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**AVAILABILITY, RELEVANCE AND USE OF HUMANITIES INFORMATION RESOURCE BY LECTURERS IN HUMANITIES DEPARTMENTS, OBAFEMI AWOLOWO UNIVERSITY, ILE-IFE, OSUN STATE**

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**ABSTRACT**

*Information landscape has continued to expand beyond traditional text-based resources to encompass a plethora of formats including digital, video, and social media as human civilization evolves. This evolution has paved the way for varieties of information resources to be made available for use in all fields of knowledge. Through information acquired, humanism provides general knowledge of the best accomplishments of human beings throughout history. However, there are hardly studies that explored availability, relevance and use of information resources by humanities' lecturers, academics and scholars in different branches of knowledge in Nigeria. Hence, this paper examined availability, relevance and use of information resources in humanities by lecturers in Obafemi Awolowo University, Ile-Ife, Osun State. This study adopted descriptive survey research design of the case study type. The population of the study comprised of Eight Humanities Departments which are Dramatic Arts, (10), English (35), African Languages (13), Foreign Languages (15), History (16), Philosophy (16), Music (9) and Religious Studies (12) giving a study population of 126. Total enumeration sampling technique was adopted for the study. Questionnaire was administered to the respondents, with 66(52%) response rate. Descriptive statistics, frequency counts and simple percentages, pie and bar charts was used for the data analysis. Result showed that reference materials, theses and dissertation, grey literature, e-resources and relevant websites are some information sources used by the academics of Humanities in OAU. It was also revealed that these resources are harvested through the library and the Internet. However, unstable power supply and inadequate funding of the library among others were factors militating against their use. Alternative power supply, increased funds to the library and review of collection development policies of academic libraries were recommended.*

**Keywords:** *Humanities, Humanities information sources, Humanities lecturers, Information resources*



## **Introduction**

The universe is surrounded by individuals with interests in different branches of knowledge. Some of these individuals are in the social, physical and applied sciences, as well as technology and engineering, whereas others are in the humanities. Adherents of these different branches of knowledge are practicing their professions, engaging in advocacy for their professions, conducting researches in their respective specializations, contributing to the growth of knowledge from their areas of specialties, thereby leading to the overall advancement of humanity. This shows that from their little ends, man in different knowledge endeavours and capacities, are contributing towards the existence of humanity.

Humanities represent those branches of knowledge that are interested in the activities of man and other happenings in the society through culture, traditions, arts and the likes. According to Stanford University (2019), the humanities can be described as the study of how people process and document the human experience. Since the emergence of man, disciplines like philosophy, literature, religion, art, music, history and language have been used to understand and record facts about the world. These modes of expression have become some of the subjects that traditionally fall under the humanities umbrella. Knowledge of these records of human experience gives man the opportunity to feel a sense of connection to those who have come before us, as well as to our contemporaries. These points to the direction that, for individuals and practitioners in the humanities, their emphasis is on issues associated with man in his natural environment in the society which cuts across the arts and crafts, archeology, languages, history, culture and traditions, religions and religious practices, among others.

It is a fact that the information resources that will contribute towards satisfying the information and research needs of scholars in the humanities will emanate from the investigations and studies from researchers in the concerned areas. As noted by Collins and Jubb (2012), information is at the heart of research and scholarly engagements, which implies that at every stage of research cycle, there is the inevitability of discovering, accessing, generating, manipulating, interpreting or presenting information, in order to advance knowledge. These information resources, according to Adomi (2012), are information materials from which people receive ideas, meaningful messages, enlightenment and direction that will enable them to accomplish tasks, take decisions and solve problems. It is essential that these resources, especially as found in academic libraries, are expected to be organized by subjects, both print and electronic versions, which would enable librarians, educators and students to quickly find the requisite resources for their diverse academic, information and research needs (Perrault & Aversa, 2012). Succinctly, what the laboratory is to the scientist is what the library is to a humanist. Whether he relies on his personal library or any other library. He strives to show evidence of analytical and critical approach to issues through relevant authorities in information sources to develop a considered argument and present a scholarly perspective on a topic. He may align himself strongly to one source and distance himself from others.

## **Statement of the Problem**

Information plays a major role in the advancement of man at all levels and in all fields of knowledge. Through information acquired humanism provides general knowledge of the best accomplishments of human beings throughout history. However, there are hardly studies that explored availability, relevance and use of information resources humanities by lecturers, academics and scholars in different branches of knowledge in Nigeria, especially in the humanities. This is the gap that necessitated this study, with emphasis on academics of humanities at Obafemi Awolowo University (OAU), Ile-Ife, Osun State, Nigeria. Five objectives were therefore drawn to delve into the information resources available to the lecturers in the Humanities at Obafemi Awolowo University



(OAU), Ile Ife, Osun State.

### **Objectives of the study**

The study sets out to:

1. determine the information sources available to the academics of Humanities in OAU;
2. identify the websites used in harvesting the information resources in Humanities in OAU;
3. find out the relevance of the information resources to the academics of Humanities in OAU;
4. examine ways in which the information resources are accessed by the academics of Humanities in OAU; and
5. determine the level of use of the resources by the academics of Humanities in OAU.

### **Research Questions**

These following research questions were drawn to achieve the stated objectives:

1. What are the information sources available to the academics of Humanities in OAU?
2. What are the websites used in harvesting the information resources in Humanities in OAU?
3. How relevant are the information resources to the academics of Humanities in OAU?
4. What are the ways in which the information resources are accessed by the academics of Humanities in OAU?
5. What is the level of use of the resources by the academics of Humanities in OAU?

### **Review of Related Literature**

The Concept of Information and its Availability, Use and Relevance

Information is the critical recourse for development and the survival of individuals, societies, organizations, and nations. It is one of the parameters for classification of the world into two (2) categories namely information rich country and information poor country, thus the difference between develop and undeveloped countries depends on the amount of information available to them as well as the use to which such information is put. Information can be defined as knowledge accumulated from different sources and different forms that can be used to make rational decisions that lead to the increase in the understanding and decrease in uncertainty. It is an indispensable factor for promoting the development of any society. Those connected to it who have information have varieties of backgrounds; there are agreements about its boundaries, percentage and essential nature. It is slippery and loaded with implications and it involves different aspects of human endeavors; above all it has different categories such as; agriculture, culture, development, economic, educational, health, political scientific, technology, security, social, sport and entertainment. (Ishola & Isiwele, 2014, in Ifidon, 2006). According to Unegbu and Ladan (2014) the need for library resources availability and accessibility in academic libraries has long been recognized as the core of academic libraries services is to foster information literacy and provide resources to students, researchers, and staff. Ishola et al (2018) asserted that in the library and information science scenery the user is a 'king' and all library activities are woven round the users hence, the core of any library mission is meeting the information needs of the users. The study called for sustenance of good services culture of systemic building up of books, journals, e-resources etc in the libraries. Effectiveness of an academic library does not depend on only its large information resources and facilities alone, but also on the effective exploitation and their relevance to user's information needs.

The University of West Florida library guide (2020) stated that the relevance of information sources depends mostly on its content, scope and targeted audience. Creative Common (2020) opined that the users' strategy for gathering relevant sources depends on his ability to: distinguish between primary and secondary sources; identify strategies for locating relevant print and electronic resources efficiently; identify instances when it is appropriate to use human sources, such as



interviews or eyewitness testimony; identify criteria for evaluating research resources and Understand why many electronic resources are not reliable. While the [Central Queensland University Library Guide](#) (2020) stated that selecting a relevant information resource for research can be daunting as the choice available include books, articles and websites. Diverse sources can give different kinds of information.

### **Information Sources in the Humanities**

Information needs of the humanities are very broad, encompassing past and present literature. It can be divided into three main categories namely; primary, secondary and tertiary sources. The University of Wisconsin-Madison Libraries Research Guide (2021) opined that both primary and secondary sources are relevant to scholars in humanities; while the primary sources are original records that were created at the time the historical events occurred or well after events in the form of memoirs or oral histories. With these researchers are able have a close knowledge of what actually took place at the scene of the event or time period to help them understand and interpret the past. The secondary sources of information available to the scholars include critical works on the text, interpretations and condensation of the primary sources of information, opinion and in the area of drama and music performances. Fayose (2006) avers that primary sources are the original text and manuscripts in literature, autobiographies, religion, philosophy and the original scrolls in music refers to as text, the original piece of painting or art work, letters/diary, statistical reports, court proceedings, technical reports, government records, maps, site records and the likes. While the secondary source includes Biographies, Indexes, Abstracts, Bibliographies, Journal Articles, Literary Criticism, Monographs written about the topic, reviews of books, movies, musical recordings, works of art, etc The tertiary sources are the textbook, introductions, popularizations, biographies, histories and even reference sources for the humanities. In the same vein, Popoola, (2008) stated that these specialized sources are mostly used by general students rather than specialist. Different fields of study use these varieties of any category of the sources depending on their needs.

The introduction of information technology has an immense contribution to the humanities in the areas of research and provision of more knowledge about humans in every part of world for collection, storage, processing and dissemination of information. Fayose, (2006) affirmed that there is a number of electronic data base information that are relevant for humanities studies, he listed some modern information sources/Databases in humanities to include:

1. Cuara, C Directory of online databases: Elsevier,
2. Williams M.F Computer-Readable Databases. Chicago/Amsterdam: American Library Association/Elsevier, Volume/Business, Law, Humanities, Social Sciences
3. World database in the Humanities. London: Bower-Sau

Collins and Jubb (2021) opined that researchers in humanities are adopting new technologies and e-resources to help them work more effectively but traditional practices still dominate in some areas. While Warwick, Terras, Galina, Huntington, and Pappa (2021) established from their empirical studies that digital resources cannot replace the need for physical library and information professionals as intermediaries in the humanities, instead has increased their importance but admonished librarians to use tools and resources like institutional repository to achieve this end. He stressed that the library remains a vital source of good quality and relevant humanities resources, whether they are large commercial collections, or web pages that provide links to information resources from the public domain

Saechan (2021) reported from their empirical studies that the type of information sources used in humanities include books, followed by research articles, reviewed articles, movie reviews. He stressed that humanities academics have problems of information usage which include problems with currency, sufficiency, varieties of information in audio-visual real material formats from libraries and



information centre and conclude that information professionals should work to solve these problems of information usage. While, Linsha and Bavakutty (2017), opined that academics in humanities depend on the library collections for their information sources and are relatively satisfied with the relevance of the sources.

### **Methodology**

This study adopted a descriptive survey research design of the case study type. The population of the study comprised of eight Departments in Obafemi Awolowo University, Ile Ife, which are: Dramatic arts, (10)English (35), African Languages (13), Foreign Languages (15), History (16), Philosophy (16), Music (9) and Religious Studies (12) giving a population size of 126. Total enumeration sampling technique was adopted for the study since the population is manageable. Hence, the researchers set out to administer questionnaire to all the responded, but sixty-six (66) questionnaires were available for collection giving 52% response rate. The questionnaire with its contents was adapted from Minnesota Department of Teacher Education Survey for Personnel Development: Administration Guidance (2016) and reorganized to reflect the objective of the study. It contains 4 sections: A: Demographic data of respondents; Section B and C contained items structured on a 2-point Likert scale of Available (2) and Not Available (1) on resources availability and on websites used in harvesting the information resources in the humanities respectively. Section D contained items structured on a 2-point Likert scale of Yes (2) and No (1) on accessibility and utilization of resources, effect of the use of the resources on their academic work type of use of the resources on their academic work and challenges to the use of the information resources. Descriptive statistics, using frequency counts and simple percentages pie and bar chart was used for the data analysis.

### **Data Analysis**

This section gathers information about the participants' gender, year of experience and department.

**Table 1: Demographic Information**

<b>Items</b>	<b>Variables</b>	<b>Frequency</b>	<b>Percent</b>
Gender:	Male	47	71.2
	Female	19	28.8
	<b>Total</b>	<b>66</b>	<b>100</b>
Experience on the job.	0-5years	24	36.3
	6-10years	18	27.3
	11-15years	10	15.2
	16-20years	14	21.2
	<b>Total</b>	<b>66</b>	<b>100</b>
Department	Dramatic Arts	5	7.6
	English	19	28.8
	Foreign Language	8	12.1
	History	8	12.1
	African Language	7	10.6



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Music	5	7.6
Philosophy	8	12.1
Religious Studies	6	9.1
<b>Total</b>	<b>66</b>	<b>100</b>

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**Source: Field survey, 2019**

Table 1 shows inter alia that there were 47(71.2%) males and 19 (28.8) females who participated in the study.

**Table 2: Resources available**

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Resources available	Available	%	Not Available	%
Reference	61	92.4	5	7.6
Periodicals	61	92.4	5	7.6
Biographical	56	84.8	10	15.2
Theses and dissertations	57	86.4	9	13.6
Conference Proceedings	54	81.8	12	18.2
Gray Literatures	57	86.4	9	13.6
E-Resources	55	83.3	11	16.7
Relevant website	57	86.4	9	13.6
Others	56	84.8	10	15.2

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**Source: Field survey, 2019**

Table 2 above shows inter alia the information resources available to academics, out of the total respondents, 61(92.4%) responded that reference materials and Periodicals are available, 57(86.4%) indicated that theses and dissertations, as presented in the chart below.

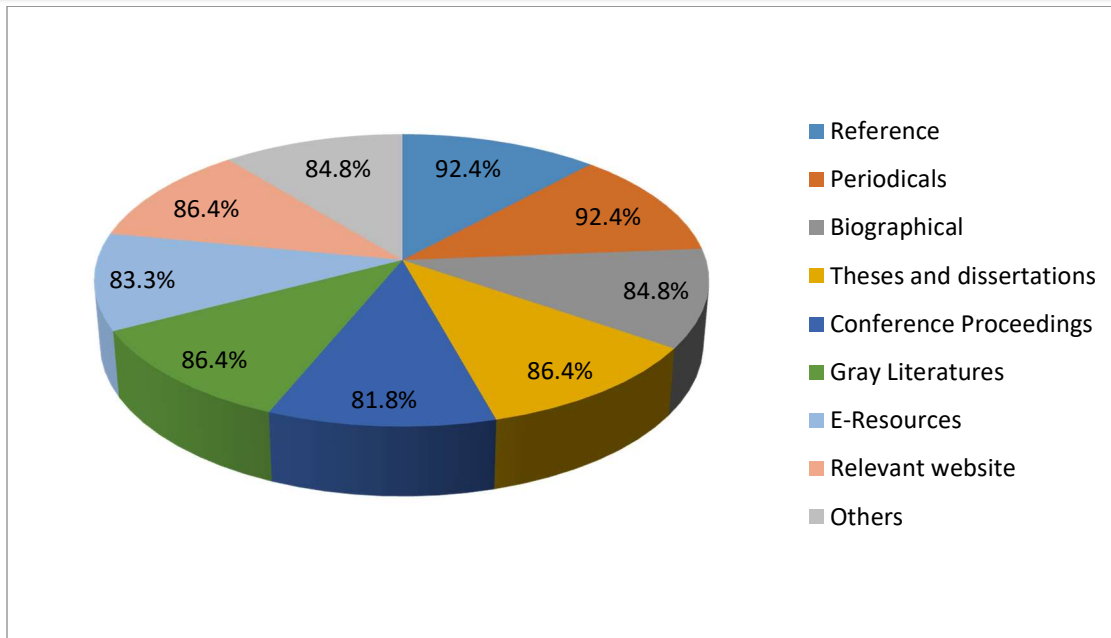


Figure 1: Resources available

**Table 3: Websites used in harvesting the information resources in humanities**

Relevant Websites	Available	%	Not Available	%
www.loc.gov Audio-visual (social cultural, political conventions seminars, film etc)	53	80.3	13	19.7
www.academicearth.com Audio-visual (lectures, from top world's scholars)	57	86.4	9	13.6
www.openculture.com Audio-visual (social, cultural event, pictures of festivals, traditional achievements, seminars, advertisement, film etc.	55	83.3	11	16.7
Ted.com www.ted.com devote to spreading ideals, inform of short powerful talk	57	86.4	9	13.6
YouTube (you can harvest and upload humanities materials)	58	87.9	8	12.1
others (please specify)	58	87.9	8	12.1

Table 3 above shows the websites used in harvesting the information resources in Humanities.



**Table 4: Relevance of the identified resources**

Items	Frequency	Percent
Relevant	12	18.2
Very relevant	54	81.8
<b>Total</b>	<b>66</b>	<b>100</b>

Table 4 above indicated that the resources mentioned in the study are very relevant to academic. Out of the total respondents, 54(81.8%) responded that the resources were very relevant to academic while 12(18.2%) reported that the sources are relevant to academic and none of the respondents disagreed with the assertion as presented in the chart below

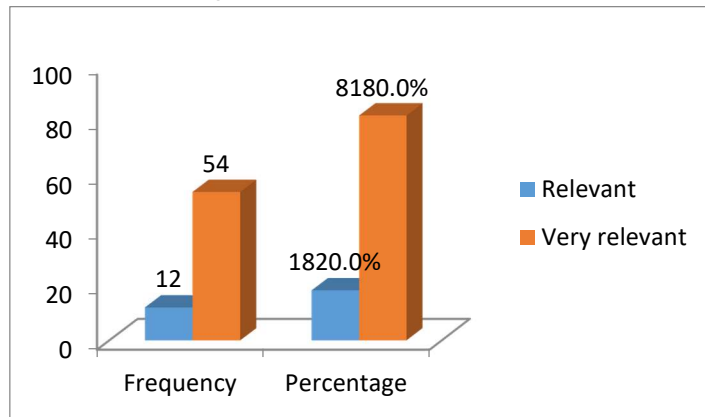


Figure 2: Relevance of the resources

**Table 5: Ways of accessing the resources**

Items	Frequency	Percent
Through the library resources	15	22.7
Through the Internet	51	77.3
<b>Total</b>	<b>66</b>	<b>100</b>

**Source: Field survey, 2019**

Table 5 indicates two ways through which the resources were being accessed. Out of the total respondents, 51(77.3%) responded that resources were accessed through the internet while 15(22.7%) reported that the resources were accessed through the library resources and the respondents did not access resources from more than two sources aforementioned.



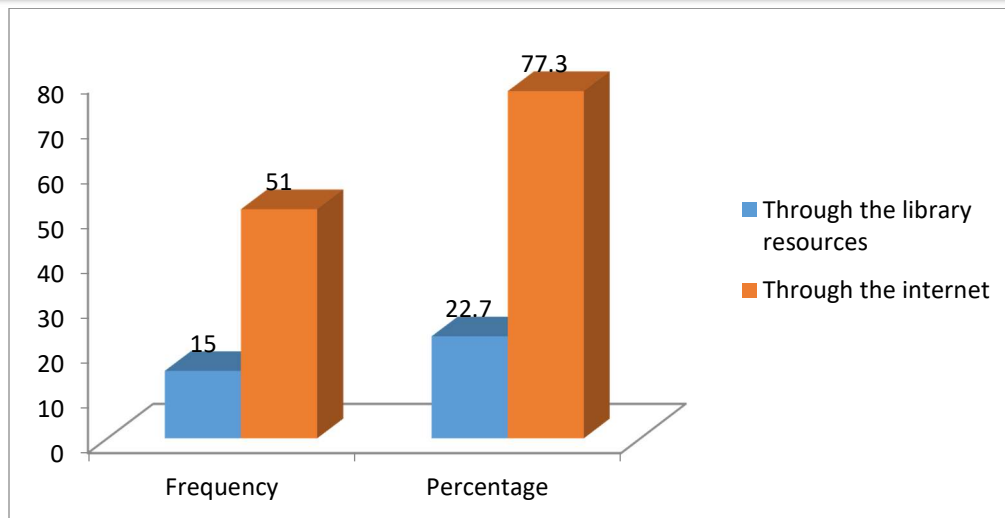


Figure 3: Ways of accessing the resources

**Table 6: The extent at which the resources are been utilized**

Items	Frequency	Percent
To a large extent	10	15.2
To a very large extent	56	84.8
<b>Total</b>	<b>66</b>	<b>100</b>

**Source: Field survey, 2019**

Table 6 indicates the extent these resources are been utilized, out of the total respondents, 56(84.8%) responded that resources were utilized to a very large extent while 10(15.2%) reported that the resources were utilized to a large extent.

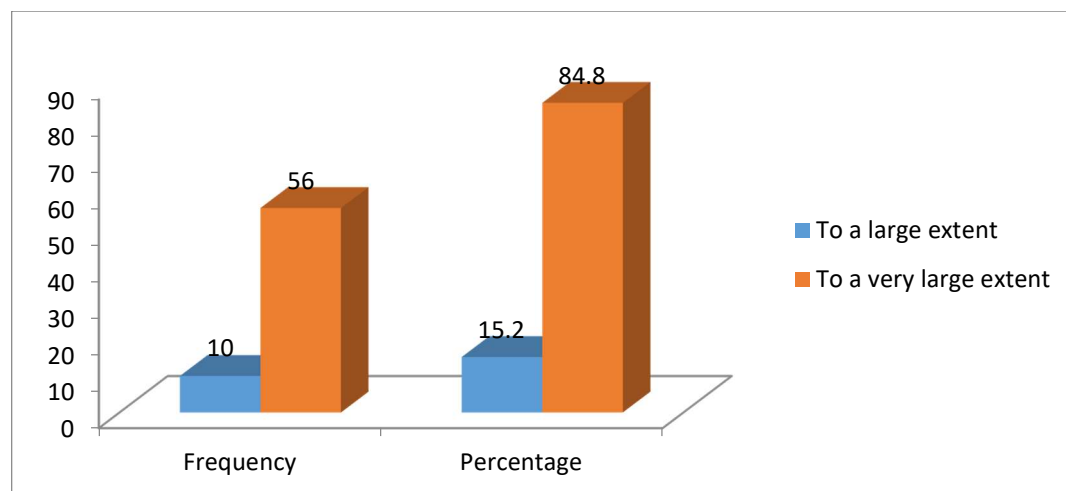


Figure 4: The extent at which the resources are been utilized

**Table 7: Effect of the use of the resources on their academic work**

Items	Frequency	Percent
Negative effect	13	19.7
Positive effect	53	80.3
<b>Total</b>	<b>66</b>	<b>100</b>

Table 7 shows that the use of these resources has positive effect on the respondents' academic work. Out of the total respondents, 53(80.3%) responded that the resources have positive effect while 13(19.7%) reported that the resources have negative effect on the academic work. It could therefore be said that all the information resources mentioned have positive effect on the academic works of the respondents as shown in the chat below.

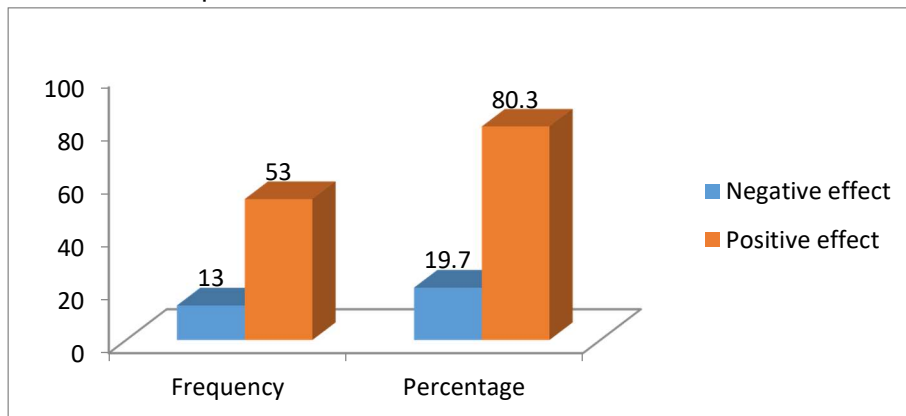


Figure 4: Frequency of use of the resources on their academic work

**Table 8: Challenges to the use of the information resources**

S/N	Challenges	Frequency (F)	Percentage (%)
1	Unstable power supply	57	86.4
2	Inadequate funding of the library	53	80.3
3	Unfavourable collection development policy	51	77.3
4	Inadequate preservation and digitalization	49	74.2

Table 8 above showed the major challenges of use of the resources, they are epileptic supply of electricity, insufficient funding of the library, unfavourable collection development policy and inadequate preservation and digitalization of resources. These problems prevent the academics from making maximum use of the available information resources and from having more of the modern



information resources.

### **Discussion of the Findings**

The result of this research work showed that reference materials, theses and dissertation, grey literature, e-resources and relevant websites are some of the information sources available and used by the academics of Humanities in OAU Ile Ife as 92.4% responded to the availability of reference sources and periodicals. 86.4% responded positively to the availability of theses and dissertations, Grey literature as well as relevant web sites; 84.8% indicated the availability of biographical sources and other forms of information sources, while e-resources have 83.3% and conference proceeding 81.8%. These findings are supported by earlier afore-stated findings of Fayose (2006) and Popoola, (2008). While Saechan (2021) also agreed with these findings but pointed out that humanities academics have problems of information usage.

Research findings also revealed some relevant websites available to the academics of humanities at OAU to include the following: www; loc, gov Audio-visual (social cultural, political conventions seminars, film etc), www.academicearth.com Audio-visual (lectures, from top world's scholars), www.openculture.com Audio-visual (social, cultural event, pictures of festivals, traditional achievements, seminars, advertisement, film etc; YouTube etc. Similarly, the findings revealed that these resources are harvested through the library and the Internet which indicated that the library is at the fore front of information provision especially to the academics. These finding are in agreement with Collins and Jubb (2021) who opined that researchers in humanities are adopting new technologies and e-resources which help them to work more effectively. In the same vein, Warwick, Terras, Galina, Huntington, and Pappa (2021) established from their empirical studies that digital resources cannot replace the need for physical library and information professionals as intermediaries in the humanities, instead has increased their importance but admonished librarians to use tools and resources like institutional repository to achieve this end. He stressed that the library remains a vital source of good quality and relevant humanities resources, whether they are large commercial collections, or web pages that provide links to information resources from the public domain

The study also indicated high availability and relevance of resources mentioned above to the academic work of the humanities lecturers. These findings align with the findings from Linsha and Bavakutty (2017) which revealed that academics in humanities depend on the library collections for their information resources and are relatively satisfied with the relevance of the resources. However, three major challenges were identified as hindrances to the use of the information resources; these are unstable power supply inadequate funding of the library and unfavourable collection development policy. These findings are also consistent with earlier finding from Saechan (2021) who asserted that humanities academics have problems of information usage which include problems with currency, sufficiency, varieties of information in audio-visual real material formats from libraries and information centre this is as a result of insufficient funds. He concluded that information professionals should work to solve these problems of information usage.

### **Conclusion**

From the analysis and discussion of the findings, the study clearly revealed that lecturers in humanities in Obafemi Awolowo University have access to relevant information resources and are connected to useful, informative web sites holding and publishing information resources in humanities. In the same vein, the study further revealed that these resources are harvested through the library and the Internet which indicated that the library is at the fore front of information provision especially to the academics in humanities. However, three major challenges were identified as hindrances to the use of the information resources; these are unstable power supply inadequate funding of the library and unfavorable collection development policy. The study reinforced the need for provision of more



relevant information sources for scholars in humanities, the need to connect them to more relevant websites to improve their access to subscription based academic databases.

### **Recommendations**

Based on the conclusion of the study, the following recommendations were made:

1. Alternative power supply should be made available so that the information resources could be put to optimal use by the academics.
2. The stake holders should look into the amount set aside for the libraries and increase funds to the library.
3. Regular review of collection development policies of academic libraries should be done for current information resources to be made available.
4. Since Information materials for Humanities especially primary sources do not go out of date, library managers should expedite action on the digitalization of information resources in the humanities for special attention.
5. Libraries should also subscribe to more electronic databases relevant to the humanities and organize periodic awareness programme for their effective use.



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