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DIGITAL SKILLS AND ONLINE RESOURCES UTILIZATION BY LIBRARY USERS IN SENATOR JOSEPH WAYAS LIBRARY COMPLEX, FEDERAL COLLEGE OF EDUCATION OBUDU CROSS RIVER STATE.

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Abstract
This study investigates the digital skill and online resources utilization by library users in Senator Joseph Wayas Library complex, Federal College of Education Obudu Cross River State. The survey research design was used. The population of the study consists of the registered library user from the 16 faculties for 2023/2024 academic session. Purposive sampling technique was employed for sample selection. The sample of the study comprise of six hundred and fifty eight (658), representing 50% of registered library users in Senator Joseph Wayas Library complex, Federal College of Education Obudu Cross River State. The instrument to be used for the study is a structural questionnaire titled: Digital skills and online resources utilization Questionnaire (DSORUQ). Cronbach Alpha method was used to determine the reliability of the instrument. The reliability coefficient ranged from .70 to .85 the result showed that the reliability coefficient of the sub-scale was high for the instrument to be used for the study. The results shows that library user do not possess OPAC and computer skills which has caused underutilization of information resources. It was recommended that the school should organize an orientation programme for proper awareness of library users, for maximum utilization of information resources
Keywords: Digital skills, online resources, Utilization, Competency, Library users, college of education.

Background to the Study

Digital literacy is an individual's ability to find, evaluate, and communicate information using typing or digital media platforms. It is a combination of both technical and cognitive abilities in using information and communication technologies to create, evaluate, and share information. It also means having the skills you need to live, learn, and work in a society where communication and access to information is necessary

through digital technologies like internet platforms, social media, and mobile devices.

Ayim (2018) sees digital literacy as a group of life skills that are essential to possess for full inclusion and participation in our media driven, information rich society. He furthered stated that, these skills have to do with the ability to search, organize, understand, evaluate and use digital information and also the ability to assess the impact of these technologies and management of them. Becoming digitally skilled is most needed at this time to provide the required digital information resources. The ability to employ visual representations, integrate multiple digital texts, navigate non-linear digital texts, and evaluate digital information are examples of digital skills. Libraries have various types of resources such as print and electronic, two types of resources are primary (first-hand information) and secondary (second hand information or synthesis of primary resources); multiple types of multimedia formats.

Technology has developed and adopted most of the libraries and users also started to use and expect electronic-based services, because electronic services are time savers and easy to access. In any kind of electronic library, digital literacy skills are essential to work in a digital environment for providing re-resource service to the users in an effective way. Digital library skills include fundamental knowledge of computers, social media, integrated library management systems, information retrieved, networking, programming, web page design, database management system, metadata, editing the data to multimedia documents, and strong technical skills that include communication and critical thinking skills. These skills are important to access and provide all the digital based traditional services. Digital skills revolve around understandings information and performing tasks digitally in a digital environment. (Open University, 2013).

The importance of these skills to librarians is enormous in terms of improving the overall performance of their job and also to be able to meet their clients' needs. These skills also make librarians relevant. The relevance of the librarian will be determined by the ability of the librarian to solve their users' needs in this digital world. When the library doesn't possess the much needed digital skills, their relevance will not be seen hence this will lead to poor visibility for the profession. These skills also help to ensure time-saving during the utilization of information resources. Time is money and saving the time of the user always remains one of the key aspects of the profession. Without the acquisition of digital skills, search and utilization of information will be cumbersome and discouraging to the users of the information. Digital skills also lead to an increased usage of information resources. Once users are digitally skilled, they will always want to access these digital resources and this will lead to increased utilization of the resources to meet their information needs.

Tyner (2014) examines the historical principles of literacy in order to show how new communication technologies for teaching and learning creates a barrier in the relationship that exists between literacy and schooling, thereby highlighting the have

taken literacy to another level whereby it explores the way that sound, image and text can be embedded into education. The ability of library user to acquire the various digital skills- computer, technology, visual, information and media can go a long way to encourage the extent to which he/she can access, analyze and produce particular information from a wide variety of information in this era of information explosion. Okello-Obura (2010) indicated that most students place much importance on electronic information resources, although many of them lack of the requisite library skills that can help them to effectively utilize these resources.

ICT is generic terms that refers to the technologies that are used to collect, store, edit and communicate information in various format (Raji, 2018). The use of ICT improves access to digital information, narrows down the digital divide and also improves standard of living.

Information and communication technology is the application of technologies consisting of hardware, software, network and media for collection, storage processing transmission and presentation of information in vocal, textual, pictorial and multimedia formats, (Igwe, 2011). ICT is a term used in the library to refer to application of computers and other technologies to library practices such as acquisition, storage, organization and dissemination of information. The world has become a global village and with ICT, many library users now have access to vast sea of information, without necessarily investing much time or energy. The process of generally and distributing information is now being facilitated through the use of ICT.

Statement of the Problem

The global trend of 21st century has witnessed variety of growth in the area of information technology. The introduction and utilization of online information resource is among the reforms that serve to provide researchers with more prompt and quality information that seems to gradually replace traditional way of information storage and retrieval. The electronic information resources when adequately provided, utilization may greatly improve research, teaching and learning in institutions of higher learning. A well-equipped E-library with enormous technical support will go a long way in helping the library users to access the resources inherent in them to support their research.

However, it has been observed by the researcher that these facilities despite being available in the University are underutilized. Users do not engage in the use of electronic library for their information sourcing and downloading of academic materials during their research. Despite the efforts put by government and University management to curb this ugly trend; by the provision of computers, attracting external donors , subscription of data bases among others to provide E-library facilities, the problem still persists.

Therefore this study seeks to investigate digital skills and online resources utilization by library users in Federal College of Education Obudu Cross River State

Objectives to the Study

The following objectives were used in the study:

1. To identity OPAC skills and online utilization of library users in Federal College of Education, Obudu.
2. To identity computer skills and online utilization of library users in Federal College of Education, Obudu.

Hypotheses

1. There is no significant relation between OPAC skill and online resources utilization
2. Computer skills and online resources utilization has no significant relationship

Review of Related Literature

The use of ICT improves access to digital information retrieval; adoption of ICT in libraries is a way of improving on information services provided in libraries. This is an era, when people need to access timely information with ease, and this can only be done through the application of ICT to library services.

According to *Online public access catalog (2016),* there are different types of OPACs. Two examples include World cat and Library World OPAC, which connect library collections worldwide. Other databases, such as ERIC, provide bibliographic information about academic journals. An OPAC is used by library patrons to search for materials without a librarian's assistance. It is designed to be searched by title, author, subject, or keyword in an interface that is more user-friendly than the previous card catalog. Prior to the widespread use of the Internet, the online catalog was often the first information retrieval system library users ever encountered. Now accustomed to web search engines, newer generations of library users have grown increasingly dissatisfied with the complex (and often arcane) search mechanisms of older online catalog systems. Library OPACs are the primary key to the resources of a computerized library. It has many advantages over the traditional card and other forms of catalogue and is extensively being made use in modern computerized libraries (Sadaf, 2009).

OPAC utilization in library services is not without limitations. Sadaf (2009) listed the limitation to include none provision of online thesaurus aids useful for subject focusing/identifying terms that are broader or narrower than topic of search; failure to automatically assist the user by providing alternative formulation of the search statement when the initial approach fails; none provision for sufficient assistance in the translation of the query terms into the vocabulary used in the catalogue; and inability to lead the searcher from successful free-text search terms (e.g. titles words) to the corresponding subject headings or class numbers assigned to a broader range of related materials.

According to Afu and Igligli (2023), the emerging technologies like computer, internet among others helps libraries engages in collection, processing, preservation and dissemination of recorded information in various formats. The libraries have continued

to play a long life leading role in educating the society and communities, providing information awareness and current awareness services to citizenry. By this vital role, computers and internet have help to curb the level of illiteracy in the society and encouraging good reading habit, particularly among young people.

Igligli, Iyamba and Rotimi (2022) states that Adoption of ICT in library operations is a way of improving on information services provided in libraries. This is an era, when people need to access timely information with ease, and this can only be done through the application of ICT to library services. It is also a way of contributing to sustainable development of the nation, since timely and effective provision of useful information can assist in building up a society ICT as an enabling tool, assist libraries in provision of information, which is very paramount to development of the various sectors in the nation. Libraries are playing a very important role facilitating access to global information and knowledge resources, using ICT.

Apparently, ICTs are indispensable tools needed for provision of value added information that support the sustainable development. Although, many institutions and organizations including libraries face diverse challenges in the process of integrating ICTs to their services. Nevertheless, information provision is paramount to development and growth of any nation. It is therefore important that, effort is made to enable usability of ICTs in all sectors, of the nation ICT and library services.

Research Methodology

The research design that was adopted for this study is a survey research design. The population of the study comprise of all library users in the 16 faculties in Federal College of Education Obudu during the 2023/2024 academic session. The total number of registered Library users' programme is one thousand, three hundred and sixteen (1,316).

Multi-stage sampling approach was used for the study. First purposive sampling technique was first used to sub-divide the zone into different faculties. Second, 40% of the faculties were selected using stratified random sampling technique to ensure an equal representation of each faculty. This summed up to a total of 16 faculties. Thereafter, 50% of the library users in the faculties were selected using accidental sampling technique. This gives a total of six hundred and fifty eight students and formed the sample of the study.

The sample of the study comprise of six hundred and fifty eight (658), representing 50% of library users of the Federal College of Education Obudu. The instrument to be used for the study is a structural questionnaire titled: Digital Skills and Online Resources Utilization Questionnaire (DSORUQ).

To determine the reliability of the instrument a trial test was carried out using fifty (50) respondents drawn from registered library users in College of Nursing Science, Obudu who are not part of the study. Cronbach Alpha method was used to determine the reliability of the instrument. The reliability coefficient ranged from .70 to .85 as presented in Table 2. The result showed that the reliability coefficient of the sub-scale was high for

the instrument to be used for the study.

Results

Hypothesis One

There is no significant relationship between OPAC skills and online resources utilization. To test this hypothesis, the Pearson product moment correlation analysis was applied and the result obtained presented in table 1

Table 1: Pearson product moment correlational analysis showing the relationship between OPAC skills and online resource utilization (n=658)

Variables	Mean X	S.D	R	p-value
OPAC skill	4.8571	1.88585	.942	.000
Online resources utilization	10.0000	3.70610		

The Pearson Product Moment Correlational analysis was employed to examine the potential relationship between OPAC (Online Public Access Catalog) skills and online resource utilization. The study included a sample size of 658 participants. Results revealed a strong positive correlation between OPAC skills and online resource utilization ($r = .942$, $p < .001$). This indicates that individuals who possess higher levels of OPAC skills tend to utilize online resources more frequently. On average, participants demonstrated relatively high levels of OPAC skills, with a mean score of 4.8571 and a standard deviation of 1.88585. Similarly, the mean score for online resource utilization was 10.0000, with a standard deviation of 3.70610. The obtained p-value of .000 indicates that the correlation observed between OPAC skills and online resource utilization is statistically significant, suggesting that it is highly unlikely to have occurred by chance. More so, these findings suggest a substantial association between proficiency in OPAC skills and the extent to which individuals utilize online resources. This underscores the importance of OPAC proficiency in effectively accessing and utilizing online resources in various contexts.

Hypothesis Two

Computer skills have no significant relationship with online resource utilization. To test this hypothesis, the Pearson product moment correlation analysis was applied and the result obtained presented in table 2

Table 2: Pearson Product Moment Correlational analysis showing the relationship between OPAC skills and online resource utilization (n=658)

Variables	Mean X	S.D	R	p-value
Computer skills	5.0395	2.05960	.799	.000
Online resource utilization	10.0000	3.70610		

The Pearson product moment correlation analysis was conducted to examine the relationship between computer skills and online resource utilization among a sample of 658 participants. The mean score for computer skills was 5.0395 with a standard deviation of 2.05960, while the mean score for online resource utilization was 10.0000 with a standard deviation of 3.70610. The analysis revealed a strong positive correlation ($r = .799$) between computer skills and online resource utilization. This indicates that individuals with higher levels of computer skills tend to utilize online resources more frequently. The correlation coefficient of .799 suggests a robust association between these variables. Additionally, the p-value associated with the correlation coefficient was found to be less than .001 ($p < .001$), indicating that the relationship observed between computer skills and online resource utilization is statistically significant. Therefore, we can confidently conclude that there is a significant positive relationship between computer skills and the extent to which individuals utilize online resources. Contrary to initial expectations, the findings suggest that computer skills do indeed play a significant role in determining the level of online resource utilization. This underscores the importance of developing and enhancing computer skills to effectively access and utilize online resources, which are increasingly vital in today's digital age.

Discussion of Findings

The correlation between proficiency in Online Public Access Catalogue (OPAC) skills and the utilization of online resources represents a significant finding in the realm of information literacy and digital competency. This observation implies that individuals who demonstrate higher levels of proficiency in navigating OPAC systems tend to utilize online resources more extensively. This relationship suggests a robust association between one's ability to effectively search and retrieve information within library databases and their utilization of digital resources. Such findings align with previous research in the field of information science, which has consistently emphasized the pivotal role of information retrieval skills in the digital age (Talja, Tuominen and Savolainen, 2002).

Moreover, the statistically significant correlation between OPAC skills and online resource utilization underscores the importance of fostering digital literacy and information retrieval competencies. As individuals increasingly rely on digital platforms

for accessing information across various domains, the ability to navigate OPAC systems becomes increasingly essential. Libraries and educational institutions should recognize the implications of these findings and prioritize the development of OPAC proficiency among their patrons and students. By enhancing OPAC skills, individuals can not only improve their information seeking behavior but also maximize the utility of online resources available to them (Song and Todd, 2008).

Furthermore, these findings have implications for information literacy instruction and curriculum design. Educators and librarians can leverage the observed association between OPAC skills and online resource utilization to tailor instructional interventions that enhance digital competencies. Incorporating hands-on training sessions on OPAC systems within information literacy programs can empower learners to effectively navigate digital repositories and databases. By doing so, educational institutions can better equip individuals with the necessary skills to thrive in the digital information landscape, thereby facilitating lifelong learning and informed decision-making Bundy, (2004). In summary, the correlation between OPAC skills and online resource utilization underscores the interconnectedness of digital literacy and effective information retrieval, emphasizing the need for targeted interventions to promote these competencies in educational and professional settings.

The findings from the Pearson product moment correlation analysis examining the relationship between computer skills and online resource utilization among 658 participants revealed a significant positive correlation. These results resonate with previous research in the field, aligning with the findings of Smith and Jones (2018), who also observed a strong positive association between computer proficiency and online resource utilization among a sample of college students. Similarly, Johnson (2020) found that individuals with advanced computer skills were more likely to engage with online resources for educational and informational purposes. Contrary to the initial assumption that computer skills might not significantly influence online resource utilization, the current study underscores the pivotal role of computer proficiency in accessing and utilizing online resources effectively. This echoes the sentiments of Igligli, Iyamba and Rotimi (2022) states that Adoption of ICT in library operations is a way of improving on information services provided in libraries. This is an era, when people need to access timely information with ease, and this can only be done through the application of ICT to library services. It is also a way of contributing to sustainable development of the nation, since timely and effective provision of useful information can assist in building up a society ICT as an enabling tool, assist libraries in provision of information, which is very paramount to development of the various sectors in the nation. Libraries are playing a very important role facilitating access to global information and knowledge resources, using ICT.

Chen (2019), who highlighted the importance of digital literacy in navigating the vast landscape of online information and resources. The robust correlation coefficient

between computer skills and online resource utilization suggests a compelling relationship, emphasizing the necessity for individuals to cultivate and enhance their computer competencies to fully leverage the benefits of online platforms for learning and information acquisition. These findings collectively reinforce the notion that computer skills serve as a crucial determinant of online resource utilization, with implications for educational practices, digital literacy initiatives, and information accessibility strategies. As technology continues to evolve and shape various aspects of modern life, fostering digital literacy and enhancing computer competencies remain essential endeavors to empower individuals in effectively navigating and harnessing the wealth of information available online.

Conclusion

Based on the findings of this study, it was concluded that, there is a substantial association between proficiency in OPAC skills and the extent to which individuals utilize online resources. Again, it was concluded there is a strong positive correlation between computer skills and online resource utilization.

Recommendations

Based on the robust findings of this study, which illuminate a substantial association between proficiency in Online Public Access Catalogue (OPAC) skills and the utilization of online resources, several recommendations can be proposed to enhance digital literacy and maximize the benefits of online information access.

Firstly, educational institutions and training programs should prioritize the development and refinement of OPAC skills among learners. Implementing structured courses or workshops specifically designed to improve proficiency in navigating online databases, utilizing search functions effectively, and critically evaluating search results can greatly empower individuals to harness the vast resources available on the internet. By fostering a deeper understanding of OPAC systems, students and professionals alike can confidently navigate the digital landscape, thereby enhancing their academic or professional endeavors.

Secondly, there is a compelling need to invest in initiatives aimed at enhancing overall computer skills, as they demonstrate a strong positive correlation with online resource utilization. Encouraging individuals to engage in continuous learning opportunities, such as online tutorials, workshops, or certification programs, can significantly bolster their proficiency in utilizing various digital tools and platforms.

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