



PUBLIC UNIVERSITY LIBRARIANS' PERCEPTION OF THE IMPACT OF THE UTILIZATION OF ONLINE INFORMATION RESOURCES AND EFFECTIVE SERVICE DELIVERY ON LIBRARY USERS IN SOUTH-EAST NIGERIA

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Abstracts

This study investigated the public university librarians' perception of the impact of the utilization of online information resources (OIR) for effective services delivery on the library users in South-East, Nigeria. To guide the study, one objective, and one research question were used while one hypothesis was formulated and tested at 0.05 level of significant. Descriptive survey was adopted for the study. The population of the study was 174 professional librarians. Total census was used for the study hence there was no sampling. The instrument of data collection was questionnaire. Validated copies of the questionnaire were tested for reliability using Cronbach Alpha, and the reliability coefficient obtained was 0.94 confirming its reliability. The 174 copies of questionnaire were administered to the respondents through the help of research assistants one from each state of the South-East. 157 were returned representing 90% return rate. Data was analyzed using descriptive statistics of mean frequency count and standard deviation. The mean was used for answering the research question while inferential statistics of t-test was used for testing the hypothesis. The result showed mean at 2.95 high extent response rate by the respondents and agreeing conclusively that the public university librarians' utilization of online information resources and effective services delivery in the public university libraries were of high impact on the public university library users in South-East, Nigeria. Hence the study recommends that university librarians should aptly direct for the utilization of OIR for continuous high impact on the users (the service receivers).

Keywords: Users, Online, Information, Resources, Utilization, Services, University Librarians, Perception, Impact.

Introduction

In the present-day world obviously, Information and Communication Technology (ICT) is holding sway. This has brought many changes that have exacted and impacted a lot of influences on various ways and means in the patterns of services delivery that have Internet/online connectivity. Almost all professionals in various vocations and industries are integrating and utilizing online/Internet platforms for effective information/information resources conveyance and services delivery in their respective businesses. ICT indeed has led to a lot of easier achievements and value additions to human life activities and endeavours. Its overwhelming influence and the twiggling effects resulted into new words, and vocabulary that have become operative jargons in the information and communication industry. Prominent and universal among them are: "online", "Internet", "wireless", "inter face" and "cloud". Their application and manipulations have made for effective services delivery; the harnessing and dissemination of information, information resources and other services delivery locally and globally with Local Area Network (LAN) or Wide Area Network (WAN) (Amadi, 2021). These are no longer news and cannot be over emphasized. The banking industry indeed is a good instance where online cum Internet approach to services delivery is significantly effective and has extremely displaced a lot of manual ways and means of the system's information links and conveyance.

The university libraries are not left out of this scenario where information and information resources collection (gathering), sharing and transmission for utilization among other dealings about library services are carried out by online/Internet connectivity. The university librarians whose professional domains are the university libraries are really on the move with this trend and scenario in the modern-day librarianship and services delivery to the library users by online. As it stands, online information/information resources vis-a-vis sources are quite numerous and varied. Their common nature is that they are gathered, disseminated and utilized (as the case may be), by the manipulation of electronic gadgets and devices which the computer with its peripherals and connectivity is main. Therefore, a study in the direction of the impact of the services rendered through online and with online information resources on the public university library patrons by the university librarians is apt. A good knowledge and application of the various online information resources and tools respectively in the university library services delivery as sources reveal, evidently enhances a faster, timely and timeless services effectively. This is irrespective of the time, distance and location of both the service giver and receiver.

In this paper the Internet is a generic term and also implies online, and as such both are used synonymously and interchangeably as off-shoot words

(jargons) of the ICT. This paper therefore, adopts online to express electronic/electrical processes of harnessing library and information stuffs/materials hoisted in the "cloud" or "ether"; and their utilization for effective services delivery in the public university libraries, and the perception of their impact by the public university librarians on the library users in the South-East public universities.

Statement of the Problem

Contemporarily, the utilization of online/online information resources approach and application in various services delivery world over guarantees and provides access to databases stored in remote computer systems globally. This operation in libraries today (particularly the university libraries) has been seen to contributing in effective services delivery via telecommunications and other component gadgets connectivity. Online/online information resources (OIR) utilization by university librarians for effective services delivery is prominent, becoming all encompassing and revolutionizing services delivery in the university libraries.

Professionally, it is known, that the target of all library services is the satisfaction of the users (service receivers) and the fulfilment of the librarian(s) (service giver(s)). From observations however, this paper is of the view that the perception of the impact of the university librarians' services delivery utilizing online/online information resources on the library users as positive (effective) in the South-East, Nigeria is an unlikely axiom and require a scientific objectivity.

Objective of the Study

The purpose of this study is to determine the university librarians' perception of the impact of the utilization of online/online information resources for effective library services delivery on the service receivers (users) in public university libraries in South-East, Nigeria.

Research Question

What are the university librarians' perception of the impact of the utilization of online/online information resources on the users (service receivers) in public university libraries in the South-East, Nigeria?

Hypothesis for the Study

There is no significant difference between the mean responses/rating of the university library users of federal and state-owned university libraries in South-East, Nigeria on the utilization of online/online information resources for

effective library services delivery.

Literature Review

Online

In the opinion of this paper, the Internet as a generic term also implies online and can be used synonymously and interchangeably as off-shoot words (jargon) of the ICT. This paper therefore, adopts online to express electronic/electrical process(es) of harnessing stuffs/materials hoisted in the "cloud" and what are gotten from it from any location of the globe, with good speed, timely and timelessly; in any required quantity, and their utilization for effective services delivery in the public university libraries. Online/Internet information resources are in diverse and varied formats, and also used to edify the library with other materials/resources collection.

Reitz (2004) gave the definition of online, as the connection of computers to the Internet via telecommunication links, as opposed to a standalone system. Reitz further stated that, online refers to the accessories or devices physically separate from, but directly connected to, and under the control of a central processing unit (CPU) and ready for interactive use in real time. Kennan and Johnstone (2000) define it as a "direct real-time communication with central processor of a computer via terminals or separate computers". Online, according to Reitz (2004), is used synonymously in libraries with the words, "automated, computerized, e-resources, network electronic information resources (NEIR), digital system and world wide web (www)".

Information

The word/term, information in the opinion of this paper is universally used in every day moment by moment conversations or discussions of people. It could be applied as suitable as its user(s) in all spheres of life activities put it and understand it to be. The use of the word "information" cuts across disciplines as it cannot be easily pinned to one particular profession or business. Information generally, implies any ideas or knowledge communicated and received. Information could be by symbols, signs, oral forms etc (Reitz, 2004). It educates, advertises and enlightens which can bring about reactions (changes) in individuals or organizations. It aids in clearing doubts in respect of people's mind agitations, and decision making or taking, in order that people, institutions and organizations do not derail from achieving desired results (Amadi, 2021).

Resources(s)

Resource(s) is anything or things that may be used to achieve an aim; usually for the purposes of information (that is; enlightenment/knowledge or even more

enlightenment/knowledge) on a particular subject, ideas, expressions, items or agenda as the case may be (Amadi, 2021). Books, newspapers, libraries, databases, computers or equipment and other media and their respective personnel even the radio, television etc. that provide information for teachers and students and others, are examples of resources for information (Hornby, 2010). Resources and sources are mostly confused to have the same meaning, which is not true (Pattar, 2017). According to Pattar, resources are things that are readily available for utilization and sources are the places from where we get things from. This is corroborated by English, (2017) a source is that from which something comes.

Consequently, online information resources (OIRs) as relates to this paper, refers to all such information products that are hoisted in the cloud (networks) which are browsed to get relevant information and resources that are utilized in various ways and for different purposes of business and services delivery in the university libraries. They are manipulated through the use of computers and their peripherals connectivity as the tools. Online information and information resources services delivery therefore, are electronic and are carried out electronically. As Nwosu and Opara (2019) put it, online (electronic) resources are materials that require computer mediation in order to access and use them or make them available for use if required. According to them both online and offline information material resources such as the CD-ROMs fall within this category. They refer to all the resource products that a library provides electronically through the use of computer networks or connectivity. They are delineated in this paper to imply those information materials and tools (data and/or programs), suitable, relevant and encoded for manipulation by computerized devices either in a Local Area Network (LAN) or Wide Area Network (WAN), as described by Quadri, Adetimirin and Idowu (2014).

According to Vasishta (2008), online information resources (OIR) is a broader term that encompasses abstracting and indexing services, full-text by materials such as newspapers and reference books, electronic journals and offerings of electronic "aggregators", articles delivery services and free resources on the internet. Arms (2000) define online information resources as "a managed collection of information, with associated services, where the information is stored in digital formats and accessible over a network". However, Bertroit (2004) is of the view that in libraries, online-based services and resources can take many forms/formats including: searching library holdings, placing a hold or recalling library materials, making an inter-library loan request, licensing online databases, e-journals, and e-books for customer access, digitizing library collections for online access, providing organized web pages that lead customers to library/non-library content, and providing real-time and asynchronous digital reference

services.

Online information resources therefore, may include three types of networked information systems (Mritunjay, (2006): (a) Local Area Networks systems: The file servers in LAN are loaded with microcomputer-based applications including various CD-ROM type databases. All microcomputers-based workstations are linked to one or more file servers to share various applications and information. Thus, LAN is a distributed network system. (b) Online integrated library management systems (ILMS): also categorized as INTERNET. This type of network system handles traditional library functions such as circulation, interlibrary loan, cataloguing, acquisition, serial control and online public access catalogue (OPAC), which this paper also reflects. (c) Wide Area Network Systems: These systems communicate with the Internet through Gopher, World Wide Web (WWW), Wide Area Information Server (WAIS), and other Internet Index Tools. Online information resources (e-resources) are in the form of E-Books, E-Journals, Online Public Access Catalog (OPAC), CD-ROMs, Online database, Internet resources, electronic link and web publishing. Added and ascribed online information resources in this paper are other off-line electronic information resource versions. They include; e-data-archives, e-manuscripts, e-maps, e-magazines, e-theses, e-newspapers, e-mails, e-research reports, e-bibliographic database which also are accessible through electronic machine systems' ways, patterns and protocols (Vasishta, 2008). They edify and make richer the libraries holdings, for effective services delivery by the librarians to their varied clienteles.

Utilisation

All the library and information resource materials harnessed in a university library are for utilization. Utilization in library parlance is the application or putting of various tools or facilities of work to achieve desired goals or expectations for effective service delivery. In the words of Duranceau (2008), utilization is the degree to which people use a system or product to a successful completion of a task for which it was employed. Hornby, (2010) defines utilization as the process of using something. Online information resources as materials are utilized for effective service delivery in university libraries. Uhegbu (2007) conceptualizes utilization as the actual putting into appropriate use of acquired information. In this paper invariably, utilization of online information resources is similarly applicable.

Utilization of online information resources by librarians is the hub that results in effective services delivery in university libraries. Furthermore, utilization in the concept of this paper, refers to the application of numerous

information resources uploaded and generated into and from the Internet respectively through the manipulation of computer networks and connectivity. Utilization of online information resources and effective services delivery differs from one library to another depending on needs of users, the extent ICT configurations are on ground in the library and other variables. In the present age of information explosion and utilization, it is rare or strange to see a university library and its librarians not complementing and effectively consummating their services delivery without online information resources utilization. Hornby, (2010) explains utilization as "to make use of available service resources at the individuals' disposal". Utilization therefore is a complex behavioral phenomenon that is related to availability. Online information resources are made more meaningful when they are appropriately and properly utilized for effective library services delivery, i.e. in meeting the information needs of the university library patrons.

Services

Services are the duties an individual or groups of individuals renders as professionals or not professional, to person(s) in society, organizations or establishments which the service receivers find useful in satisfying their needs. Services are either for free or for fee. This however, depends on the institution/organization involved. Services also are valuable actions, deeds or efforts performed to satisfy needs or demands (Hornby, 2020). Ultimately, services are actions of activities that are rendered to someone or doing something for someone. In respect of library services in the context of this paper, the concept of services delivery is the ability of librarians to professionally strive to process and organize information resources (both online and traditional) made available, and the ability to utilize them in meeting the overall information needs, queries, and demands of the library users (Olanlokun, 2013).

There are both outreach and in-house library services. Outreach library services take services to the clientele's domain or abode, while the in-house services are the opposite. Utilization of online information resources in library services delivery makes both modes of services (outreach and in house) effective. It is in this light and focus that effective services delivery in this paper implies; a timely, timeless, speedy, accurate, simple and easy provision of profuse online information resources that meets the information needs of the library users. Services of this nature can take place with or without a one-on-one interface irrespective of the location of the patrons.

University librarians/Libraries

These categories of librarians are fashioned a bit differently in orientation to

curiously and constantly put efforts that help to increase and up-hold the information resources knowledge base of the university staff and students for research, teaching and learning. They are academics *sui generis*, and serve the colleges or faculties of the universities. Today's university (academic) librarians are involved in a variety of challenging library services delivery. They may consult with individual library users in analysing, identifying and fulfilling their information needs; create campus wide information literacy programs and deliver classroom instructions to strengthen information literacy skills; select, organize and facilitate access to information in a variety of formats; keep abreast of technological advancements and develop strategies to take advantage of them; plan, implement and administer computer based systems electronic databases design and manage web sites; collaborate with classroom faculty computer specialists and instructional developers; contribute to effective teamwork among colleagues, and participate in the public relations efforts to promote and raise funds for academic libraries. All these are done in and from the library because, historically, university libraries (academic libraries) are the natural destinations for students, faculty staff and researchers seeking for relevant information (Ozioko, 2007).

Ozioko further asserts that academic libraries serve as the repository for published information as well as the intermediary for acquiring materials from every part of the globe. The university libraries where the university librarians have their domain to deliver services are major and an integral department of university education; established to meet the information resource needs for study, research, and teaching to students, (Pandey, 2015). To this end, the application or incorporation of online information resources for effective services delivery in university libraries by librarians are quite expedient and needful. However, no one can deliver what he or she does not have.

Service Receivers (Users)

The user(s) of the university libraries also are referred to as patrons, clientele or the service receivers as well. They are at the epicenter of the library setting and as such are the principal focus of the services the librarians (as service givers) render in various libraries. Invariably it is by the users and their responses that the librarians perceive impact of the effectiveness the resources they (university librarians) utilize in services delivery for the users are determined. The satisfaction of the service receiver has always been the concern and one major service fulfillment of the university librarians. And it is in this regard that the university librarians (service givers) in libraries always go out of their ways to create user services nomenclatures, classification and category according to the users' information needs and demands with the view to deliver services effectively. This

consciousness brought about the librarians formulating and doing service programs that have terms and tags such as: "user friendly", "user education", "user groups", "user ID or name", "user profile", "user survey", "user warrant" etc (Reitz, 2004).

Perception/Impact

In the context and opinion of this paper, it is through perception that impact is brought about. Perception is the power and feeling with the strength of the mind of a person to determine or detect the positive or negative aspects or nature of a matter, substance or something by exacting and drawing inference(s) from the power of any of the human sense organ(s) as the case may be. According to Hornby (2010), perception is the way one notices or feels something especially with the senses and the ability to understand the nature of the something. It may be an idea, a belief or an image one has as a result of how he/she feel, see or understand a happening over time. Further also, Honby (2010), defined impact as the powerful effect that something has on another thing or somebody.

Methodology

The study was conducted in the South-East, Nigeria. A designed Structured questionnaire served as instrument for data collection. Collected data were analysed using population mean ($\bar{x}$) statistics and standard deviation to answer research question. The cut off score for decision making was obtained by summing the value in the rating ($1+2+3+4=10$) and divided by 4 to obtain 2.50. Any mean value ranked 2.50 and above was positive; that is, agreed, otherwise it was negative; that is, disagree. In interpreting the items with response mode, very high extent, high extent and very low extent, the real limit of numbers was used: 1.0-1.49 (Very low extent), 1.50-2.49 (low extent), 2.50-3.49 (High extent), 3.50-4.00 (Very high extent). The null hypothesis was tested using t-Test statistical tool to test hypothesis about the difference between variables. If the t-Test calculated value was less than the t-Test table value at 0.05 level of significance, that means that there was significant difference between the two variables the null hypothesis was rejected, but if otherwise, the null hypothesis was accepted.

Reliability of Instrument

The reliability index of the instrument was determined by administering the instrument (i.e. questionnaire) to thirty (30) librarians at the university, South-South, Nigeria who were not part of the study area, but have similar characteristics based on their training, profession and work environment. Their responses were computed and the internal consistency coefficient was determined using Cronbach Alpha statistics. The reliability coefficient obtained was 0.94. The coefficient is very high; hence the instrument was considered reliable.

Result

Table 1: Mean ratings on the extent to which librarians perceive the impact of the utilization of OIR for effective service delivery on the service receivers (patrons/users) in the public university libraries

S/N	Items	State		Federal		Grand X	Remarks
		X	SD	X	SD		
1.	Online/E-journals	3.39	.875	3.41	.507	3.4	HE
2.	Online/E-books	3.29	.854	3.49	.514	3.39	HE
3.	CD-ROM Databases	3.25	.844	2.88	.600	3.07	HE
4.	Online Databases	3.36	.826	3.06	.556	3.21	HE
5.	Integrated Library Management Software	3.18	.863	2.94	.827	3.06	HE
6.	Internet/Browsing (LAN/WAN)	3.18	.905	3.18	.728	3.18	HE
7.	Online Public Access Catalog (OPAC)	3.11	.875	3.06	.899	3.36	HE
8.	World wide web (www)	3.14	.803	3.00	.791	3.07	HE
9.	Online/E-newspapers	3.00	.861	3.00	.866	3.00	HE
10.	Online E-conference proceedings	2.79	.957	2.71	.849	2.75	HE
11.	E-standards	2.46	1.671	2.71	.772	2.59	HE
12.	E-patents	2.50	1.036	2.59	.870	2.55	HE
13.	E-manuscripts & Special collections	2.96	1.036	2.11	.588	2.54	HE
14.	E-Theses	3.36	.780	2.76	.562	3.06	HE
15.	The social media	3.25	.844	2.53	.800	2.89	HE
16.	Online tutorials	2.75	1.005	2.47	.717	2.61	HE
17.	ONIX (Online Information Exchange)	2.43	1.069	2.41	.712	2.41	LE
18.	OJUC (Online Union Catalogue)	2.54	1.036	2.53	.717	2.53	HE
19.	OCLC (Online Computer Library Centre)	2.79	1.031	2.59	.795	2.69	HE
20.	POD (Print-on-demand)	2.68	1.090	2.47	.717	2.58	HE
21.	Sharper Romeo	2.54	1.138	2.41	.712	2.48	LE
	Grand mean	2.95		2.86		2.95	HE

Where X = mean, SD = Standard deviation, LE = Low Extent, HE = High Extent

The data in Table 1 show that 19 out of the 21 items were rated high while 2 items were rated low. The items that were rated high based on the impact of utilization of online information resources on the service receivers include online/E-journal, online/E-books, Online Public Access Catalog (OPAC), online databases, Internet browsing (LAN/WAN), CD-ROM Databases, World Wide Web (www) among others. The items that were rated low are only two. They are online information exchange and Sharper Romeo. The state universities obtained a group mean of 2.95 while the federal universities obtained a group mean of 2.86. It implies that on the average all the items were rated high extent based on the impact of the utilization of online information resources for effective service delivery on the service receivers.

Hypothesis

Ho:1 There is no significant difference between the mean responses/rating of the university librarians of federal and state-owned university libraries in South-East, Nigeria on the utilization of online/online information resources for effective library services delivery.

Table 2: T-test analysis of mean difference between librarians in federal and state -owned public university librarians on the impact the librarians perceive the utilization of online information resources on users of library for effective service delivery.

Variable	N	X	SD	Df	T	Sig	Decision
Federal	106	60.99	16.00	172	.253	.801	Accept Ho
State	52	60.40	7.66				

* Significant at $P < 0.05$

The result in Table 2 above reveals t-calculated value of .253 at $df = 172$ where $p > 0.05$. This indicates that there was no significant difference between the mean score of librarians in federal and state-owned public university libraries on the perceived impact of online information resources utilization on the service receivers for effective service delivery in public universities in South East, Nigeria. Hence the null hypothesis was accepted. This implies that federal and state university librarians hold the same perception on the utilization of online information resources on users of library for effective service delivery.

Conclusion

Based on discoveries from the research, it is concluded that Federal and State-owned university librarians showed that there is an all-embracing use of OIR, by means of grand means of 3.19 and 2.88 for both types of public university libraries, respectively, and a comprehensive grand mean of 3.03. The participants in the research correspondingly agree that effective service delivery in South-East Nigeria is guaranteed by the use of online information resources (OIR).

Recommendation

Librarians should aptly direct for the utilization of online information resource materials on users (service receivers) of the public university libraries for effective services delivery in the South-East, Nigeria.

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