Open Access Resources (RLOARs),Benefits Derived from Open Access Resources (BOARs) and Challenges encountered when promoting Open Access Resources (COARs) were the three instruments used to collect relevant data for the study. The research questions raised were answered using mean and standard deviation. Means scores cut off point of 2.50 and above would be accepted. The findings from the study indicated that librarians play significant roles in open access resources in order for researchers, universities, publishers and library users to accomplish their aims, goals and objectives with(weighted average = 3.53). Finding also revealed that many benefits were derived from using open access resources, that is, open access resources increase exposure to research work; enable researcher to publish without costs; provide free articles for teaching and learning with (weighted average = 3.16) and lastly from the finding that slow internet connectivity and lack of awareness of Open Access Resources are the major challenges encountered when promoting open access resourceswith (weighted average = 2.53). Based on the above finding, the following recommendations were made:Librarian should play an effective role to make open access resources accessible and available for the users such as researchers, students, staff, authors, publishers, societies and nations.Librarians should liaise with the universities administrators to endure users get what they want in terms of exposure to research work and publish without costs. The challenges of open access resources such as slow internet connectivity can be solve by upgrading the router which will make internet available and accessible to the users.

Keywords: Perception, Contribution, Librarian, Open Access Resources, Tertiary Institution

Introduction

Academic libraries are the heart and center of information provision for teaching, learning, research, and leisure need to be fully supplied with various forms of information resources. Academic libraries play an important role in the scholarly communication system. Many academic institutions are research-intensive and a library's main mandate is to support the teaching, learning, and research activities of their parent institutions (Jain, 2012). In carrying out this mandate, a lot of activities are involved in facilitating access to knowledge; and when knowledge is open, anyone would be free to access, use, modify and share it. Open Access represents the classic way of thinking about the information and how it is shared, yet it is a novel approach for researchers and librarians who are accustomed to viewing information as a commodity that is meant to be purchased. Open access (OA) means free access to information and unrestricted use of electronic resources for everyone. Open Access (OA) was initiated in the developed countries and was marked by three notable declarations known as Budapest Open Access Initiative (BOAI) in 2002, Bethesda statement in June 2003 and the Berlin declaration in October 2003. According to Ugwauanyi, et al, (2013), Open Access means accessibility of all kinds of information that is published and can be accessed through the Internet free of charge. Open access also means that access is permitted to research papers and documents in an open environment at no chargeable cost to the user. The concept of open access applies exclusively to online access, as it is the internet that has offered up the technical possibility of allowing users to view research openly and without paying anything.

Open access has two different versions- gratis and libre. Gratis open access is simply making research available for others to read without payment. However, it does not grant the user the right to make copies distribute or modify the work in any way beyond fair use. Libre open access making research available free of charge, but it goes further by granting users additional rights to use, reuse and remix. Harnad (2008) posited that open access is free, immediate, permanent, full- text, and accessible while Jain (2012) reaffirmed on the elements of open access to include free availability, free of copyright and licensing restrictions, online or on the Internet, full text, accessible by anybody from anywhere and can be used by anyone. UNESCO (2015) positioned open access to knowledge as the effort to repost knowledge resources available in the public domain which can be accessed and used without restrictions usually imposed by subscription fee and access changes.

Thus, open access provides several benefits to:

i.   Research and publication: Through open access, researchers have wider visibility and usage of their research findings. They have a significantly larger and more diverse audience. Increased exposure to research also increases citation rate. Open Access provides an avenue to connect with a global society more easily and researchers can publish without printing costs.

ii.   Universities: Universities benefit from their researchers' increased impact and increase their visibility. Open access reduces their journal expenses and advances their mission to share knowledge.

iii.   Libraries: Open access solves the pricing and permission crisis for scholarly journals. Open access also serves library interests in other indirect ways. Librarians want to help users find the information they need, regardless of the budget-enforced limits on the library's own collection. Academic librarians want to help faculties increase their audience and impact, and help the university raise its research profile (Suber, 2010).

iv.   Readers: Readers around the globe can have barrier free access to the latest literature and research findings.

v.   Author: Open access gives authors a worldwide audience larger than that of any subscription-based journal, no matter how prestigious or popular, and demonstrably increases the visibility and impact of their work (Willinsky, 2010, Suber, 2010).

vi.   Journals and publishers: Open access makes their articles more visible, discoverable, retrievable, and useful. If a journal is Open access, then it can use superior visibility to attract submissions and advertising, not to mention readers and citations (Suber, 2010).

vii.   Teaching staff and students: By puttingrich and poor on an equal footing, Open Access provides free articles for teaching and learning.

viii.   Society: Society as a whole benefits from an expanded and accelerated research cycle in which research can advance more effectively because researchers have immediate access to all the findings they need.

ix.   Citizens: Open access gives them access to peer-reviewed research, which is unavailable in public libraries, and gives them access to the research for which they pay taxes. Open access accelerates not only research but the translation of research into new medicines, useful technologies, solved problems, and informed decisions that benefit everyone (Suber, 2010).

x.   Nations: Open access incorporates local research into all interoperable network of global knowledge; increases impact of local research, providing new contacts and research partnerships for authors; removes professional isolation and strengthens economies through developing a strong and independent national science base ((Antelman, 2004, Nicholas &Rowlands, 2005, Giarlo, 2005, Canada, 2009, Willinsky, 2010, Suber, 2010 and Abukutsa-Onyango, 2010).

xi.   Funding agencies: Open access increases the return on their investment in research, making the results of the funded research more widely available, more discoverable, more retrievable, and more useful. Thus Open access provides fairness to taxpayers by providing open access to the results of publicly-funded research (Suber, 2010).

xii.   Governments: Government benefit from Open access as funders of research and Open access also promotes democracy by sharing non-classified government information as widely as possible (Suber, 2010).

Open access resources are electronic resources that are freely available to the end-user at free of cost. No need to pay either by the institution or by the individual for accessing and downloading articles. The user can read, download, copy, distribute, print, search, or link to full texts of these articles. Prince and Saravanan (2015) defined Open Access Resources (OARs) as electronic resources that are available to the end-user without payment. This means that there is no need for the institution or the individual to pay for accessing and using the resources. One of the goals of Open Access is that anyone on the public Internet can access and use Open Access Resources (OARs) to the fullest capacity; it gives users access to newest information without restriction and they are made available, published, and disseminated quickly on the Internet. These resources include library catalogs (OPAC), Open Access Journals, Open Access magazines, Open Access databases, Open Access e-books, Open Access theses, website information, Open Access repositories, Open Access Journals Search Engine (OAJS), Directory of Open Access Books, library websites, portals, blogs, forums institutional repositories, and social networks for accessing information. Bala, Bansal, and Sharma (2018) in their view lists research reports, conference papers, research articles, audio/video lectures and e-newspapers as types of Open Access Resources (OARs). Users can access and use Open Access Resources (OARs) regardless of wherever they are located.

Academic libraries are taking the initiative in academic publishing efforts. Librarians play a key role in the development of these models for academic publishing and dissemination, Ricgard, Koufogiannakis Ryan (2009). Librarians should make efforts by creating an environment for open access and make awareness to the academic community to maximize the usage of Open Access Resources (OARs) available either in Institutional repositories or otherwise. Although, Librarians have shown their support for open access by signing open access initiatives and petitions. Librarians have provided support in research data and sharing. They have helped scholarly publishers to publish open access journals and books, and they have worked with educators to produce open educational resources ensuring the quality of digital content, its reuse, and sharing.

In the process of promoting and facilitating Open Access Resources (OARs), librarians may encounter some challenges and according to Veena (2016) lists the major problems of accessing these information resources as slow internet access, it is hard to obtain quality information to solve a problem, difficulty in finding relevant information, excess amount of content online, absence of technical skills and few computers with internet facilities. Ashraf and Mohammed (2017) reveal that users face barriers of lack of guidance and support, difficulty in locating the URL, lack of awareness, and inconsistency of availability of Open Access Resources (OARs). Others are: lack of financial resources to produce quality research; lack of knowledge in the use of computer and the internet; lack of information sources; lack of involvement in research; lack of encouragement from parent and professional bodies; lack of proper

infrastructure facilities; lack of congenial environment and lack of expertise in every organization.In spite of the challenges encountered while promoting Open Access Resources (OARs), librarians must be positive and they must always be eager to adopt new techniques to cope with the changes and ready to do the adjustment with the rapidly evolving conditions.

Problem of the Study

Open access resources are one that meets the conditions of "Open Access"- composed of free, online copies of peer-reviewed Journal articles and conference papers as well as technical reports, theses, and working papers. In most cases, there are no licensing restrictions on their use by readers. Open Access Resources helps researchers directly, as both authors and readers. Open Access resources enhance research productivity and accelerates the pace of discovery, it provides enormous benefits to researchers, teaching staff, students, authors, readers, in addition to global society including government, funding agencies, and community members. Despite the significant roles Open Access Resources (OARs) play in higher institution of learning, it is observed that librarians in Ekiti State universities are not advocating with open access resources. It may be as a result of in-availability of the resources in their universities or they are having challenges in promoting Open Access Resources (OARs) in their universities. Therefore, this study will investigate the perception and contribution of librarians to open access resources in tertiary institutions in Ekiti State.

Objectives of the Study

The general objective of this research work is to find out the perception and contribution of librarians to Open Access Resources (OARs) in tertiary institutions in EkitiState. Specifically, the objectives tend to:

i.   Investigate the roles of Librarians in facilitating Open Access Resources (OARs) in their respective tertiary Institution.

ii.   Find out the benefits Librarians derived in using Open Access Resources (OARs) in their respective tertiary Institution.

ii.   Determine the challenges encountered by librarians while promoting Open Access Resources (OARs) in their respective tertiary Institution.

Research Questions

The following research questions were raised to guide the study:

i.   What are the roles of librarians in facilitating Open Access Resources in Ekiti State tertiary institution?

ii.   What are the Benefits derived by librarians in using Open Access Resources in Ekiti State tertiary institution?

iii.   What are the challenges encountered by Librarianswhile promoting Open Access Resources in Ekiti state tertiary institution?

Literature Review

Open access resources are seen as possible solution to university libraries limited collection development by offering easy and more comprehensive free access to scholarly research works that can be downloaded, printed and bound for users use and accreditation purpose.Open Access" (OA) resources have dawned as boom to both the academic

users and the library managers (Joshi, Vatnal&Manjunath, 2012). Oyewusi and Oyeboade (2006), are of the opinion that faculty members, students and researchers have realised the important role the library plays in providing information for research as it acts as a means by which patrons can obtain the newest research-based and highly versed knowledge set in print or digital form. The print materials are accessed offline and electronic ones are accessed online using computer and telecommunication technologies. Iyoro (2004) posits that accessibility is a prerequisite for use of information and therefore Ugah (2008) is of the view that people are more likely to use information resources when they have access to them or are given access to the resources. In other words, free electronic resources are the most valuable communication channel that promotes research (Omotayo, 2010). Tanzanian health science librarians Lwoga&Quetier (2015) reveal that 75% of the librarians strongly support promoting OA issues on campus. Veena (2016) indicates that users can easily access articles and electronic resources online free of charge and that they use these resources because they are more informative, and timesaving. Similarly, Muthuvennila and Thanuskodi (2018) state that OARs are advantageous by being more informative, timesaving, providing larger potential evidence and being easy to access. Prince and Saravanan (2015) explained that users use OARs because they are freely available, easy to collect, have quality and are reliable, all the information is in one place, the resources are digital in format and are full text.Varadaiah, Veerabasavaiah and Padmamma (2013) have found that open access resource literature is digital form, free of charges and free of copyright. It offers excellent opportunities for publishing the information. Many tools and protocols have been developed to publish the information and established the hyperlink with the related information. In other words where research literature like peer-reviewed journal articles, conference papers, technical reports, working papers, thesis, and dissertation are available free online with no legal restriction on their user, and they are called as open access literature. These resources are very valuable particularly for the academic institution of colleges and universities. Since printed media is cost effective and not available in time. The individual institution can really on the web-based resources unto some extent to getting into data information. In a study conducted by Gbaje (2010) in Ahmadu Bello University, the findings revealed that sixteen representing 76% of the respondents who were editors–in-chief of the journals published in the university indicated that they were not aware of Open access initiatives. In addition, similar study conducted by Obuh and Bozimo (2012), showed that most of the respondents, who were LIS lecturer in southern Nigerian indicated some level of familiarity with of open access publications. Even though the result shows fairly high level of awareness on open access publications by lecturers of LIS in southern Nigeria, it is clear that, their awareness hinged mainly on the nature and types of open access and not on open access initiatives. Parmer, Dill and Charlene (2006) found that the American Academic librarians had positive attitudes towards Open Access principles and they were focused on advocating Open Access. Another study conducted in Nigerian private colleges librarian found out that, the academic librarians have positive perception towards Open Access information resources Utulu&Avemaria (2011). Similarly, Ugwuanyietl (2013) identified that the perceptions of librarians in colleges of education in south-east Nigeria towards Open Access to knowledge were positive. The researchers Ugwuanyi&Ugwaungy (2013) also discovered that most of the librarians did not understand the concept of Open Access. The current research completed by Tanzanian health science librarians Lwoga&Quetier (2015) reveals that 75% of the librarians strongly support promoting OA issues on campus.Librarians are expected to collaborate in the development of open access resources in the area of repository implementation and considered as champions of open access who are require to ensure that open access resources are discovered and accessed. In order to increase students' access to information, there is need for universities in Nigeria to join the OA trend to make OARs available to the students.

Research Design

The research design adopted for this research work is the descriptive design which is ex-post-facto. The reason is to describe the responses of the respondents on the perception and contribution of Librarians to Open Access Resources in Tertiary Institutions in Ekiti State Universities.

Research Instrument

The instrument used for this study was questionnaire. The questionnaire covers the perception and contribution of Librarians to Open Access Resources in Tertiary Institutions in Ekiti State universities.Three research instruments were used for the study. The instruments were tagged: The Roles of Librarians to Open Access Resources (RLOARs), Benefits derived from using Open Access Resources in Tertiary Institution (BOARs) and Challenges of Open Access Resources (COARs). 4 point likert type scale was used and scored as follows: (Strongly Agree (SA)- 4 points, Agree (A)- 3 points, Disagree (D) -2 points and Strongly Disagree (SD) – 1 point.

Administration of the Instruments

The researchers personally went to all the sampled Tertiary Institutions in Ekiti State to administer the instruments to the Librarians. The researchers supervised the completion after that the instruments were retrieved from the Librarians on the spot after completion. The researchers ensured that the Librarians took no script away.

Data Analysis

The questions raised were answered using descriptive statistics such as means and standard deviation.

Table 1.1: Means rating and standard deviation on the roles of librarians to open access resources

S/N	Items	SA	A	D	SD	$\overline{\times}$	Std Dev
1.	I make information free and accessible for library users	75	13	-	12	3.51	0.99
2.	I encourage university administrators to finance open access resources related projects	63	37	-	-	3.63	0.49
3.	I encourage library users to navigate to Open Access Resources available in our University	49	51	-	-	3.49	0.50
4	I encourage university administrators to upgrade open access resources facilities	50	50	-	-	3.50	0.50
5.	I make library users freer and more empowered	63	37	-	-	3.52	0.64
6.	I adapt quickly to the changing of Open Access resources landscape	51	49	-	-	3.51	0.50
Weighted average = 3.53							

From table 1.1, all the items from 1 – 6 had the means scores above the accepted cut off point of 2.50 and above with weighted average (3.53). This implies that librarians play significant roles in making information free and accessible for the library users; encourage library users to navigate to open access resources available in their university; encourage university administrators to upgrade open access resources facilities for the effective and prompt use of library users. This finding is collaborated with the findings of Prince and Saravanan (2015) that users use Open access resources because they are freely available, easy to collect, have quality and are reliable, all the information is in one place, the resources are digital in format and are full text.Varadaiah, Veerabasavaiah and Padmamma (2013) have found that open access resource literature is digital form, free of charges and free of copyright. It offers excellent opportunities for publishing the information.

Table 1.2: Means and standard deviation on the benefit derived from using open access resources

S/N	Item	SA	A	D	SD	$\overline{\times}$	Std Dev
7.	Open Access Resources increase	39	24	25	12	2.90	1.06

S/N	Item	SA	A	D	SD	$\overline{X}$	Std Dev
	exposure to research work						
8.	Open Access Resources enable researchers to publish without costs.	37	51	12	-	3.25	0.66
9.	Open Access Resources make researchers articles more visible, discoverable, retrievable, and useful.	49	39	12	-	3.37	0.69
10.	Open Access Resources provide free articles for teaching and learning.	37	39	24	-	3.13	0.77
11.	Open Access Resources help library users find the information they need.	51	25	12	12	3.15	1.05
12.	Open Access Resources expand universities mission to share knowledge.	25	63	12	-	3.13	0.5
	Weighted average = 3.16						

Table 1.2 indicates that all the items from 7 – 12 had the means scores above the accepted cut off point of 2.50 and above with weighted average of (3.16). This shows that there are so many benefits derived from using open access resources. Which implies that open access resources increase exposure to research work; enable researcher to publish without costs; provide free articles for teaching and learning; help library users find information they need and also expand universities mission to share knowledge.This findings is in line with Veena (2016) indicates that users can easily access articles and electronic resources online free of charge and that they use these resources because they are more informative, and timesaving. Similarly, Muthuvennila and Thanuskodi (2018) state that OARs are advantageous by being more informative, timesaving, providing larger potential evidence and being easy to access.

Table 1.3: Means and standard deviation on the challenges encountered when promoting open access resources

S/N	Item	SA	A	D	SD	$\overline{X}$	Std Dev
13.	Slow Internet connectivity	27	36	37	-	2.90	0.79
14.	Few/ no computers with Internet facilities	-	24	76	-	2.24	0.43
15.	Absence of technical skills on Open Access Resources	-	48	52	-	2.48	0.50
16.	Lack of guidance and support from university administrators	13	12	61	14	2.24	0.85
17.	Inconsistency of availability of Open Access Resources	25	12	49	14	2.48	1.02
18.	Lack of awareness of Open Access Resources	25	49	12	14	2.85	0.96
	Weighted average = 2.53						

Table 1.3 indicates that the items 13 and 18 had the means scores above the accepted cut off point of 2.50 and item 14, 15, 16 and 17 had the means scores below the accepted cut off point of 2.50. This implies that items 13 and 18 agreed that slow internet connectivity and lack of awareness of Open Access Resources are the major challenges encountered when promoting open access resources. While items 14, 15, 16 and 17 disagreed that few/ no computers with Internet facilities;Absence of technical skills onOpen Access Resources; Lack of guidance and support from university administrators and lack of awareness of Open Access Resources could not be considered as challenges encountered when promoting open access resources.This finding is collaborated with the findings of Veena (2016) lists the major problems of accessing these information resources as slow internet access, it is hard to

obtain quality information to solve a problem, difficulty in finding relevant information, excess amount of content online, absence of technical skills and few computers with internet facilities. The finding is against Ashraf and Mohammed (2017) which reveal that users face barriers of lack of guidance and support, difficulty in locating the URL, lack of awareness, and inconsistency of availability of Open Access Resources (OARs). This means that some of these challenges could not hinder librarians in promoting open access resources in their respective universities.

Conclusion

The study provides a panoramic view of the perception and contribution of librarians to open access resources in tertiary institutions in Ekiti State, Nigeria. The results of the findings indicated that library play important role in making open access resources available to the users. Also, open access resources provide so many benefits for the users such as making the researchers to publish free of charge and making researchers articles more visible, discoverable, retrievable, and useful. Based on the finding above, librarians encountered some challenge while promoting open access resources in their respective universities such as slow internet connectivity and lack of awareness of Open Access Resources.

Recommendations

The recommendations were made based on the above findings that:

➢ Librarian should play an effective role to make open access resources accessible and available for the users such as researchers, students, staff, authors, publishers, societies and nations.
➢ Librarians should liaise with the universities administrators to endure users get what they want in terms of exposure to research work and publish without costs.
➢ The challenges of open access resources such as slow internet connectivity can be solve by upgrading the router which will make available and accessible to the users.

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