INFORMATION LITERACY COMPETENCIES AS CORRELATES OF ELECTRONIC INFORMATION RESOURCES UTILIZATION BY UNDERGRADUATE STUDENTS IN OBAFEMI AWOLOWO UNIVERSITY, ILE – IFE, OSUN STATE, NIGERIA

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ABSTRACT

The paper examines the information literacy competencies correlates of electronic information resources utilization by undergraduate students in Obafemi Awolowo University, Ile-Ife, Osun-State, Nigeria. Survey research design was used self administered questionnaire was used to collect data for the study. There are thirteen faculties in the university; sample size was determined by using multi-stage random sampling. A total number of 400 copies of the questionnaire were administered, 380 were properly filled and analyzed giving a response rate at 95% and 5% drop out rate. The findings of the study showed that a greater percentage of the respondents possess information literacy competency, and revealed that e-resources were readily available. However, availability does not mean utilization, Electronic resources in the library were underutilized by undergraduate students in O.A.U. The underutilization could be due to lack of awareness on the part of respondents. The paper recommends, among other strategies marketing of e-resources effectively to create awareness to the institutions community.

Introduction

Information is an important yardstick for measuring the competency of an individual or organization. It reduces uncertainty and helps an individual to make informed decisions Okoro and Okoro (2006) considered information as the raw material for making decisions, and creating knowledge. In order for the modern organization to succeed in any aspect of human endeavour, accessibility to quick and up-to-date information is very essential. . In the same vein Issa et al (2011) reiterated that information professions is a resource that is naturally needed in all human endeavours and which is very crucial to the development of a nation, without which there would be no society. In recent times, students are faced with diverse information choices in their studies, and they must be empowered to choose rightly, and this could be done through an information literacy programme. Ojedokun (2011) asserted that

information literacy is a means of personal empowerment, which will enable individuals to reason and think critically. In the same vein, Weiner (2010) submits that information literacy is essential for lifelong learning and empowers individuals and societies.

Many academic libraries are shifting emphasis from print to electronic resources. They acquired various electronic databases for different disciplines in order to be relevant in the society The mission of higher institutions of learning is to provide an enabling environment for every student to be information literate in order to excel in their chosen career and for overall personal development. This implies that the availability and utilization of e-resources in the universities depend greatly on the level of the students' information literacy competencies. Humes (2010) opined that in this information age, with the provision of so much information, and more misinformation, individuals in whatever system must not only possess reading and computer skills but also information literacy skills. It was argued that information literacy is not the same as computer literacy (which requires a technological know-how to manipulate computer hardware and software) or library literacy (which requires the ability to use a library's collection and its services), although there is a strong relationship among all these concepts. Nonetheless, each of these literacy skills requires some levels of critical thinking (Gilton, 1994).

Ojo and Akande (2004) stressed that students constitute one part of society who are fortunate to have access to a wide variety of electronic information resources. It is obvious that information society provides students with so much information that may create a barrier in their lives, the way out of this situation is to be information literate in order to be able to cope with the huge quantity of information available in variety of formats. The concept of information literacy presupposes that an individual knows when there is an information need, how to find, evaluate, use and subsequently communicate information effectively. According to Corrall (2007) Information literacy is a vital ability for the modern information intensive world enabling personal, economic, social and cultural development. Information and communication technologies (ICTs) have brought radical changes to the way information is gathered, stored, organized, accessed, retrieved and consumed in all libraries most especially in academic libraries. Information and communication technologies (ICTs) are playing a laudable role in realising the overall objectives of academic libraries which are; to contribute to the teaching role of the parent institutions, to support learning and research activities, to stimulate creativity and intellectual development and the acquisition of knowledge (Nwalo, 2000).

Information literacy is an educational concept that has gained importance, as presently we are more immersed in the "information age". It is an intellectual framework for identifying finding, understanding, evaluating and using information. Information literacy skills have become the concern of higher institutions of learning in Nigeria and around the globe. Both developed and developing countries place more and more emphasis on information literacy skills. The Association of college and research libraries ACRL (2010) defined information literacy as a set of abilities requiring individuals to recognize when information is needed and have the ability to locate, evaluate, and use effectively the needed information. Kindilchle and Samarvate (2008) asserted that information literacy provides us with methods to cope with the huge quantity of information coming from all directions through various kinds of e-resources

by giving us the ability and skills to know where to search and locate information effectively and efficiently. This corroborated the findings of Julien and Breu (2005) who opined that people who are not information literate are not able to fully access digital information. Also it was observed by Sridhar as far back as 1997, that one of the important reasons for the under utilization of electronic information is the lack of requisite level of working knowledge and consumption skills among customers and information intermediaries. In fact, information literacy forms the basis for lifelong learning.

Ojedokun (2007) observed that information literacy is common to all disciplines, learning environments and all levels of education. He suggested that information literacy skills should be systematically embedded at all levels of education. Again ACRL (2005) suggested that information literacy should be incorporated across the curricula, in all programs and services, and throughout the administrative life of the university. Therefore, information literacy cannot be over emphasized because, it is the literacy needed now for all categories of students, and more urgently for undergraduate students. Darch et al (1997) noted that information literacy requires awareness of the way in which information systems worked and of the dynamic link between a particular information need and the sources and channels required to satisfy their need. This suggested that there should be programs organised by university administrations to inculcate the skills.

Diane and Diane (2011) support the report of Ojo & Akande (2004) that lack of awareness of information research process often has a negative impact on students' abilities to search and retrieve the information needed to complete their course work. The reason being that students often abandon their search when they do not find any relevant information or they waste time by consulting the wrong type of document or by using search tools ineffectively. This leaves less time for reading books and articles and for writing papers. In support of this, Plotrick (2010) in his study suggested that academic library programs are preparing faculty to facilitate their students mastery of information literacy skills so that the faculty can in turn provide information literacy learning experience for the students enrolled in their classes. Utilization of electronic information resources depend greatly on the individual's information literacy competencies. It is obvious now that information literacy skills play an important role in academic achievement and lifelong learning. Information literacy is required for effective use, consumption and assessment of information resources available in the institutions. Consequently, it is argued that a deficiency in information literacy skills has a negative impact on academic achievement, as well as on personal development. Literacy programs should be given serious attention in tertiary institutions, and should be a collaborative effort of – Librarians, Faculty and Administrators to achieve greater results.

Electronic information resources have become essential part of libraries' collections. One major factor in the successful exploitation of the materials is the ability to navigate through a multitude of resources effectively and efficiently. Also they must provide justification for the huge amount expended on electronic information resources provided for students in tertiary institutions. It is on this premise that this study was conducted to contribute to the limited information available on information literacy. This study aims to ascertain information literacy competencies as correlates of electronic information resources utilization by undergraduate students in Obafemi Awolowo University, Ile-Ife, Nigeria

Objectives of the Study

The objectives of the study are to:
- ascertain the level of knowledge and information literacy competencies of the undergraduate students of Obafemi Awolowo University;
- determine the level of availability of electronic resources in OAU library;
- assess the level of utilization of information literacy skills by undergraduates of OAU; and
- determine the undergraduate students' knowledge of information literacy based on some selected background characteristics.

Research Questions
- What is the level of information literacy competencies of the undergraduates?
- What are the types of electronic resources available to undergraduate students?
- What are the factors that determine the undergraduate students' knowledge of information literacy based on some selected background characteristics.
- What is the level of utilization of information literacy skills by students of OAU?

Methodology

The study was carried out in Obafemi Awolwo University Ile-Ife, Osun State Nigeria. The University is one of the first generation universities in Nigeria. There are thirteen faculties in the University; sample size was determined by using multi-stage random sampling. Out of the thirteen (13) faculties, four faculties were selected by balloting. The respondents of the study were determined by applying systematic random sampling using the attendance register for library instruction programme which contains the names of all students. The study adopted a descriptive research design. The research instrument which was used for the study was questionnaire. The questionnaire was adapted from The National Electronic Library-User questionnaire for universities (2007). The researchers personally administered the questionnaire to respondents during library instruction programme lectures in all the faculties involved. A total number of 400 copies of the questionnaire were administered, 380 were properly filled and analyzed giving a response rate of 95% and 5% drop out rate. SPSS version 15.0 was used in analyzing the quantitative data. The statistical analysis employed in this study include frequency distributions for the univariate analysis for the socio-demographic characteristics of respondents as well as some selected variables in the study, Chi-square test was also employed for the bivaraiate analysis in the study.

Analysis and Interpretation of Results

TABLE 1: Socio-demographic characteristics of respondents

Background characteristics	Undergraduate Students	
	Frequency (N=) 380	Percentage
Gender: Male Female	218 162	57.37 42.63
TOTAL	380	100
Age group (in years): 14-20 21-25 26-30 31-40 40+	277 79 19 2 3	72.89 20.79 5.00 0.53 0.79
TOTAL	380	100.00

Source: Field survey

The above table shows the background characteristics of undergraduate students in the study, where more than half 218 (57.27%) of the respondents were males while162 (42.63%) of the respondents were females. It also shows the age distribution pattern of undergraduate students, Majority of the sampled respondents 277 (72.89%) fall within the age group 14 to 20 years which was followed by students in the ages 21 to 25 years 79 (20.79%), the frequency of ages falls with increasing years and only a negligible percent of 3 (0.79%) of the total undergraduate students sampled were aged 40 years and above. It further shows the percentage distribution of undergraduate students based on their faculties. More than two thirds 259 (68.16%) of the respondents were from the arts faculty while a little below one third of the respondents 121 (31.84%) were from the college of health sciences. From the study, the two faculties represented were the faculty of Clinical Sciences and the faculty of Arts.

TABLE 2: Percentage distribution of respondents by information literacy competency

Information Literacy competency	Undergraduate Students	
	Frequency(N=)	Percentage
Ability to determine when information is needed: Excellent Average Poor	333 36 11	87.63 9.47 2.89

TOTAL	380	100
Ability to access the needed information effectively and efficiently:		
Excellent	283	74.47
Average	59	15.53
Poor	38	10
TOTAL	380	100
Ability to evaluate information and its service critically:		
Excellent	284	74.74
Average	59	15.53
Poor	37	9.73
TOTAL	380	100
Ability to use information effectively to accomplish a given goal		
Excellent	305	80.26
Average	52	13.68
Poor	23	6.05
TOTAL	380	100
Ability to understand the economic, legal and social issues surrounding the use of information:		
Excellent	304	80
Average	44	11.16
Poor	32	8.40
TOTAL	380	100

Source: Field survey

Table 2 above shows various forms of information literacy skills that students in the study possessed. Of the 380 respondents, majority 333(87.63%) indicated that they had the ability to determine when information is needed. While only 11(2.89%) indicated that they do not possess the ability to determine when information is needed. Information literacy was also assessed by the ability of respondents to access the needed information effectively and efficiently. About two-fifths 149(39.21 percent) of the respondents indicated that they possess the ability to access the needed information effectively and efficiently. Also, 134 (35.26%) of the study respondents agreed that they possessed the literacy skills, about one sixth 59(15.53%) of the sampled students said they were unsure if they had the ability to access the needed information effectively and efficiently while just one tenth 38 (10.00%) of the respondents

admitted that they lacked the information literacy skill of accessing the needed information effectively and efficiently.

Based on the ability of respondents to evaluate information and its service critically, majority 284(74.74%) of the respondents indicated that they possessed the ability to evaluate information and its service critically, 59 (15.53%) were not sure if they possessed this literacy skill while 37(9.73%) of the respondents indicated that they lacked the ability to evaluate information and its services critically. Respondents were also asked of their ability to use information effectively to accomplish a specific goal, as shown from Table 2 above, close to half 175 (46.05%) of the respondents admitted that they possessed the ability to use information effectively to accomplish a specific goal, while 136(34.21%) agreed that they do not have the skill of using information effectively to accomplish a specific goal. A significant proportion 23 (6.05%) of the respondents do not have the skill needed to use information effectively to accomplish a specific goal while 52(13.68 %) of the respondents were unsure if they possessed the skill of effectively using information to achieve a stated goal.

Table 2 also shows the literacy ability of respondents to understand the economic, legal and social issues surrounding the use of information, majority 304 (80%) of the respondent had this capability, less than one tenth 32 (8.40%) of the respondents lack the ability to understand the economic, legal and social issues surrounding the use of information while 44(11.16%) of the respondents were not sure if they possessed the ability or not.

TABLE 3: Percentage distribution of respondents by availability of electronic resources in respondents' institution

Availability of electronic resources	Undergraduate Students	
	Frequency(N=)	Percentage
Electronic journals		
Readily available	296	77.89
Available	13	3.42
Not available	71	18.68
TOTAL	380	100
E-Books		
Readily available	288	75.99
Available	54	14.25
Not available	38	10.02
TOTAL	380	100
Reference books:		
Readily available	346	91.05
Available	22	5.79
Not available	12	3.16
TOTAL	380	100
Dictionaries:		
Readily available	360	94.73
Available	10	2.63

Not available	10	2.63
TOTAL	380	100
Reference databases:		
Readily available	273	71.84
Available	77	20.26
Not available	30	7.90
TOTAL	380	100
Factual databases:		
Readily available	231	60.15
Available	95	25.07
Not available	53	13.99
TOTAL	380	100
CD-Rom:		
Readily available	241	63.42
Available	87	22.89
Not available	52	13.69
TOTAL	380	100
E-Mail:		
Readily available	323	84 .99
Available	34	8.95
Not available	23	6.05
TOTAL	380	100
Internet:		
Readily available	344	90.54
Available	7	1.84
Not available	29	7.63
TOTAL	380	100
Online Public Access Catalogues (OPAC):		
Readily available	253	66.58
Available	51	13.42
Not available	76	20
TOTAL	380	100

Source: Field survey

Table 3 above assessed the availability of some electronic resources in Obafemi Awolowo University. The electronic resources listed include; Electronic journals, E-Books, reference books, Dictionaries, Reference databases, Factual databases, CD-Rom, E-mail, Internet and Online public access catalogues (OPAC).

As shown in Table 3 above, the most available electronic resource to undergraduate students in the study is Dictionaries. A total of 360 (94.47%) of the respondents agreed that dictionaries are readily available in their institution. This was followed by reference books, a

total of 346 (91.105%) of students sampled agreed that they have reference books as an electronic resource in the institution. Similarly, 344 (90.53%) of the sampled students agreed that internet is available in their institution as an electronic resource. Also, majority 323(84.99%) of the respondents also agreed that email is available in their institution as an electronic resource. Similarly 286 (77.89%) of the respondents agreed that they were familiar with electronic journals as an electronic resource in their institution. Over two thirds 278(71.84%) of the respondents agreed that there are reference databases available in their institutions and 253(66.58%) of the sampled undergraduate students agreed that there was an Online Public Access Catalogue (OPAC) in their institution. About 241 (63.42%) of the sampled students agreed that there were CD-ROM available in their institution, while 87(22.89%) of the sampled student were undecided about the availability of CD-ROMs' as an electronic resource in their institution, while 54 (14.21%) disagreed that there are factual database available in their institution while 231(60.78%) of the sampled respondent agreed that factual database is available as an electronic resource in their institution.

TABLE 4: Percentage distribution of respondents by their frequency of usage of electronic information resources

Frequency of usage of electronic information resources	Undergraduate Students	
	Frequency	**Percentage**
Daily	123	32.40
Twice a week	64	16.80
Once a week	29	7.60
Once a month	21	5.50
Twice a month	9	2.40
Occasional	128	33.70
Never	6	1.60
TOTAL	380	100

Source: Field survey

Table 4 shows the frequency of students' usage of electronic information resources. Less than one third 123(32.40 %) use electronic information on a daily basis. About one quarter 128(33.70%) have access to electronic information occasionally. Only 29(7.60%) of the respondents have accessed electronic information resources once in a week. A significant proportion 9(2.40%) of the respondents had access to electronic information resources twice in a month. Only 6 (1.60%) of the sampled students had never had access to any of the electronic information resources.

TABLE 5: *Percentage Distribution of Respondents Knowledge of Information Literacy based on some Selected background Characteristics*

Background Variables	Knowledge of information literacy					
	Agree	Undecided	Disagree	Total	X^2 - value	P-value
Sex:						
Male	175 (80.28)	39 (17.89)	4 (1.83)	218 (100)	1.8150	0.404
Female	137 (84.57)	21 (12.96)	4 (2.47)	162 (100)		
TOTAL	312 (82.11)	60 (15.79)	8 (2.11)	380 (100)		
Age:						
14-20	230 (83.03)	40 (14.44)	7 (2.53)	277 (100)		
21-25	66 (83.54)	13(16.46)	0	79 (100)	9.4479	0.306
26-30	12 (63.16)	6 (31.58)	1(5.26)	19 (100)		
31-40	1 (50.00)	1 (50.00)	0	2 (100)		
40+	3 (100.00)	0	0	3 (100)		
TOTAL	312 (82.11)	60 (15.79)	8 (2.11)	380 (100)		
Level of Education:						
100	229(83.58)	39 (14.23)	6 (2.19)	274 (100)		
200	42 (72.41)	16 (27.59)	0	58 (100)	24.5254	0.006
300	26 (89.66)	3 (10.34)	0	29 (100)		
400	10 (83.33)	0	2 (16.67)	12(100)		
500	1(100)	0	0	1 (100)		
600	6 (66.67)	2(33.33)	0	6 (100)		
TOTAL		60 (15.79)	8(2.11)	380 (100)		

312(82.11)					

Significance level: *p<0.05

Source: Field survey

Table 5 above assessed the percentage distribution of respondent's knowledge of information literacy skills based on the background characteristics of gender, age and level of education. From the table, majority 175(80.28%) of the male respondents were knowledgeable about information literacy skills and only 4(1.83%) of male respondents were not knowledgeable about information literacy skills. Similarly, 137(84.57%) of female respondent were knowledgeable about information literacy skill while only 21(12.96%) of female respondents were not, and 4(2.47 %) do not possess information literacy skills at all. About one-tenth 44(11.16%) of the respondents were poor in understanding the economic, legal and social issues surrounding the use of information.

Discussion of the Findings

Information literacy is a fundamental prerequisite for lifelong learning especially in the 21st century. In recent times information comes in different formats and different directions. this poses a lot of problems on the part, of students of which undergraduate students are most affected. It is obvious that universities are under increasing pressure to measure and report levels of graduate attribute type skills during the first year at university (Barrie, 2007), and when to demonstrate improvement of those skills over the course of a degree. The study revealed that greater percentage of the respondents posses information literacy competency. It presumed that this will enhance their ability to source out the needed information without wasting time and energy contrary to the findings of Ojo & Akande (2004); Diane and Diane; (2011) that students often abandon their search when they do not find any relevant information or they waste time by consulting the wrong type of document or by using search tools in effectively. As Humes (2010) expressly put it that everyone (students inclusive) should not have only reading skills and computer skills but information literacyskills also. Thus the study is in accordance with the view of Humes and Ghosh & Kumar Das (2006) respectively.

On the availability of e-resources in the institution, the finding revealed that e-resources were readily available in Obafemi Awolowo University. The university library has a huge collection of resources to meet its users needs. It has different databases, e-journals, and internets facilities which in no doubt changed the ways students and the entire country source for information. As Ozoemene (2011) rightly put it, availability of e-resources has changed what users actually read and use. The finding also support the work of Sekula (2008) who reported that Academic libraries around the globe are shifting from print to electronic information materials.

As regards to utilization, the study revealed that e-resources in the library were underutilized by undergraduates in Obafemi Awolowo University. It is crystally clear that availability of information resources do not necessarily mean utilization. The institution (OAU) provided huge amounts of e-resources. In spite of this, students' frequency of usage of electronic information resources was not encouraging, as only123 (32.40%) use electronic

information on daily basis and 128 (33.70%) use electronic information occasionally. The findings of the study corroborates the findings of Ojo & Akande (2004) who discovered a similar problem in their study of students access, usage and awareness of electronic information resources at the University College Hospital, University of Ibadan, Nigeria and Daine and Daine, (2011) respectively. This implies that the limited or low use of e-resources is not being justified by the high cost of provision of the resources by the University in the face of meagre resources. The study also revealed that more male participated in the study against their female counterpart (162). And it was also found that the greater percentage of males were more knowledgeable about information literacy skills than female. Hence, this study calls for further investigation on gender dimensions of information literacy competency.

Implications for Librarianship and Policy Makers

This study has far reaching implications for the practice of librarian especially in academic libraries. Issues such as information literacy competencies of the librarians themselves as well as the ability to determine appropriate selection criteria for the e-resources provided for the various institutions. Also the place of the library instruction programmes in incorporating information literacy skills and creation of awareness of the available resources. This may lead to a curriculum review and teaching strategies which are all very germane to the practice of librarianship in Nigeria since large sums of public funds are channelled to the provision of e-resources to our University libraries especially the one understudy. The study also has far reaching effects for the policy makers who make educational policies and determine the sharing formula for fund allocation to various sectors of the economy of which education is a part. If there is a policy making the teaching of information literacy compulsory and establishing a minimum literacy standard for entry into the university, a proper utilization and increased rate of e-resource utilization would be achieved. This would certainly justify the huge funds allocated to e-resources provision by the government and other international funding/ agencies.

Conclusion

Electronic information resources are available in larger quantities than it used to be in the past. Information content in electronic form is growing at the rate that one cannot predict, because nearly all information in the world presently available in print format as well as in electronic format. There had been considerable increase in the amount of e-resources in academic libraries especially the understudied institution's library (OAU) which has influenced the way students and other members of the university community source for information needed. However, the resources are yet to be maximally utilized by undergraduate students. One of the reasons suggested by the study for the under utilization of electronic information could be lack of awareness on the part of undergraduate students. Although, information literacy competency is an essential tool to improve utilization of e-resources, another major setback/barrier to e-resource utilization is the low level of awareness.

Recommendations

Based on the findings of this study, it is recommended that information literacy competencies should be made as part of graduation requirements for undergraduate students by the school administration to enhance fully the integration of information literacy into the undergraduate curriculum of OAU. It is high time for Academic libraries to give greater attention to literacy programmes that will facilitate student's mastery of information literacy skills and potential users for effective utilization of e-resources for lifelong learning. Marketing of e-resources effectively to create awareness for the institutions' community is another factor to be considered by academic libraries. As is obtained in other libraries, addresses and passwords of the databases available in the library should be posted in all strategic places within the library, to enhance the utilization of e-resources by undergraduate students who are the newest segment of the institution's community. Therefore, increased sensitization to availability of e-resources to users is highly imperative. Academic libraries should develop programmes that will prepare faculty to facilitate their students' mastery of information literacy skills.

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