Electronic Resources as a Panacea for Research Output of Academic Staff: A Case Study of Nigerian University

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Abstract

This paper examines electronic resources as a means of improving research output of academic staff in Nigerian university. Survey method was adopted in conducting the research. Structured questionnaire were employed to obtain data from 105 respondents who returned questionnaire selected for the study. The data obtained were analyzed using simple percentages. Findings of the study revealed that majority of academic staff were able to access e-resources at their offices/Laboratory, Off campus and University library, academic staff frequently make use of e-resources for their research interest and also agreed that e-resources contributed to their research output. Part of the recommendations includes Nigerian university through their libraries should subscribe for more e-resources and databases that covers all courses ran by the university and ensure constant electricity supply in the campus.

Keywords: E-resources, Academic staff, Research output, Nigerian university

Introduction

Electronic resources are used by academic staff for teaching, research, forming note and assignment. Electronic resources have become major tools in carry out research in the universities by academic staff. Academic staff access electronic resources right in their university offices/ Laboratory or in the university libraries and off campus, this is made possible through university libraries who had subscribed to many of these electronic resources and databases which are being access free of charge. Some of these electronic resources and databases are available in various forms such like e-books, online journals, e-data archives, Health International Network Access to Research Initiatives (HINARI), Access to Global Online Research in Agriculture (AGORA), Joint System to Order Resources (JSTOR), The Essential Electronic Agriculture Library (TEEAL) and Ebscohost among others. This had enabled academic staff to improve on their research output in Nigerian university.

Shelton (2011) stated that the use of electronic resources by academic staff in the UK universities has shown that 87% of the respondents are using e-resources in their academic and research activities. Deng (2010) has shown that electronic resources have been effectively integrated into learning, teaching and research in Australian universities. This has motivated him to explore the patterns and trends of utilizing electronic resources among all categories of staff and students in higher education in Australia. Parameshwar and Pati (2009) observed that the Internet is redefining how research is been conducted in the universities.

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Their survey exploring the extent of use of the electronic resources by faculty and research scholars at Gulbarga University, India indicated that most respondents were accessing and using electronic resources frequently in research.

Egberongbe (2011) stated that the emergence of electronic resources has tremendously affected how information is been accessed and used by academic staff in Nigerian University. In her study, she surveyed the use of electronic resources by academic staff at the University of Lagos, Nigeria. It was found that over 90% of the respondents accessed and used electronic resources in carryout research in their various disciplines.

Literature Review

Isah (2010) submitted that the emergence of electronic resources has cut the barrier to valuable information resources which until now were difficult to access especially by scholars in the developing nations of the world. Electronic resources are invaluable research tools which complement print based resources in any traditional library; they provide access to information that might be restricted to the user because of geographical location or finances (Sabouri, Shamsaii, Sinaki and Aboueye 2010).

Manda (2005) examined the extent of access and use of electronic resources by researchers by ten academic staff in Tanzania. The findings of the study revealed that majority of the respondents were using electronic resources in their research. Madhusuudhn (2010) examined the use of electronic resources by research scholars of Kuruksetra University in India. It was found that electronic resources have become a major part of the information needs of research scholars at Kurukshetra University.

In a study conducted by Ajala, Adegun, Adetunji and Oyewunmi (2010) on the use of electronic resources by academic staff in Ladoke Akintola University of Technology Ogbomoso, Nigeria, found that a vast majority of respondents were using electronic resources in their research. Ellis and Oldman (2005) explored the extent to which academic in the UK universities are accessing information as a result of the emerging electronic resources, particularly the Internet resources. The basic aim of the study was to determine the extent of accessibility and utilization of the Internet resources in research in the Humanities. It was found that most of the respondents were accessing and using electronic resources in their research.

Heterick (2002) opined that the proliferation of electronic resources has significantly affected access and use of information by academic staff in the U.S. universities, as these electronic resources are invaluable tools for research. Thus, he conducted a study that explored how academic in the U.S. are accessing and using electronic resources in research. It was found that over 60 percent of the respondents were using electronic resources, since they believe that a variety of electronic resources is invaluable in their research.

Al-Ansari (2006) studied the use of Internet by academic staff in Kuwait University, the Interest resources that are used and the purpose for use. He postulated that, the Internet has changed the research process in the universities, but, that the intensity of Internet use varies from individual to individual, institution to institution and from country to country. Sharma (2009) perceived that availability of electronic resources is now common in university libraries in India; and carried out a survey to find out the preferences and frequency of use of online resources among research scholars at the Guru Gobind Singh Indraprastha University. It was found that the use of electronic journals was relatively high among the researchers, with high frequency of use. This shows an increasing trend towards access and use of relevant electronic resources.

Khan and Dominic (2012) the use of the Internet is vital in research in every university. They conducted a survey to assess the extent of Internet use by academic staff in College of Moradabad, India. The findings of the study revealed increasing use of the Internet in research by the respondents. Sujatha and Murthy (2010) studied the use of electronic information resources by researchers at the Fisheries Sciences Institutions of South India. The results showed that there has been significant use of electronic resources mainly for research purposes among the respondents. Haridasan and Khan (2009 stated that the use of electronic resources by academic staff in social sciences in National Science Documentation Centre (NASSDOC), India. The results showed that most respondents accessed and used available electronic resources at the centre for research purposes.

Jankowska (2004) studied how academics in the University of Idaho, Moscow, Russia are using electronic resources in conducting research. The Findings of the study revealed that all the respondents in the survey were using electronic resources to support their research.

In another study in Botswana by Ojedokun and Owolabi (2003) studied the extent of use of electronic resources for teaching and research activities by academic staff at the University of Botswana. The results showed that most respondents were using electronic resources.

Research Questions

       1. Academic staff able to access electronic resources?
       2. What purpose are academic staff using electronic resources?
       3. How frequent are academic staff using electronic resources?
       4. Do electronic resources contributing to their research output?

Methodology

A survey approach was used for this study. A questionnaire was constructed to gather information on use of electronic resources by academic staff for research purposes. The questionnaire sought for the respondents' on access point, frequency of use, purpose of usage and whether electronic resources contributing to their research output. Sample random technique was used to select 120 academic staff from Federal University of Agriculture, Abeokuta and University of Ibadan, Ibadan. The researchers personally administered the questionnaire to the respondents. Out of 120 copies of the questionnaire administered, 105 were returned completed filled representing 87.5%. These were used for data analysis on the study.

Data Presentation and Interpretation

This presents the result of the analysis in line with the objective of this study in order to make a valid conclusion based on the stated problem for the study.

Table 1: Access Point

	Daily	Weekly	Monthly	Never	Total (%)
University Library	25(23.8)	13(12.4)	44(41.9)	23(21.9)	105 (100)
Office/Laboratory	71(67.6)	10(9.5)	4(3.8)	20(19.0)	105 (100)
Off Campus	36(34.2)	29(27.6)	14(13.3)	26(24.8)	105 (100)

Table 1 presents' responds on the access point of the respondents. Majority of the respondents 82(78.1%) accessed e-resources daily, weekly and monthly from University Library while 23(21.9) did not. 85(80.9%) accessed e-resources daily, weekly and monthly from Office/Laboratory respectively while 20(19.0) did not. 79(75.1) accessed e-resources daily, weekly and monthly from Off campus while 26(24.8) did not. This shows that majority of academic staff were able to accessed e-resources from various access point highlighted by the researchers.

Table 2: Frequency of Usage

	Daily	Weekly	Monthly	Never	Occasionally	Total (%)
Agora	41(39.0)	26(24.8)	28(26.7)	4(3.8)	6(5.7)	105(100)
E-book	27(25.7)	39(37.1)	12(11.4)	27(25.7)	-	105(100)
Ebscohost	73(69.5)	17(16.2)	11(10.5)	4(3.8)	-	105(100)
E-journal	61(58.1)	33(31.4)	-	11(10.5)	-	105(100)
Internet	91(86.7)	14(13.3)	-	-	-	105(100)
Jstor	68(64.8)	24(22.9)	6(5.7)	7(6.7)	-	105(100)
Teeal	70(66.7)	25(23.8)	6(5.7)	4(3.8)	-	105(100)

Table 2 presents' responds on frequency of usage, 95(92.5%) and 101(97.2%) respondents accessed Agora and Ebscohost daily, weekly and monthly respectively while 94(89.5%) and 105(100.0%) respondents accessed E-journal and Internet daily, weekly and month respectively. 92(87.7%) and 95(90.5%) respondents accessed Jstor and Teeal e-resources daily, weekly and monthly respectively. This shows that majority of academic staff were able to use these highlighted e-resources frequently.

Table 3: Purpose of Usage

Assignment	47(44.8)
Note	64(61.8)
Research	105(100)
Teaching	91(86.7)

Table 3 presents' responds on purpose of usage, all of the respondents use e-resources for Research purpose 105(100%), followed by Teaching 91(86.7%), Note 64(61.8%) and Assignment 47(44.8%). This shows that all of the respondents were using e-resources for the purpose of research.

Table 4: Improved Research Output

Agree	18(17.1)
Strongly Agree	87(82.9)
Disagree	-
Strongly Disagree	-

Table 4 presents' responds on improved research output, 18(17.1%) and 87(82.9%) respondents agree and strongly agree that e-resources actually improved their research output. This shows that all respondents 105(100%) agreed that e-resources plays a vital role in the output of their research.

Discussion of the Findings

1. The study showed that majority of academic staffs were able to access e-resources at their offices/Laboratory, Off campus and University library. The implication of these findings is that academic staffs were able to use e-resources for their research purposes.
2. The study also revealed that majority of academic staff frequently makes use of e-resources for their research purpose. Majority of the respondents indicated that they make use of e-resources daily, weekly and monthly. This indirectly contributed to the research output of academic staff.
3. The findings revealed that majority of respondents uses e-resources for research purpose, followed by teaching, note forming and assignment.
4. The study finally, showed that all respondents agreed that e-resources contributed to their research output, since they have been using e-resources their research output has increased tremendously.

Conclusion and Recommendations

E-resources are sources of information where materials are access by individuals for their research interests, Academic staff has taking the benefit to improve their research output by accessing information and materials on the internet and other databases for their research interest. This is invaluable tools for research interests and this has led to a major breakthrough in research in Nigerian University. Based on these findings, the following recommendations are therefore advanced:

1. Nigerian university through their libraries should subscribe for more e- resources and databases that cover all courses ran by the university
2. The university administration should ensure constant electricity supply in the campus is stable, so that these e-resources can be accessed.
3. Academic staff can be encouraged to use e-resources by organizing training and workshop on how these e-resources that can access and use for their research interests.
4. University libraries should also inform the university community whenever they acquire new databases and make electronic library conductive for its users.

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