Assessment of Availability and Accessibility of E-resources for Service Provision Among Academic Staff in Modibbo Adama University of Technology Yola, Adamawa State

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Abstract

There has been a continuous campaign by the universities governing authorities on the introduction of E-resources for service delivery to the academic community. Nevertheless, the question that has been bothering the researcher is the E-resources achieved their aims? This study was set to assess the availability and accessibility of e-resources for service provision among academic staff at the Modibbo Adama University of Technology Yola (MAUTECH). The objectives of the study were to determine the available and accessible E-resources for use by academic staff in IBB Library of MAUTECH; ascertain the purpose and satisfaction derived in accessing the E-resources by the academic staff in MAUTECH. The study adopted a survey research design with a total of two hundred and thirty-nine (239) academic staff drawn from the nine (9) faculties using a stratified random sampling technique. The population of the study is, therefore, 239 academic staff. The main instrument for data collection is the questionnaire. Data collected was analyzed using descriptive statistics of frequency counts and percentages displayed in charts and tables. The findings revealed that the facilities were "fairly available" and the E-resources were "accessible"; the purposes for using the resources were for research planning and preparing lecture notes, and they were "fairly satisfied' with the services. Network failure, inadequate power supply, slow network connectivity, and inadequate computer terminals constituted the bulk of their problems while using the e-resources. The study recommended that more funds should be made available to address the issues of connectivity, inadequate terminals, and improve the living environment of staff and users.

Keywords*: Academic staff, Accessibility, Availability, E-resources, and University library*

Introduction

In the 21sth Century, Electronic Resources play a vital role in all fields of human endeavour, and the world has increasingly become more dependent on it. Electronic resources have been identified as the significant sources of information in academic institutions, and they are now dominating activities of researchers (Academic Staff) who have realized the importance of such resources (Hadagali, Kumbar, Nelogal, and Bachalapur, 2012). It has been recorded that people who want to get the best information about a particular phenomenon accessed E-resources successfully. The

economic meltdown of the country, as well as our leaders' lackadaisical attitude toward libraries, pose a challenge to depend on manual information resources and be comfortable, particularly to those who are into research.

Electronic resources are defined as what users can access electronically via a computing network from inside the library or remotely from the library (Thanuskodi 2012). In other words, it can be described as any information that is stored in an electronic form that requires the use of electronic devices to access. With this, all data stored in electronic media such as floppies, CDs, magnetic tapes, videos, among others, can be retrieved with the help of electronic devices like computers, video players, and the like. The electronic medium for storing information could be said to be the best as it has many advantages over print resources such as ample storage capacity, data security, space-saving, and easy access, among others. The fact that libraries empower users by providing access to the broadest range of information, availability of electronic resources, including information via the Internet, can enable libraries to fulfill this responsibility better than before. The availability of E-resources, therefore, refers to readily access to information in electronic format with little or no stress to the library user. The availability of electronic information resources in the library is not just enough; users must know of their existence to be able to use them effectively and to put to use what is available. Users should possess requisite skills that will enable them to exploit these resources and services. Accessibility is the ability to get, locate, or obtain electronic information resources with ease in the conduct of research.

The term accessibility is referred to in this study as a process in which academic staff can quickly locate and use the e-resources aided by ICTs in research. It is the ability to use electronic information resources in the conduct of research. E-resource operation indeed expresses the ease of its use through Information Communication Technology. The relevance of E-resources in the academic community is evident because it is one of the sources through which current research findings can be accessed in developing countries like Nigeria to be relevant in their fields of expertise. Electronic resources provide accurate and timely information, especially for students and academic staff, as they depend much on it for knowledge to advance research and collaboration with other researchers around the world for intellectual growth (Ukpebor, 2012). Considering the advantages of electronic resources, the inviolability of research tools to complement the print-based resources in a traditional library setting is a complete setback. Their benefits, according to (Ukpebor2012) include access to information that might be restricted to the user due to geographical location or finances, access to more current information, and provision of extensive links to additional resources related content. This rapid emergence and development of electronic information technologies, therefore, makes it possible to envisage the need for radical change in the ways of organizing our collections in a more reformed manner to provide services that can change the future of our professions to the scientific approach.

Problem Statement

It has been reported that Nigerian universities are lagging behind their counterparts in western countries in terms of research productivity owing to the millions of dollars invested in e-resources provision by the government (Adams, King, and Hook, 2010). Surprisingly, university authorities always feel that the needed e-resources for sufficient research work for more collaboration with their counterparts in western countries have been made available. University elites have been crying for lack of adequate modern ICT infrastructural facilities in Nigerian Universities, including Ibrahim Badamasi Babangida Library (IBB Library), Modibbo Adama University of Technology, Yola (MAUTECH). It is on this basis that the study intended to cover the existing gap by investigating whether the availability and accessibility of electronic information resources by academic staff is worth what the government has been spending money in MAUTECH.

Objectives of the Study

The general objective of the study is to ascertain whether the available and accessible E-resources in the library are meeting the information needs of the academic staff at the Modibbo Adama University of Technology (MAUTECH), Yola. The specific objectives of the study were to:
1. Determine the extent of availability and accessibility of E-resources by academic staff in IBB Library of MAUTECH, Yola.
2. Ascertain the purpose and satisfaction derived by academic staff in accessing the e-resources in IBB Library, MAUTECH, Yola
3. Determine the problems academic staff encounter while accessing electronic resources in MAUTECH Yola.

Research Questions

The following research questions were raised in line with the objectives to guide the study:
1. To what extent are electronic resources available and accessible to the Academic Staff at Modibbo Adama University of Technology (MAUTECH), Yola?
2. For what purposes do academic staff at MAUTECH, Yola use e-resources, and to what extent are they satisfied with these e-resources?
3. What problems does the academic staff of the MAUTECH, Yola encounter while accessing electronic resources?

Literature Review

The ideas of e-resources and electronic communications services have indeed been studied over the years in different information centres and nations. Digital applications cover a wide variety of products, such as e-books, e-series / e-journals,

CD-ROMs, e-mail lists, records of documents, and the like, and the use of electronic enhancement of such digital facilities by using a computer is prevalent. Accordingly, Akporhonor and Akpojotor (2016) noted that digital facilities, availability, and access to e-services in Abia State Academic and Special Library are technologies that store information electrically and make it available by electromechanical means. Also, the expansion of digital services into academic library facilities offers opportunities to address most of the issues of teaching, learning, research, and data development, organization, sharing of information, preservation, and sustainability even more quickly and precisely than previously imagined (Nwachukwu and Asom, 2015). Electronic resources could give access to current data as it is regularly modified to manage data services. It comprises of facilities such as online databases, online reference services, use of Online Public Access Catalog, and the like. Besides, Internet data services are collaborative academic education and study undertaking that on for a long time, a vast amount of information over high-speed networks.

As a consequence of its countless significance in distinct fields of life, the introduction of e-resources in libraries and the availability of Internet data facilities have been overemphasized (Gbaje, 2007). It is evident that university libraries around the globe, especially in Nigeria, are confronted with problems of lack of funding to obtain data services in digital form. Other issues are lack of membership to electronic resources, as well as insufficient numbers of skilled library experts appropriate for the digital age. Human capital is lacking to efficiently preserve the technology, as well as uncertainty in energy supply (Nnadozie Chukwueke, 2016). This situation is peculiar to most university libraries in Nigeria. Despite the above challenges as observed from the literature, establishing electronic libraries, provision of electronic resources, and the inauguration of online information services for use by library clienteles become essential. Connectivity to information resources like databases, electronic journals, electronic books, alerting services, and other e-services can go a long way to enhance the libraries' image, attract patronage and further generate funds for those libraries that suffer from poor budgetary allocation.

Surveys have thus shown that information has overburdened the Internet users by the overload of information in developed countries and the need for assistance in finding academic libraries in developing is a severe battle to win in economically depressed countries like Nigeria. William and Sawyer (2010) agreed that Internet services allowed individuals to access data that they cannot quickly receive. The consequence is that academic staff need access to the use of Internet data facilities is essential for delivering quality education and additional instructional experiences that contribute to financial, political, and social development. According to Ossai-Ugbah and Ogunrombi (2011), it is a fast and convenient way of achieving effective service delivery.

The reality is that e-resources and services are available to help libraries to alleviate their financing problems knowing well that they have difficulties in providing the fund to run their respective libraries. Currently, the Internet-related applications and websites of social media all around the globe have become a worldwide town with excellent potential for education and data interaction (Nwachukwu and Asom, 2015). The introduction of digital technology in information business is a severe achievement in the sense that scientists can hold discussions with other scientists in their selected fields and themes of the research through Internet data platforms. Khan (2009) sustained that schools use electronic platforms for studies, provide learners with Internet lessons and course content, explore liturgical texts, conduct investigations, and released journals and articles. Despite these advantages, Gbaje (2007) pointed out that Nigeria's inflation, political climate, public indifference towards the data services, weak and disorganized practitioners, among other things, are obstacles to e-resource access and the efficient delivery of Internet studies and scientific data services. Another significant issue discovered in a research problem is the funding and administrative support that has been lacking in almost all university libraries. Consequently, the ordeal of libraries has reached a point that there is no technical workforce, machinery and price, and no complete electrical supplies and ICT installation in Nigeria, which are primarily the difficulties to supply and utilize electronic resources and services.

Methodology

The survey research design is employed. The choice of survey research was due to the extensive nature of the population. The method involved collecting data about the target population, which is a group of people or items that are few considered to be the true representative of the entire population under the study (Anikweze, 2010). A total of two hundred and thirty-nine (239) academic staff were drawn from the nine (9) faculties using stratified random sampling to serve as the population of the study. The main instrument for data collection is the questionnaire. Data collected is analyzed using descriptive statistics of frequency counts and percentages displayed in charts and tables.

Results and Discussion

The study found that the bulk of the academic staff in the studied institution senior lecturers pulling 71(36.6%), lecturer one 44(22.7%), lecturer two 37(19/1%), associate professors 20(10.3%), professors 16(8.2%), assistant lecturers 6(3.1%), and finally, graduate assistants 2(1%) respectively. The study also revealed that the majority of the respondents were males with 163(83.2% as against females having 33(16.8%), respectively.
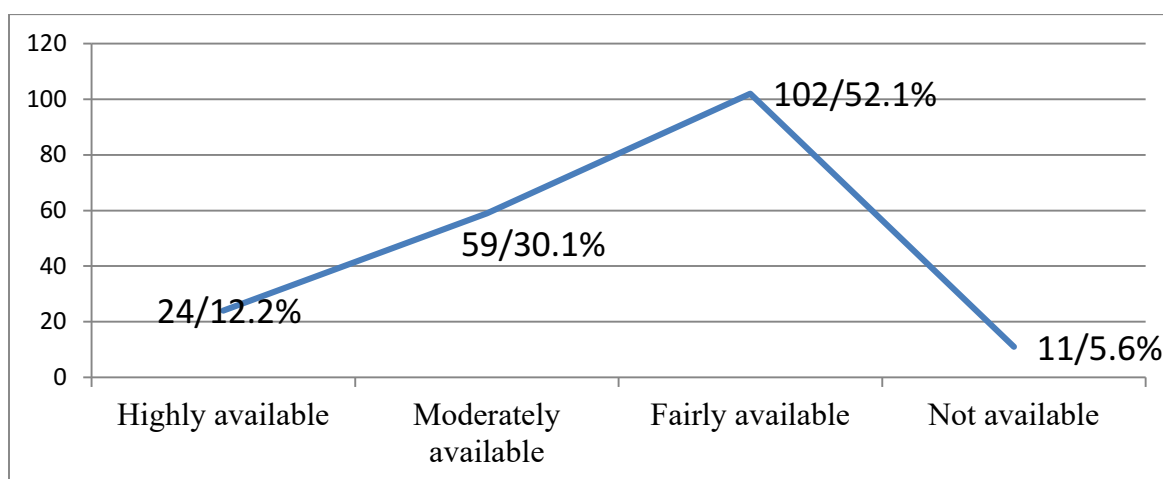
Figure 1: Extent of Availability of E-resources in the IBB Library of MAUTECH, Yola

Figure 1 shows that the extent to which E-resources are made available in the university library for academic staff is relatively possible as indicated by 102(52.1%), followed by moderately available with 59(30.1%), highly available 24(12.2%) and Not available with 11(5.6%) respectively. The implication of E-resources being "fairly available" is that it is a pointer that so many things are lacking. As suggested by Mamza and Abdullahi (2016) that the inadequacy of ICT facilities in a library affects their accessibility for the clienteles to exploit them for meaningful development.
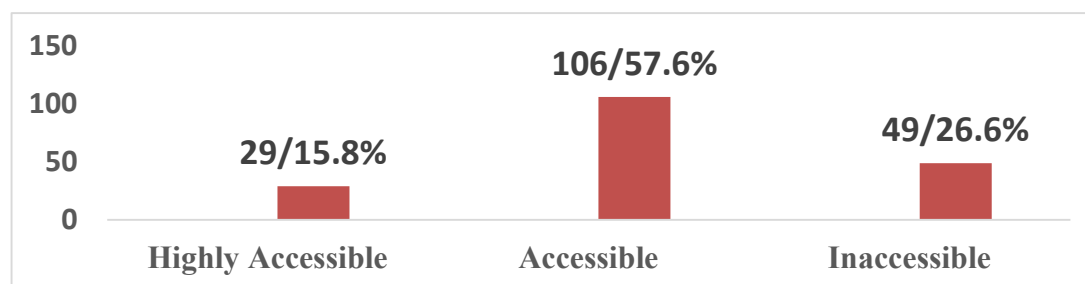

Figure 2: Extent of Accessibility to Electronic Resources by Academic Staff in the IBB Library of MAUTECH, Yola.

The chart revealed that the E-resources in the IBB Library of Modibbo Adama University of Technology Yola is accessible for the academic staff to access, as indicated by 106(57.6%). In comparison, 49(26.6%) reported that the facilities are inaccessible, while 29 (15.9%) stated the facilities are highly accessible. Even though the resources are reasonably available, its accessibility is adequate. This finding signifies that the library staff is service focused on making the e-resources available for the researchers.
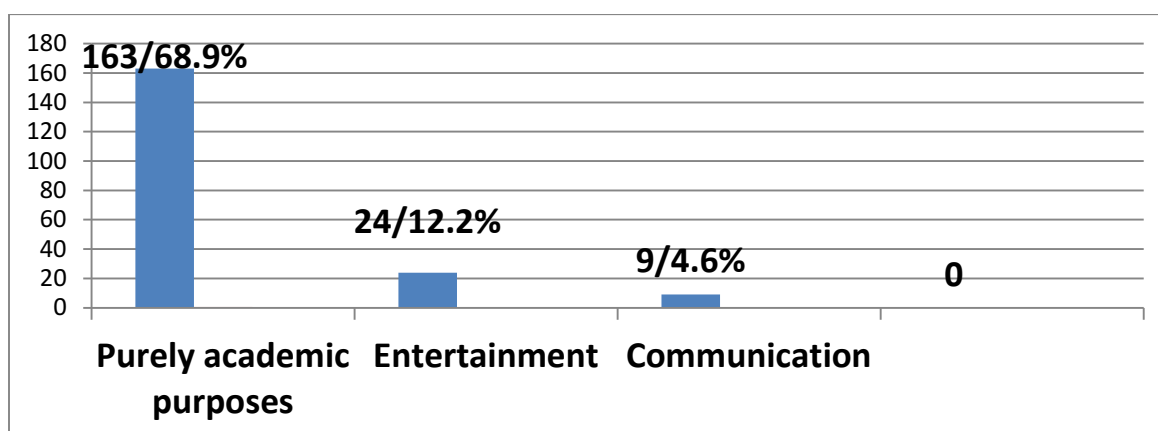
Figure 3: Purpose for Using Electronic Resources by Academic Staff in the IBB Library of MAUTECH, Yola

Figure 3 shows the valid percentage of respondents on the purposes for which academic staff use electronic information resources in Modibbo Adama University of Technology Yola. Out of the 196 respondents, 163 representing 68.9% of the total population indicated that they do use the facilities for purely academic-related matters, 24(12.2%) use it for entertainment purposes. In contrast, 9(4.6%) use it solely for communication purposes. Although there has been under-delivery of E-resources in the library, the lecturers and researchers are seriously using the available ones exclusively for academic purposes.
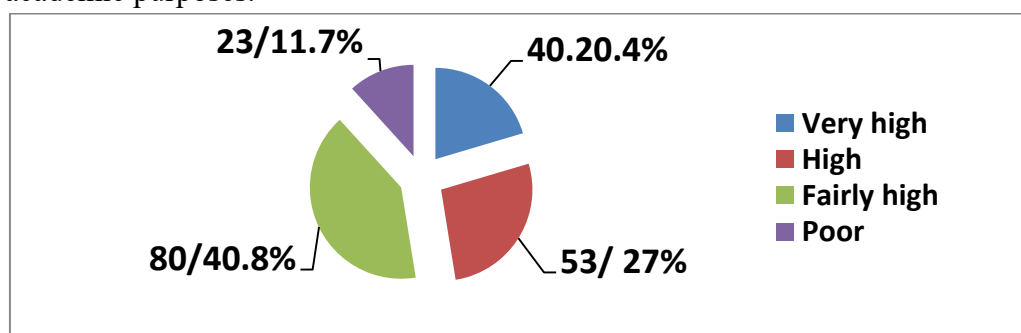

Figure 4: Extent of Satisfaction with the Use of E-resources by Academic Staff in the IBB Library of MAUTECH, Yola

Figure 4 which is a representation of academic staff at the Modibbo Adama University of Technology Yola which indicates that there is a reasonably high level of satisfaction pointed out by 80(40.8%), top with 53(27%), poor 40(20.4%) and very high with 23(11.7%) respectively. For the university to get the best of the academic staff, particularly in research and development towards improving their output, it calls for a means through which adequate resources are made available for use.

Problems Academic staff of Modibbo Adama University of Technology, Yola encounter while accessing electronic resources

Problems associated with the use of E-resources by academic staff in the IBB library
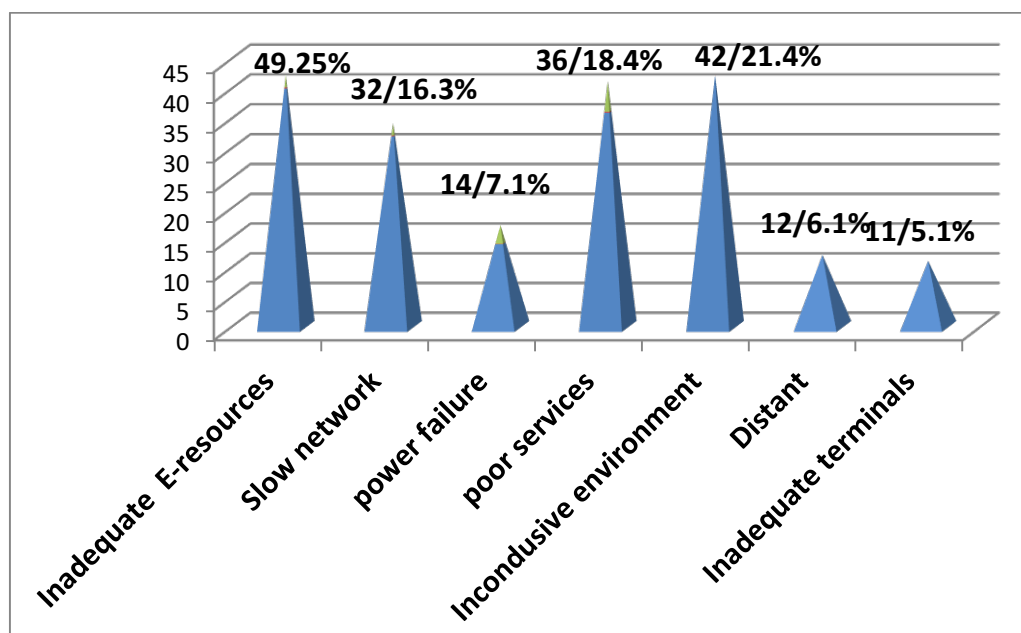

Figure 5: Problems Related to the Use of E-resources in the IBB Library of MAUTECH, Yola

Figure 5 shows that the bulk of the problems faced by academic staff in using the E-resources is the issue of inadequate E-resources as indicated by 49(25%), unconducive environment 42(21.4%), and poor Internet services 36(18.4%). Other problems include slow network 32(16.3%), inadequate power supply 14(7.3%), distant 12(6.1%), and insufficient computer terminals 11(5/1%), respectively. It is glaring that most of the areas identified as problems are attributed to a lack of adequate funding. The need for a pleasant working environment, inadequate computer terminals for lecturers to access, and connectivity problems are extreme areas that have to be addressed urgently.

Conclusion

The relevance of E-resources in a library is the most and not an option because evident has it that advanced countries used their libraries to furnish them with the right information at the right time for action. Based on the findings of the library studied, it is inevitable that efforts have been made to meet up with such challenges, but that has not been easy with them. It is indicated that the availability and accessibility of the facilities were rated relatively. Although most of the users use the resources for academic

purposes, they are relatively satisfied with the services due to problems arising from finance, power failure, and inadequate search terminals, which require immediate attention.

Recommendations

Based on the findings revealed, the following recommendations are worth consideration:

1. There is a need to acquire more E-resources to make more resources available and accessible to the academic staff for effective academic excellence;
2. There should be a proper and transparent relationship between the university administrators and the library staff for effective communication and support for library development, and
3. The library should source for support from donor agencies and friends of the library to help them shoulder some of the challenges faced since the library budget has always been meagre.

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