Abstract

This study was carried out to assess the usage of e-journals amongst education lecturers at a public university in Malaysia. A total of 55 education lecturers participated in the study by completing a self-developed questionnaire to answer the following questions: (1) What are the challenges or constraints that they faced in using e-journals? and (2) What are their suggestions which would improve the use of e-journals for academic purposes? The major findings revealed a “neutral” perception amongst the education lecturers on the challenges that they faced in using e-journals; although they were challenges none were too detrimental towards the usage of e-journals. The education lecturers also responded by giving 5 aptly suggestions on how to improve the usage of e-journals; by providing more training for lecturers, provide training for students, providing better Internet facilities, encouraging more sharing of information on e-journals, as well as encouraging the use of e-journals in teaching and learning.

Keywords: challenges, education lecturers, e-journal, teaching and learning

1. INTRODUCTION

Electronic journals, also known as ejournals, e-journals, and electronic serials, are scholarly journals or intellectual magazines that can be accessed via electronic transmission. In practice, this means that they are usually published on the Web. It is therefore probable that in this modern age of technology one can presume almost everybody has access to e-journals due to the simple fact that the Internet in its truest nature is basically, free. One only needs to have access to any piece of technology which allows them the ability to surf the web such
as computers, personal digital assistant or commonly known as PDA, or even mobile phones which is considered to be an essential item for our every-day living nowadays.

Together with this presumption of the ease of accessibility of the Internet, one could also presume that it is not only logical that all academicians; lecturers and students, are able to easily use this advantage for their academic purposes but should also greatly integrate this technological advancement of e-journals into all of their scholarly works. In any practice of education, a piece of scholarly work is considered to be more exquisite in terms of its content, validity and professionalism if a good amount of journals related to its field is used as one of its data and referential tool. Furthermore even the effort of proclaiming the journals itself is highly deemed as one of the act of the true pursuit of knowledge and in some cases, being current.

2. THE USAGE OF E-JOURNALS
Journals therefore play a major part in any academicians’ scholarly work and are also one of the most preferential tools of the trade apart from books. A survey done by Kling (2003) indicated that 85% of scholars preferred e-journals over print and additionally other research shows how this preference is transformed into reading patterns (Tenopir & King, 2003). Kling (2003) indicated that scholars highly value e-journals access and most of the scholars preferred e-journals over print mostly for the following reasons: e-journals saves time, makes work easier, result in better quality research, and enable the scholar to find more materials. One of the main key point in Kling’s study (2003) is that the ease of accessibility and the wide range of e-journals on the Internet; literally being able to access a plethora range of journals from as many field as possible, highly promotes the usage of e-journals amongst scholars. Supported by this it is by all means safe to make the assumption that most scholars largely tend to use and accommodate e-journals in their scholarly works.

According to Isman (2012) educators are increasingly using technology in all aspects of the profession including work assignments. This trend can be enhanced by educating the educator about cultural and cognitive aspects of technology and technikos.

Ansari and Zuberi (2010) explore the use of electronic resources among academics at the University of Karachi, Pakistan. About one-third of 70 respondents use electronic resources for research. One-quarter to one third use it to prepare lectures and gain subject knowledge. The 90% of academic staff believe electronic resources are reliable, however majority of the respondents consider only those electronic resources are reliable which are produced by authentic organization or publisher (p.5).

Ollé and Borrego (2010) conduct a study of the impact of e-journals on scholarly information behavior of academics at Catalan universities. About 75% of the survey respondents stated that they consult more journals and read more articles than they did in the past. Regarding the benefits of electronic access the respondents stated that speediness and convenience of electronic access meant that they have more reading time and, more generally, more time for doing research (p.6-7).

A study by Upadhayay and Chakraborty (2008) shows that Science Direct and IEL online are the two most popular online journal packages about which researcher’s and faculty members of Banaras Hindu University are aware. All 64 respondents answered the question on satisfaction with existing online journal and databases. 43.75% respondents indicated average, 34.37% indicated good, 12.5% indicated excellent and 9.37% indicated fair about satisfaction with content, coverage and availability in the subject area (p.651-653).

Gulbahar (2008) investigated the ICT usage in higher education in Turkey. Results show that 95% academic staff used computers for communication, preparing examination ad course material (92%) and research
in Internet (90%). Majority of academic staff recognized computer as a supportive tool for instruction and other activities. Almost all of the respondents were willing to use technology in their courses effectively (p.35). Shuling (2007) conduct a study on the use of electronic resources in Shaanxi University of Science and Technology among the library users. It was found that that nearly 80% of respondents knew little about electronic resources. Nearly 50% the respondents use both printed and electronic resources.

Apart from these preferential, this study aims to uncover other aspects of characteristics which may or may not factor in the usage of e-journals. Certain preferences which would directly be in question relates to the possible constraints faced during the search and usage of e-journals online which would determine if any constraints might exists, and if it does would it discourage the usage of e-journals amongst students. Although it is suggested and proved that lecturers and scholars are avid users of e-journals, a study needs to be done to discover and assess their preferential characteristics in an e-journal and whether they are advocating or influencing their students to purposely accommodate and integrate e-journals in their studies. Due to mainstream use of e-journals by scholars, there is definitely a pre-emptive assumption that students should by all means incorporate the same tool in their works as not only is e-journals easily accessible but it is also held in high regards in the education world. As to how far scholars advocate the use of e-journals on their students, a study to determine this current situation needs to be carried out especially amongst lecturers and students at an institution of higher learning in Malaysia.

3. OBJECTIVES
The objectives of this study are to look at the challenges or constraints faced by the academic members or lecturers at the Faculty of Education at a public university when using e-journals and to identify their suggestions which would improve the use of e-journals for academic purposes. In order to achieve these research objectives these following research questions were developed for this study:

- What are the challenges or constraints that they faced in using e-journals?
- What are their suggestions which would improve the use of e-journals for academic purposes?

This study involves respondents who are academic members or lecturers from the Faculty of Education, Universiti Teknologi Mara (UiTM), which is one of the largest public universities in Malaysia. The selected participants in this study will be assessed by gauging their usage and preference of using e-journals for academic purposes and their usage of e-journals in their instruction. Through assessing the compiled data, it would represent the best model of influential power as by principle; it is the medium with the highest probability in spreading the influence as their main profession and perfection is in molding and developing future teachers.

4. METHODS
A mixed method combining both quantitative and qualitative research design was employed in order to get both quantitative and qualitative data. According to Creswell (2005), mixed methods research is a good research design as it allows the researcher to assess both outcomes of the study (quantitative) as well as the process (qualitative). The combination of research design provides a rich and comprehensive picture of any social phenomena. There are three types of mixed method research designs presented by Creswell (2005) which are the triangulation design, explanatory design and exploratory design. For the purpose of this study, the exploratory design was used as it permitted the researcher to simultaneously collect both quantitative and qualitative data, merge the data compiled and use the results to understand a research problem. A survey method using a questionnaire specially designed for this study was utilized to gather both quantitative and qualitative data.

The research population will consist of 70 lecturers from the Faculty of Education, UiTM, comprising of lecturers, senior lecturers, associate professors and professors. A minimum of 50 samples represents more than
70% of the total academic members of the faculty thus is adequate to provide a valid and reliable research data for the study. The total sample of this study is 55 lecturers from the faculty. The former will be implemented in the form of questionnaires which would assist in answering the study’s two research questions. The questionnaires will attempt to identify what are the challenges or constraints of e-journals which factors in its usage amongst the respondents. This section contains eight (8) items which are constructed according to a 5 point Likert-scale from 1-Strongly Disagree to 5-Strongly Agree. Each question directly assesses the level of specific challenges or constraints of e-journals amongst the respondents for academic purposes. The questionnaire will ask for suggestion by the respondents which could improve the usage of e-journals amongst education lecturers.

5. RESEARCH FINDINGS AND DISCUSSIONS

5.1 The challenges on using e-journals

Table 1 presents the respondents’ perception on the challenges or constraints of e-journals. Of the 8 items that were listed, 7 were rated as “Neutral” and one “Disagree”. The data is presented in order of agreement as follows: were listed; (i) Internet connection issue (mean=3.34), (ii) limited facilities (mean=3.23), (iii) monetary issues (mean=3.20), (iv) technical difficulties (mean=3.12), (v) validity of e-journals (mean=2.90), (vi) too many to choose from (mean=2.72), (vii) lack of exposure (mean=2.69) and (viii) time consuming (mean=2.47). Each item was given a 5-point value ranging from 1 “Strongly disagree” to 5 “Strongly agree”.

A mean of 3.34 or “Neutral” was achieved on respondents perception that Internet connection issues is one of the challenges of e-journals; which 3 (5.5%) respondents rated “strongly disagree” and 13 (23.6%) respondents rated “disagree”. 8 (14.4%) respondents rated “neutral”. However 24 (43.6%) respondents rated “agree” and 7 (12.7%) respondents rated “strongly agree”; with a standard deviation of 1.14.

A mean of 3.23 or “Neutral” was also achieved on respondents perception that limited facilities is one of the challenges of e-journals; while 2 (3.6%) respondents rated “strongly disagree” and 16 (29.1%) respondents rated “disagree”. 9 (16.4%) respondents rated “neutral”. 23 (41.8%) respondents rated “agree” and 5 (9.1%) respondents rated “strongly agree”; with a standard deviation of 1.08.

A mean of 3.20 or “Neutral” was achieved on respondents perception that monetary issues is one of the challenges of e-journals; with another 2 (3.6%) respondents rated “strongly disagree” and 15 (27.3%) respondents rated “disagree”. 9 (16.4%) respondents rated “neutral”. 23 (41.8%) respondents rated “agree” and 4 (7.3%) respondents rated “strongly agree”; with a standard deviation of 1.04.

A mean of 3.12 or “Neutral” was achieved on respondents perception that technical difficulties is one of the challenges of e-journals; with 3 (5.5%) respondents rated “strongly disagree” and 15 (27.3%) respondents rated “disagree”. 11 (20.0%) respondents rated “neutral”. 24 (43.6%) respondents rated “agree” and 2 (3.6%) respondents rated “strongly agree”; with a standard deviation of 1.03.

A mean of 2.90 or “Neutral” was also achieved on respondents perception that the validity of e-journals is one of the challenges of e-journals; with 5 (9.1%) respondents rated “strongly disagree” and 20 (36.4%) respondents rated “disagree”. 8 (14.5%) respondents rated “neutral”. On the other hand, 19 (34.5%) respondents rated “agree” and 3 (5.5%) respondents rated “strongly agree”; with a standard deviation of 1.14.

A mean of 2.72 or “Neutral” was also achieved on respondents perception that there is too many e-journals to choose from is one of the challenges of e-journals; with 7 (12.7%) respondents rated “strongly disagree” and 17 (30.9%) respondents rated “disagree”. 17 (30.9%) respondents rated “neutral”. However, 12 (21.8%) respondents rated “agree” and 2 (3.6%) respondents rated “strongly agree”; with a standard deviation of 1.06.
Table 1. Challenges of E-journals

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Perception on the challenges with E-journals</th>
<th>Strongly Disagree</th>
<th>Disagree</th>
<th>Neutral</th>
<th>Agree</th>
<th>Strongly Agree</th>
<th>Mean</th>
<th>Std. Dev.</th>
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<tr>
<td>Internet connection issue</td>
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<td>13</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>24</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>3.3455</td>
<td>1.14209</td>
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<td>5.5%</td>
<td>23.6%</td>
<td>14.4%</td>
<td>43.6%</td>
<td>12.7%</td>
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<tr>
<td>Limited facilities</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>16</td>
<td>9</td>
<td>23</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>3.2364</td>
<td>1.08804</td>
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<td></td>
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<td>29.1%</td>
<td>16.4%</td>
<td>41.8%</td>
<td>9.1%</td>
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<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>Monetary issue</td>
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<td>15</td>
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<td>27.3%</td>
<td>21.8%</td>
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<tr>
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<td>15</td>
<td>11</td>
<td>24</td>
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<tr>
<td>Validity of electronic journals</td>
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<td>8</td>
<td>19</td>
<td>3</td>
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<td>14.5%</td>
<td>34.5%</td>
<td>5.5%</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>Too many to choose from</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>17</td>
<td>17</td>
<td>12</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>2.7273</td>
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<td></td>
<td>12.7%</td>
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<td>30.9%</td>
<td>21.8%</td>
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<tr>
<td>Lack of exposure</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>21</td>
<td>12</td>
<td>16</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>2.6909</td>
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<td>38.2%</td>
<td>21.8%</td>
<td>29.1%</td>
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<tr>
<td>Time consuming</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>27</td>
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<td>6</td>
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<td>25.5%</td>
<td>10.9%</td>
<td>3.6%</td>
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</table>

1.00 – 1.49 = Strongly Disagree  
2.50 – 3.49 = Neutral  
1.50 – 2.49 = Disagree  
3.50 – 4.49 = Agree  
4.50 – 5.00 = Strongly Agree

A mean of 3.20 or “Neutral” was achieved on respondents perception that lack of exposure towards e-journals is one of the challenges of e-journals; while 6 (10.9%) respondents rated “strongly disagree” and 21 (38.2%) respondents rated “disagree”. 12 (21.8%) respondents rated “neutral”. 16 (29.1%) respondents rated “agree”; with a standard deviation of 1.016.

All the data suggests that respondents were neutral or unsure with the statements as some who disagreed with the statements while there were also some who agreed with the statements. Only one items was rated as “Disagree” with a mean of 2.47 “Disagree” was achieved on respondents perception that e-journals is time consuming is one of the challenges of e-journals. 6 (10.9%) respondents rated “strongly disagree” and 27 (49.1%) respondents rated “disagree”. 14 (25.5%) respondents rated “neutral”. 6 (10.9%) respondents rated “agree” and 2 (3.6%) respondents rated “strongly agree”; with a standard deviation of 0.95. This data suggests that overall, they disagree that using e-journals is time consuming.

Analysis on open-ended question shows that perception on other challenges of using e-journals is the limited access to quality articles from cited or high impact journals as many are not readily available electronically since they are only available to subscribers. As such, in certain cases, lecturers only get access to abstract and titles only and not the full paper or article.
5.2. Suggestions on the use of e-journal for academic purposes

The following suggestions and recommendations based on the findings of the study are intended to assist the Faculty to increase the usage of e-journals amongst education lecturers for academic purposes and to incorporate e-journals in teaching and learning.

Training for Lecturers

The study indicated a high percentage of lecturers who preferred to use e-journals for academic purposes and in their teaching sessions. Respondents suggested training and retraining to be organized by the faculty on how to carry out better and efficient online searches while some suggested the faculty to organize workshops, seminars or talks on on-line search. Based on the feedback, it is recommended that the faculty conduct occasional training sessions through formal training, workshops, seminars or talks on effective online searches in order to increase the usage of e-journals amongst education lecturers.

Training for Students

Respondents also indicated that they encouraged students to use e-journals and some preferred their students to use e-journals in terms of their academic studies. Some respondents suggested that similar training be given to students on conducting online searches. Based on the data and to further encourage students to use e-journals for their academic studies, similar training, workshop, seminars or talks should also be organized for the students.

Better Internet Facilities

In relation to their perception on the challenges with regards to e-journals, four of the top challenges that respondents indicated were Internet connection issues, limited facilities, monetary issues, and technical difficulties. Respondents also indicated on the need to improve Internet connection and Internet facilities. Based on the responses, it is recommended that the Internet and related facilities be improved as an effort to increase the usage of e-journals amongst education lecturers.

Sharing of Information on E-Journals

Respondents also recommended that the faculty establish a sharing of information through bulletin, blogs or newsletter on current and related e-journals which are available. Based on these responses, it is recommended that the Faculty of Education, UiTM establish a printed bulletin or online information on current e-journals available in order to keep lecturers updated.

Encourage the Usage of E-Journals in Teaching and Learning

Responses on open-ended items indicated lecturers use e-journals in their teaching sessions and also encourages students to use e-journals for their academic studies. It is recommended that the faculty encourage more lecturers to incorporate e-journals in their teaching sessions as well as encourage students to do assignments involving the use of e-journals for their academic studies.

6. CONCLUSION

This study examined the challenges that the educations lecturers faced in using e-journals for academic purposes. The findings revealed a “neutral” perception amongst the education lecturers on the challenges that they faced in using e-journals. However, they gave some suggestions in improving the use of e-journals in teaching and learning. With more exposure, training and encouragement, the usage of e-journals amongst education lecturers for preparation for teaching may increase in the future.
REFERENCES