

Types of Library and Information Science Publications Available in Selected Academic Libraries in Nigeria

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Abstract

The study was carried out to ascertain the types of print Library and Information Science publications, published between 2000-2012, that are available in academic libraries in South East Nigeria. The study had one objective, one research question and one null hypothesis. The survey research method was adopted for the study, and a population of 400 librarians from the delimited academic libraries was used. Frequency and percentage was used to answer the Research Question, while the null hypothesis was tested using PPMC analytical statistics, at 0.05 alpha level of significance. Data analysis yielded a low extent of types of LIS publications available in the selected libraries.

Key words: Types, Publications, Availability

Introduction

Publications are the outlets through which scholars contribute their knowledge to the existing body of knowledge. There is a symbiotic relationship between research and publications, to the effect that research is not an end in itself, but rather a means to an end. In this vein, the transmission of research findings through publications is the only means of attaining the ultimate goal of research which is to extend the frontiers of knowledge.

In essence, research findings must necessarily be recorded and packaged in easily understood, accessible and usable format to facilitate its transmission, application, advancement and conservation.

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Adelekan,(2005) summarized publishing as “to make public in form of newspapers, books or electronic media ... a chain from authors to editors to printers, booksellers and the end users, the totality of the input for developing ideas of authors to make them useful for the public. Print research publications by librarians take several forms, chief among which are journals, books, conference papers and proceedings, and secondary publications such as catalogues, indexes, bibliographies and reviews. The objective of the study is to determine the extent to which the various types of print publications output used by librarians between 2000 - 2012, are available in the selected academic libraries.

Objective

To determine the types of the LIS information materials, published between 2000-2012, that are available in the selected academic libraries.

Research Question

What types of LIS print publications, published between 2000-2012, are available in the selected academic libraries?

Hypothesis

H₀₁. There is no significant relationship between the types of the LIS publications and the extent of their availability in the selected academic libraries.

Review of Related Literature

Aina (2004) observed that research and publication are fundamental to the growth and development of any discipline and especially critical to librarianship as a fast growing discipline. The findings of such research, according to Ifidon, (1999) naturally find their outlets in publications of various types including print; books, journals, research reports, indexes, proceedings and non-print; audio-visual, microform, CD-Rom, patents. Many scholars of the discipline agree that librarians have become more motivated to publish. Powell, Barker and Mika as cited by Ogbomo, (2010) assert that librarians are critical consumers of researches in other fields, especially given their academic status.

In the same paper earlier cited, Ogbomo (2010), writing on the Publications Output of Librarians in Tertiary Institutions, further cites holds that publications promote advancement and recognition for librarians and that librarians who conduct research have a more effective relationship with other faculty.

In addition to the demands of academic status, librarians are also motivated to publish for other reasons which include eagerness to publish, presence of enabling environment and self perception of individual librarians with respect to their role, more so with the availability of other publications which contain the needed language as part of motivation to publish. Mabawonku (2005) held that librarians are especially motivated to publish in foreign journals to enhance their visibility and satisfy institutional requirements for advancement.

Ochai in Ogbomo (2010) posited that meeting the demands for publication and academic status has many benefits for librarians which further motivate them to publish. Some of these benefits include; study leave with pay, separate academic salary scale, extended retirement age, attendance of conferences, research grants and sabbatical leave. Therefore academic status both compels and motivates increased publication for librarians.

Ogbomo (2010) lists newsletters, journals, bulletins, fact sheets, reports, summaries, guides, video recordings, conference proceedings, books, bibliometric and technical reports as some of the publications outlets available for librarians' research output. Of the lot, journals appear to be the most preferred, having been sub-divided into 3 sub-categories namely; scholarly journals, popular magazines and trade publications. Ocholla (2005) studied the Management of LIS journals and concluded that the quantity of LIS journals is increasing whether in traditional print only, print and web-based or web-based only formats. He highlights three formats in which scientific journals are published and concludes that print and web-based LIS journals are predominant.

The need for current information and timely availability of latest research findings in research and academics is obvious. Journals carry the latest research findings. They are also the preferred publication output format as well as the most consulted.

Nevertheless, text books and monographs also carry extensive, detailed and elaborate information and remain an effective means to retrieve vast amounts of information. They may not be as frequently, regularly or speedily published/updated as journals but they are very useful for in depth study especially of a historical / retrospective nature, as such their currency is relative to the nature of the enquiry. Okafor (2011) lists publications outlets for librarians to include journals, technical reports, books and chapters in books.

In the same study which investigates the extent of research output and the preferred publications outlets, it was reported that Nigerian librarians patronized local journals more than international journals. Aguolu and Aguolu (2002) add reference materials, patents and manuals to the list of scholarly publications but stress that journals are the most regular and sought after. The reason is that they serve as the platform for the speedy and timely dissemination of knowledge.

This does not suggest that other forms of scholarly publications are less important or useful, however, being published at closer intervals, carry more current information and are cheaper and faster to produce including review thereby ensuring the continuous documentation of research. The scholarly communication system which has developed around the referred journal has come to occupy a place of central importance in the world of academics. In her findings on Quality Assurance of LIS Journals published in Nigeria, Mabawonku (2005) agrees that academics in Nigeria and elsewhere disseminate their research findings and advance new ideas in books, conference papers, reports and journals, but the journal is perceived as the most prestigious of the various outlets.

Although the print format publications are the focus of this study, yet mention must be made of the escalating indices of e-publications which according to Feather (2005) is derived from the traditional print model and works in essentially the same way. Dale, Beard, and Holland (2010) also agree that there is no significant field of research that is not already rich in digital data and some are even more so, being data intensive. Moahi (2005) adds that many publishers now tend to publish journals in both the print and electronic environments while those who had the print format now provide access electronically.

There exists a school of thought which suggests that the world is moving rapidly from print to digital media. According to Godia (2007), "the dearth of the book has been predicted with every new medium of communication or entertainment technology ... from television to the internet", but the book seems to be thriving side by side with these newer technologies. Production of digital data is certainly on the increase, but it does not seem to be accompanied by a diminution in printed output.

The e-journal, although offering instantaneous access, is effective only if users have network access and can afford the cost where the data base is available. As Feather (1998) puts it, technology has improved the potential for access although access is restricted by technical skills, technological infrastructure and financial capacity. Dale, Beard and Holland (2010) quote (Mann, 2001) who claimed that

"although libraries must continue to provide electronic resources. The distinctive strength of research libraries lies mainly in their ability to provide free access to preserve able book collections that facilitate the understanding of lengthy textual works that cannot be tapped into from anywhere at any time, by anyone".

Granted that we live in an ever changing world where the format in which information is presented continues to change at a rapid pace, information providers must remain vigilant to the pros and cons of these formats. One of the most quoted reasons for the use of digital initiatives to information literacy skill and students' learning skills is the comfort level of present generation with technology.

The report from a study by the Centre for Information Behaviour and the Evaluation of Research (CIBER) at the University College, London as recorded by (Dale, Beard and Holland, 2010) outlined among others that;

- the information literacy of young people has not improved with widening access to technology, in fact, their apparent freedom with the computer disguises some worrying problems
- internet research shows that the speed that young people's web searching means that little time is spent evaluating information, either for relevance, accuracy or authority.

A study by (Mgobozi and Ocholla, 2002) as cited in Ocholla, (2005) compared the use of electronic journals for the dissemination of scholarly journals by the Universities of Natal and Zululand. The study concludes that the use of e-journals was significantly lower than that of print journals although the use of e-journals has strong impact on the academic work of students and faculty.

ICT offers vast opportunities and new potentials for publishing, including desktop publishing and printing in various formats. Against this background, the academic libraries stand to benefit as the ultimate collection point of these publications.

Data Analysis

Research Question

What types of the LIS publications are available in the selected academic libraries?

Table 1: Types of LIS publications available in selected libraries

S/N	Type of publication	Response	f	%
1.	Text books	High Extent	62	15.90
2.	Reference Materials	High Extent	58	14.87
3.	Secondary Publications	Low Extent	205	52.56
4.	Journals/ proceedings	Very Low Extent	65	16.67
		Total	390	100

N=390

The result presented in Table 1 shows the extent of types of LIS publications available in the selected libraries. The LIS publications de limited are those published within the ten year study period of 2000-2012. The data indicates that a frequency of 205 or 52% rate the extent of availability of secondary publications as low, whereas, a frequency of 65 or 16.67% rate the extent of availability for journals as very low. On the other hand, both text books and reference materials were rated high extent of availability by a frequency by 62 or 15.90% of the respondents for text books, and frequency of 58, or 14.87 % for reference materials.

Therefore, total frequency and percentage for Low Extent of Types of LIS publications available in the selected libraries is 270 (69.23%) while total frequency and percentage for High Extent of Types LIS publications rating is 120 (30.77%). This means that the extent of types of LIS publications available in the selected libraries is low.

Table 2: PPMC analysis of data on the significance of the relationship between types's of LIS publications and the extent of their availability in the selected academic libraries.

Variable	Σ	Σ^2	Σxy	r
Types of LIS Pub	8916	216505	2885	.1699*
Extent of Availability	115	213		

N=390, *significant P<.05, df =388, r_{cri} =0.88

The results presented in Table 2 showed that the computed r of .1699 is greater than the critical r of .088 at df of 388 and .05 level of significance. From this result, the null hypothesis was rejected. This means that there is a significant relationship between the types of LIS publications and the extent of their availability in the selected academic libraries. However since, the computed r value of .1699 was close to 0, the relationship is said to be weak. Therefore given that the extent of types of LIS publications as derived from the research question is low, it follows that the low extent of types of LIS publications has significant relationship with the low extent of availability.

Discussion of findings

The results showed a low rating of extent of types of LIS publications available in the selected libraries with a total of 270 frequency and (69.29%). The analysis of data for the hypotheses yielded a computed r of .1699 which was greater than the critical r of .088 and as a result, the hypotheses, which stated that there is no significant relationship between the extent of types of LIS publications and their availability in the selected libraries was rejected. Therefore, the relationship is significant, but weak.

This finding is supported by those of Ogbomo (2011) and Okafor (2011) which list journals, textbooks, conference proceedings and other secondary publications as the preferred publications outlets for librarians in Nigeria. It also corroborates Okezie (2015), which reported a low extent of availability of LIS publications by librarians in South East Nigeria, over a ten year study period (2002 - 2012) in academic libraries in South East Nigeria. Therefore, the findings of this study reveals that neither journals, conference papers nor other secondary publications used by librarians as publications outlets between 2002-2012 have a high extent of availability in the selected academic libraries.

Conclusion

There is a possibility that the low extent of availability of the various types of print LIS publications in the selected libraries could be as a result of the rising incidence of e-publications in the field of LIS. However, it is imperative that libraries should embrace and maintain the acquisition of print publications of their librarians in order to enhance their availability and visibility. This will also ensure a robust bibliographic base because it has become evident that e- publications do not replace or eradicate the printed versions. Rather both complement and enhance one another. Dhiman and Rani (2005) succinctly capture this argument by positing that

“ it is evident that the book occupies and will continue to do so, the prime place in the hall of culture and development, and this is in spite of the communications revolution, including the electronic hegemony.... Perhaps, it is even because of this that the book has strengthened its rightful place and assured its permanence in the larger scheme of things. Both the modern library and librarians have truly moved in tandem - from the card index age to the electronic multi-media era ... , making the library an active partner with the giant ICT paraphernalia. Together, they constitute the center of knowledge and information, research and learning, that is global in perspectives and cosmic in outreach.”

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