

Full Length Research

Use of Electronic Resources by the Different Categories of Staff in Polytechnic Libraries in Niger-Delta Region of Nigeria

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Accepted 5 November 2016

This study surveyed the use of electronic resources by the different categories of staff in polytechnic libraries in Niger-Delta region of Nigeria. The study employed a descriptive survey method and questionnaire was the instrument used for data collection. Purposive sampling technique was employed to select a focus group of one hundred and two (102) library staff used in this study. It was revealed from the study that social media tools and e-newspaper/magazine are the most frequently used types of e-resources by the three categories of library staff. The study revealed that librarians and Para-professionals used Wikipedia and e-theses/project/dissertation frequently than the non-professionals. It was discovered from the study that for social networking activities, for information search and for academic pursuit/study are the major reasons the three categories of library staff used e-resources. Librarians and Para-professionals used e-resources for research/publishing articles and for carrying out their assignment. The study revealed that poor network/bandwidth, frequent power outage, lack of time/work overload and lack of internet connectivity in the library are the major problems militating against the three categories of library staff in their use of e-resources. The study recommended that the polytechnic management and library administrators should deem it necessary to always organize training and retraining programmes for non-professionals staff in the library in order to expose them to technological advancement and usage. The polytechnic and library management should ensure that alternative power source is provided for to reduce the effect of incessant power failure.

Key words: Use of electronic resources, library staff, categories of library staff, polytechnic libraries, Niger-Delta region, Nigeria

Cite This Article As: Oni O, Ekuoye O, Oshionebo F (2016). Use of Electronic Resources by the Different Categories of Staff in Polytechnic Libraries in Niger-Delta Region of Nigeria. *Inter. J. Acad. Lib. Info. Sci.* 4(9): 233-241

INTRODUCTION

Okorie and Agboola (2012) opined that the educational society can only exist when information is stored, shared, and used properly. Education depends on information resources and these resources are the driving forces for making an educated society. Academic libraries are often considered the most important resource center of institution of higher learning. However, university education in Nigeria is facing a critical challenge in meeting new demands of the 21st century, with its ever increasing population growth, inadequate library facilities, resources and insufficient funding (Oyewusi & Oyeboade, 2009). Education and library are two inseparable and indivisible concepts, working for the promotion and evolution of teaching, learning and research in academic environment. The primary purpose of university libraries is to support teaching, learning, and research in ways consistent with, and supportive of, the institution's mission and goals. As a result, library resources and services should be sufficient in quality, depth, diversity, and currency to support the institution's curriculum (Okorie & Agboola, 2012).

Kumar and Kumar (2008) posited that rapid growth of new technologies has changed the communication process and reduced the cost of communication for individuals. Electronic information sources can be seen as the most recent development in information technology and are among the most powerful tools ever invented in human history. Most Libraries in Nigeria have transformed into digital and virtual libraries where books, journals, and magazines that were formally in print format have changed into e-books, e-journals, and e-magazines. According to Narayana and Goudar (2005), print medium is increasingly giving way to the electronic form of materials.

Library staff uses electronic resources for diverse purposes. Ugboma and Edewor (2008) found that e-mail is heavily used in provision of library and information services such as order, inquiries, selection of relevant information materials, contacting publishers and vendors. Kumar and Kumar (2008) highlighted six reasons for using electronic information sources. Users in the study use electronic sources in support of their study (70%) and teaching (59%). One-third of respondents used the sources for project work or research. Ansari and Zuberi (2010) reported from their study of use of electronic resources among Academics at the University of Karachi, that about one-third (32%) of respondents use electronic resource for research. About one-quarter (29.4%) use it to prepare lectures and (24.8%) for gaining subject knowledge. Academics at Obafemi Awolowo University, Ile-Ife, use electronic resources mostly for literature search in research and professional growth (Omotayo, 2010). Tomney and Burton (1998) posited that the most given reason for non-use of e-journals was lack of

awareness of any relevant e-journals' publications. Majid and Mansoor (1996) reveal in their study of two universities in Malaysia, found that a majority of users were not aware of the CD-ROM services, which were directly related to the degree and effectiveness of the promotional activities of the library. Dawson (1999) found that the major barriers to e-journal use were the limited number of relevant journals available and the ease of access, including slow downloading and technical problems.

Rehman and Ramzy (2004) investigated the awareness and use of electronic information resources among health academics. Results show that libraries are extensively used for research needs, preparation of lectures, and for obtaining current knowledge. Lack of time is the main reason given for not using electronic resources (37 percent). Unfamiliarity with computerized searching comes next (22.6 percent). Several studies have been carried out on the use electronic resources among which are: Availability and Use of Electronic Resources in Agricultural University Libraries by (Okorie & Agboola, 2012); Use of Electronic Resources among Academics at the University of Karachi (Ansari & Zuberi, 2010); and an Empirical Study of Accessibility and Use of Library Resources by Undergraduates in a Nigerian State University of Technology by (Oyewusi & Oyeboade, 2009). However, much have not been done on the use of e-resources among polytechnic library staff, this study will fill this gap.

STATEMENT OF THE PROBLEM

Research is one of the main activities of African polytechnics besides teaching, learning and normal library routine. To accomplish this objective in this digital era, polytechnic libraries must acquire and make information materials available for both staff and students' use. The resources include not only traditional print materials such as books, journals, newspapers, magazines and reference materials but also electronic resources such as e-books, e-journals, e-magazines, Wikipedia, CD-ROMs, online databases, social media and internet among others.

Chibini (2007) posits that electronic resources provide access to information that might be restricted to the users because of geographical location or finances. They also provide access to current information as they are updated frequently and offered great promise in scholarly and scientific communication. Electronic resources are invaluable research and study tools in this digital age for library users which include library staff.

However, the use of e-resources by the different categories of staff in polytechnic libraries remains to be

ascertained. It is against this background that this study attempts to investigate the use of electronic resources by the different categories of staff in Polytechnic Libraries in Niger-Delta Region of Nigeria.

OBJECTIVE OF THE STUDY

The main objective of this study is to examine the use of electronic resources by the different categories of staff in Polytechnic Libraries in Niger-Delta Region of Nigeria. Specifically, the study sets out to:

- i. ascertain the frequency of use of different types of electronic resources by library staff of the polytechnic libraries.
- ii. find out the purpose of using electronic resources by library staff
- iii. identify the problems militating against the use of electronic resources by library staff

RESEARCH QUESTIONS

- i. What is the frequency in the use of different types of electronic resources by different categories of library staff?
- ii. What is the purpose of using electronic resources by library staff?
- iii. What are the problems militating against the use of electronic resources by library staff of different categories?

METHODOLOGY

This study employed a descriptive design to examine the use of electronic resources by the different categories of staff in Polytechnic Libraries in Niger-Delta Region of Nigeria. The population for the study comprises of four polytechnics libraries in the Niger-Delta region of Nigeria. The institutions are, Edo state polytechnic Usen, Delta state polytechnic Ozoro, Akwa-Ibom state polytechnic and Port- Harcourt polytechnic Rumuola, River state. The population for the study comprises of one hundred and ten (110) library staff. The entire population was used for the study and only the staff that was found in their offices in the library within the period of the study was used for the study. However, one hundred and two(102) library staff was found in their respective offices and was subsequently selected as sample for the study using purposive sampling technique. The questionnaire entitled "Use of Electronic Resources by the Different Categories of Staff in Polytechnic Libraries in Niger-Delta Region of Nigeria Questionnaire (UERDCSPLQ)" was chosen as the instrument for data collection. The questionnaire was

made up of two parts. The first part consists of biographical data such as categories of library staff and gender. The second part consisted of structure statements or items that help to elicit information or data on the use of electronic resources by the different categories of staff in Polytechnic Libraries in Niger-Delta Region of Nigeria. The data obtained from the copies of the questionnaires retrieved from respondents were analyzed using percentage and frequency count and mean.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

Table1 shows the categories of library staff. The table reveals the non-professional staff are in the majority with 62(61%), followed by professionals with 22(22%) and the Para-professional came last with 18(17%). The non-professionals are more than other categories of library staff in this study. This simply implies that the non-professionals must be trained and exposed to the tenets of library profession to enable them function properly.

Table 2 reveals the gender distribution of the respondents. A total of 64 (63%) females and 38 (37%) males participated in the study. The number of females' library staff who participated in the study are more than their males counterparts. This is a reflection of gender difference among the different categories of library staff in the polytechnic libraries in Niger- Delta region.

RESEARCH QUESTION ONE

What is the frequency of use of different types of electronic resources by different categories of library staff?

Table 3 reveals the frequency of use of different types of electronic resources by various categories of library staff. The opinion of the respondents varies on the frequency of use of e- resources by library staff. Social media tools are the most frequently used e-resources among the three categories of library staff with the mean of 66 (3.7) for Para-professionals, 77(3.5) librarians and 212 (3.4) for non- professionals. E-Newspaper/magazine is another most frequently use e-resources by the different categories of library staff with the mean score of 84 (3.8) for librarians, 65(3.6) Para-professionals and 173(2.8) non-professionals. It is obvious from the study that the three categories of library staff make use of social media tools and e-newspaper/magazine more frequently than other e-resources. This may be due to the information and entertainment contents of these resources. Wikipedia also ranked high among librarians and Para-professionals with 71(3.2) for librarians, 54(3.0) Para-professionals and a low response of 128(2.1) for non- professionals. E-theses/project/dissertation is

Table 1: Categories of Library Staff

Categories of Library Staff	No of Respondents	%
Librarians (Professionals)	22	22
Library Officers(Para-professionals)	18	17
Library support staff (Non-Professionals)	62	61
Total	102	100

Table 2: Sex of the Respondents

Sex	No of Respondents	%
Male	38	37
Female	64	63
Total	102	100

Table 3: Frequency in the use of different types of electronic resources by polytechnic library staff.

Types Of Resources	Categories of staff	Very Often		Often		Rarely		Never		Total		Mean	
		No	%	No	%	No	%	No	%	No	%	No	X
e-Journal	Librarians	17	77	5	23	--	--	--	--	22	100	83	3.8
	Library officers	4	22	6	33	5	28	3	17	18	100	47	2.6
	Library assistants	8	13	12	19	16	26	26	42	62	100	126	2.0
e- Newspaper/ magazine	Librarians	18	82	4	18	--	--	--	--	22	100	84	3.8
	Library officers	11	61	7	39	--	--	--	--	18	100	65	3.6
	Library assistants	18	29	23	37	11	18	10	16	62	100	173	2.8
e-Books	Librarians	5	23	8	36	5	23	4	18	22	100	47	2.1
	Library officers	2	11	2	11	6	33	8	44	18	100	34	1.9
	Library assistants	6	10	7	11	12	19	37	60	62	100	106	1.7
Social media tools	Librarians	14	64	5	23	3	14	--	--	22	100	77	3.5
	Library officers	12	67	6	33	--	--	--	--	18	100	66	3.7
	Library assistants	38	61	12	19	12	19	--	--	62	100	212	3.4
Online dictionaries	Librarians	4	18	4	18	2	9	12	55	22	100	44	2.0
	Library officers	2	11	3	17	5	28	8	44	18	100	33	1.8
	Library assistants	6	10	10	16	18	29	28	45	62	100	118	1.9

Table 3: Continuation

Wikipedia	Librarians	9	41	9	41	4	18	--	--	22	100	71	3.2
	Library officers	4	22	10	56	4	22	--	--	18	100	54	3.0
	Library assistants	9	15	14	23	11	18	28	45	62	100	128	2.1
Government publication	Librarians	4	18	4	18	11	50	3	14	22	100	53	2.4
	Library officers	2	11	4	22	5	28	7	39	18	100	37	21
	Library assistants	8	13	9	15	20	32	25	40	62	100	124	2.0
e-theses/project/dissertation	Librarians	8	36	7	32	5	23	2	9	22	100	65	3.0
	Library officers	6	33	10	56	2	11	--	--	18	100	56	3.1
	Library assistants	7	11	12	19	13	21	30	48	62	100	120	1.9

Criterion mean=2.5

another major type of e-resources frequently used by Para-professionals and librarians with mean score of 56(3.1) for Para-professionals, 65(3.0) librarians and mean score of 120(1.9) for non-professionals. E-journal also attracts high response from librarians with a mean score of 83(3.8) and low response from Para-professionals and non-professionals with mean score of 47(2.6) and 126(2.0) respectively. It is very obvious from the study that apart from social media a majority of the non-professional library staff do not utilize electronic resources like their professional and Para-professional counterparts. This could be attributed to their level of education and e-resources use knowledge.

RESEARCH QUESTION TWO

What is the purpose of using electronic resources by library staff?

Table 4 reveals the purpose of using e-resources by different categories of library staff. The three categories of library staff used e-resources for social networking activities with the mean of 63(2.9) for librarians, 53(2.9) Para-professionals and 172(2.8) non-professionals. For information search is another major reason for using e-resources by the three categories of library staff with the mean of 63(2.9) librarians, 51(2.8) Para-professionals and 158(2.6) non-professionals. The three categories of library staff also used e-resources for academic pursuit/study with the mean of 50 (2.7) for Para-professionals, 157(2.5) non-professionals and 54 (2.5) librarians. However, librarians and Para-professionals

use e-resources for research/publishing articles than non-professionals library staff with mean of 64(2.9) for librarians, 47(2.6), 120(1.9) non-professionals. This finding could be attributed to fact that librarians in higher institutions of learning are academic staff; they are mandated to publish certain numbers of articles before promotion or perish for failure to publish. Para-professionals and librarians also use e-resources for assignment than non-professionals library staff with the mean of 51 (2.8) Para-professionals, 58(2.6) for librarians and 118(1.9) for non-professionals. This due to the fact that Para-professionals possessed higher diploma certificate and are anxious to upgrade themselves in order to be certify as professionals by librarians' registration council of Nigeria. While, librarians are eager to acquire higher qualification in order to get to the peak of their career. Librarians and Para-professionals are saddled with some official responsibilities that require the use of e-resources to execute. Non-professionals dominates other categories of staff in the use of e-resources for entertainment with the mean of 152(2.5).

RESEARCH QUESTION THREE

What are the problems militating against the use of electronic resources by library staff of different categories?

Table 5 shows the problems militating against the use of e-resources among the different categories of library staff in polytechnic libraries in the Niger-Delta region of Nigeria. The opinion of the respondents is as follows:

Table 4: Purpose of using electronic resources by polytechnic library staff

Purpose	Categories of Staff	Agree		Disagree		Undecided		Total		Mean	
		No	%	No	%	No	%	No	%	No	X
For research/publishing articles.	Librarians	20	91	2	9	--	--	22	100	64	2.9
	Library officers	11		7	39	--	--	18	100	47	2.6
	Library assistants	18	29	22	35	22	36	62	100	120	1.9
for assignment	Librarians	16	73	4	18	2	9	22	100	58	2.6
	Library officers	15	83	3	17	--	--	18	100	51	2.8
	Library assistants	15	24	26	42	21	34	62	100	118	1.9
For entertainment	Librarians	7	32	11	50	4	18	22	100	47	2.1
	Library officers	11	61	--	--	7	39	18	100	40	2.2
	Library assistants	36	58	16	26	10	16	62	100	152	2.5
For academic pursuit/study	Librarians	14	64	4	18	4	18	22	100	54	2.5
	Library officers	16	89	2	11	--	--	18	100	50	2.7
	Library assistants	33	53	29	47	--	--	62	100	157	2.5
For social networking activities	Librarians	19	86	3	14	--	--	22	100	63	2.9
	Library officers	17	94	1	6	--	--	18	100	53	2.9
	Library assistants	48	77	14	23	--	--	62	100	172	2.8
To carry out reference services	Librarians	7	32	9	41	6	27	22	100	45	2.0
	Library officers	9	50	7	39	2	11	18	100	43	2.4
	Library assistants	14	23	28	45	20	32	62	100	118	1.9
For information search	Librarians	19	86	3	14	--	--	22	100	63	2.9
	Library officers	15	83	3	17	--	--	18	100	51	2.8
	Library assistants	48	77	--	--	14	23	62	100	158	2.6

Criterion mean=2.5

Poor network/bandwidth with the mean of 63(2.9) librarians, 181(2.9) non-professionals and 50(2.8) Para-professionals. Frequent power outage with mean of 179(2.9) for non-professionals, Para-professionals 50(2.8) and librarians 58(2.7). Lack of time /work overload also got high response with the mean of 49(2.7) Para-professionals, 170(2.7) non-professionals and 56(2.6) librarians. Another major problem is lack of internet connectivity in my library with 48(2.7) Para-professionals, 58(2.6) librarians and 153(2.5) non-professionals. This study clearly indicates that poor network/bandwidth, frequent power outage, lack of time

/work overload and lack of internet connectivity are the major problems militating against the three categories of library staff in their use of e-resources. However, librarians and Para-professionals agreed to Information over load as another major problem with the mean of 57(2.6) and 47(2.6) for librarians and Para-professionals respectively. In a related development, non-professionals also agree that lack of search skills/knowledge with the mean of 170(2.7) and Technophobia with the mean of 160(2.6) are major problems militating against their use of e-resources.

Table 5: Problems militating against the use of electronic resources by polytechnic library staff.

Problems	Categories of Staff	Agree		Disagree		Undecided		Total		Mean	
		No	%	No	%	No	%	No	%	No	X
Information over load	Librarians	15	68	5	23	2	9	22	100	57	2.6
	Library officers	11	61	7	39	--	--	18	100	47	2.6
	Library assistants	33	53	10	16	19	31	62	100	138	2.2
lack of time /Work overload	Librarians	14	64	6	27	2	9	22	100	56	2.6
	Library officers	15	83	2	11	--	--	18	100	49	2.7
	Library assistants	46	74	16	26	--	--	62	100	170	2.7
Lack of search skills/knowledge	Librarians	4	18	18	82	--	--	22	100	48	2.2
	Library officers	7	39	9	50	--	--	18	100	39	2.2
	Library assistants	47	76	12	19	3	5	62	100	170	2.7
Frequent power outage	Librarians	17	77	4	18	--	--	22	100	58	2.7
	Library officers	16	89	2	11	--	--	18	100	50	2.8
	Library assistants	55	89	7	11	--	--	62	100	179	2.9
Poor network/bandwidth	Librarians	19	86	3	14	--	--	22	100	63	2.9
	Library officers	16	89	2	11	--	--	18	100	50	2.8
	Library assistants	57	92	5	8	--	--	62	100	181	2.9
Lack of internet connectivity in my library	Librarians	14	64	8	36	--	--	22	100	58	2.6
	Library officers	12	67	6	33	--	--	18	100	48	2.7
	Library assistants	39	63	13	21	10	16	62	100	153	2.5
Techno-phobia	Librarians	6	27	16	73	--	--	22	100	50	2.3
	Library officers	7	39	11	61	--	--	18	100	43	2.4
	Library assistants	44	71	10	16	8	13	62	100	160	2.6

Criterion mean=2.5

SUMMARY OF THE FINDINGS

Based on the result arising from the data analysis the following findings were summarized in the study.

- i. The study reveals that social media tools and e-newspaper/magazine are the most frequently used types of e-resources by the three categories of library staff.
- ii. The study revealed that librarians and Para-professionals used Wikipedia and e-theses/project/dissertation more frequently than the non-professionals
- iii. It was also discovered from the study that librarians used e-journals more frequently than other categories of library staff.

- iv. It was discovered from the study that for social networking activities, for information search and for academic pursuit/study are the major reasons the three categories of library staff used e-resources.
- v. Librarians and Para-professionals used e-resources for research/publishing articles and for carrying out their assignment.
- vi. The study reveals that non-professionals also used e-resources for entertainment.
- vii. Poor network/bandwidth, frequent power outage, lack of time /work overload and lack of internet connectivity in the library are the major problems militating against the three categories of library staff in their use of e-resources.
- viii. A majority of librarians and Para-professionals agreed that information over load is one of the problems militating against their use of e-resources.
- ix. Lack of search skills/knowledge and techno-phobia are some of the problems militating against use of e-resources by non-professional library staff.

CONCLUSION

Print resources are gradually given way to electronic resources in most libraries today. In Nigeria, many academic libraries are establishing e-libraries sections to meet the information and educational needs of their users. Libraries have transformed into digital and virtual libraries where print resources such as books, journals, and magazines have changed into e-books, e-journals, and e-magazines. The frequency of use of the various types of e- resources by library staff is one of the focuses in this study. Social media was discovered to be the most frequently used e-resources by the three categories of library staff. However, librarians and Para-professionals used Wikipedia theses/project/dissertation frequently than the non- professional staff. There are various reasons outlined for using e-resources by the different categories of library staff. The study revealed that for social networking activities, for information search and for academic pursuit/study are some of the major reasons the three categories of library staff gave for using e-resources. Library staff faced some hic-cups in the use of e-resources. Poor network/bandwidth, frequent power outage, lack of time /work overload and lack of internet connectivity in the library are some of the major problems militating against the three categories of library staff in their use of e- resources.

RECOMMENDATIONS

- i. The polytechnic management and library administrators should deem it necessary to always organize training and retraining programmes for non- professionals staff

- in the library in order to expose them to technological advancement and usage.
- ii. The polytechnic and library management should ensure that alternative power source is provided for to reduce the effect of incessant power failure.
- iii. Library staff should as a matter of necessity create time out of their busy schedule to interact with e- resources.
- iv. Library management should constantly upgrade the library bandwidth and liaise with network providers to improve on the internet connectivity to enhance smooth and effective use of e-resources by library staff in the library.
- v. Library staff especially the non- professionals should work on their level of confidence and desist from the habit of resisting or developing phobia for new development especially in the area of technology.

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