

Accessibility and Use of Electronic Resources by Academic Staff of Polytechnics in South-west Nigeria

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**Abstract**

*Electronic information resources constitute a significant portion of library resources available to academic staff for teaching and research. However, studies indicate that their use seems not to have been optimized by the academic staff of polytechnics in South-West, Nigeria. This could be attributed to the low level of information accessibility of academic staff. This study, therefore, investigated information accessibility and its influence on the use of electronic information resources by academic staff in polytechnics in South-West, Nigeria. A survey research design was adopted. The population of the study comprised 3,807 academic staff in the nine public polytechnics in South-West, Nigeria. A multistage sampling technique was employed in the study. Krejcie and Morgan's formula was used to determine the sample size of 720. A simple random sampling technique was used to select six out of the nine polytechnics in South-West, Nigeria. A simple random sampling technique was used to select two schools/colleges from each polytechnic. Then, four departments were randomly selected from each of the selected schools/colleges. Lastly, the proportionate allocation was used to select 720 respondents from the polytechnics. A structured questionnaire was used as the instrument for data collection. Data were analysed using descriptive and inferential (multiple regression) statistics. The findings showed that information accessibility significantly influences the use of electronic resources as follows: information accessibility ( $R^2=0.198$ ;  $\beta=.546$ ,  $t(630)=21.458$ ;  $p<.05$ ). Electronic information resources were mostly used for academic publications but their use was not fully optimised ( $M=2.34$ ). The Internet search engine is the most accessible electronic information resource ( $M=2.97$ ). The study concluded that information accessibility influences the use of electronic resources among academic staff of polytechnics in South-West, Nigeria.*

**Keywords:** Academic staff, Electronic resources use, Information accessibility, Polytechnics.

**Introduction**

In this 21<sup>st</sup> century, accessibility of information is perceived as a critical and vital tool for knowledge growth and development. Accessibility is seen to be much more relevant than availability. It is about being able to use what is available at the required time. It is also one of the major prerequisites of information utilisation among library users and information seekers.

According to Ajegbomogun and Popoola (2014), access is determined by the permutation of the availability of information resources, availability of infrastructure, and the accessibility and affordability of the information services provided. Jonathan and Nwokocha (2013) posited that information accessibility is making accessible to users any available information at a reduced or no cost. They further described it as the prerequisite of information utilisation. The utilisation of information differs from person to person and from one corporate organization to another according to their information needs and other socio-economic imperatives. It can be viewed within the context of need, accessibility, and function performed. Jonathan and Nwokocha further asserted that the use of information by any individual can be influenced by the kind of job done, profession, the function performed or the task at hand. However, the ability to identify and retrieve specific information needed for a particular situation requires an awareness of the source (availability) and the skill to retrieve it within a short time and at a low cost (accessibility).

The emergence of information and communication technology in university and all other tertiary institutions environment around the world as well as the integration of ICT into research processes brought about a fundamental shift from the traditional information environment to an electronic environment where electronic resources such as e-books, e-journals, e-databases and so on constitute the bulk of library resources (Ishola & Obadare, 2014).

Electronic resources have been affirmed by Diyaolu (2012) as resources that have contributed tremendously to the reshaping of the information retrieval process which used to be mediated by the librarians within the confine of the library but is now accessible directly to the end-users regardless of time and space. The ease of accessibility which electronic resources offer an ideal search mechanism or retrieval tool for locating relevant information materials faster among thousands of information resources in the database and the continuous integration of print and electronic resources which facilitates the continuous integration of digitized as well as born-digital resources into the system. It was also described by Tonia and Tsiglis (2009) as a valuable tool for studying, learning, and research which have various advantages over the traditional print-based resources as they contain up-to-date information with advanced search capabilities. They facilitate access to information without the restriction of time and location. Electronic information resources are defined as the electronic representation of information that can be accessed via the electronic system and computer network (Johnson, Evensen, Gelfand, Lammers, Sipe, and Zilper, 2012). They constitute the most recent development in information technology made available in various forms like electronic books (e-books), digital libraries, online journals, magazines, e-learning tutors, and online tests.

Polytechnics play a major role in the progress of the nation through the provision of technical knowledge and vocational skills necessary for various sectors of the economy. Polytechnics are involved in the production of craftsmen, technicians, technologists, engineers, and other skilled personnel trained to be enterprising and self-reliant. Polytechnic education, therefore, is expected, according to the National Policy on Education (the Federal Republic of Nigeria, 1998), to be the main vehicle for technical education in Nigeria at the tertiary level of education.

Academic staff is central to the achievement of the statutory goals of polytechnic education. The staff themselves needs information from both print and electronic sources to perform their functions effectively (Goldstein & Ford, 2002).

### **Statement of the Problem**

Academic libraries are not left out in this development as electronic information resources now constitute a considerable portion of their collections. However, the degree of access and use of these electronic resources by academic staff appear to be low (Ani, Ngulube, and Onyancha, 2014). Perhaps the observed low utilization of electronic information resources by academic staff members in polytechnics in South-West Nigeria could be attributed to the level of accessibility to electronic information resources use among others. It is, therefore necessary to investigate the influence of information accessibility, on the use of electronic information resources by academic staff of polytechnics in South-West Nigeria, hence the need for this study.

### **Research Questions**

This study is set to find answers to the following research questions:

- 1) How accessible are electronic resources to the academic staff of polytechnics in South-West Nigeria?
- 2) What is the purpose of the use of electronic resources among academic staff of polytechnic in South-West Nigeria:?

### **Hypotheses**

Ho1. Information accessibility will not influence electronic resources use among academic staff of polytechnics in South-West Nigeria

### **Literature review**

Accessibility is critical in information utilization. According to Ajegbomogun and Popoola (2014), access is determined by the combination of the availability of various information resources, infrastructure, and the accessibility and affordability of the information services provided. Today, the accessibility of information is an essential tool for knowledge accumulation. The researchers further described accessibility as much more relevant than availability. It is about being able to use what is available at the required time. Also, accessibility to information networks influences the use of information resources. Daramola (2016) pointed out that there is a significant transformation in information access and use due to the advent of online and electronic resources. The author added that, as a result of this significant transformation, information access is now fast, easy, saves time, and can be accessed at anytime anywhere, and from one's convenience. Borgman (2002) defined access to information as connectivity to a computer network and to available content such that the technology is usable with the user having the required skills and understanding and the content itself in a usable and useful form. The definition is rooted in technology but also incorporates knowledge utility and communicative aspects.

Accessibility of information is also one of the major prerequisites of information utilisation among library users. Lack of access to information in the desired formats can be attributed to frequent power failure, machine breakdown, and the non-availability of technical staff to assist in retrieving information. According to Ajegbomogun and Popoola (2014), access is determined by the permutation of the availability of information resources, availability of infrastructure, and the accessibility and affordability of the information services provided.

Jonathan and Nwokocha (2013) argued that information generation, collection, organisation, recording, and distribution, accessing, and utilisation operate imperfectly. Thus, the purpose, user characteristics, environment, or situation involved the medium of communication, quality, infrastructural facility, cost, and times of availability all condition the use of information. Heppensta (2010) revealed a low level of access and use of emerging electronic resources by academic staff in Nigerian universities which are critical to effective research in the Nigerian universities. Foster (2011) argued that this low level of access towards the use of electronic information resources among academic staff of the Nigerian tertiary institution has greatly affected their research as well as the publication output of Nigerian academics in international journals. Similarly, Frankor and Akussah (2012) affirmed that academic staff in Nigerian Universities had little or no access to relevant reliable information when making decisions and conclusions on other research activities.

With the emergence of information and communication technology in the university environment around the world as well as the integration of ICT into research processes, the state of ICT infrastructure in Nigerian tertiary institutions is reportedly low in comparison to other developing and developed world. As a result of this, the Nigerian tertiary institution cannot invest in the emerging ICT to support reliable research activities (Ani et al., 2012). In a related study, Bayir (2010) opined that low level of access to electronic resources among academic staff and researchers has been attributed to low level of scientific publication in developing countries. The researcher concluded that academics in Turkish universities were benefiting extensively from electronic databases provided by ANKOS (Anatolian University Libraries Consortium).

In the study conducted by Tahir, Mahmood and Shafique (2008) on the use of electronic information resources among faculties of at the University of Punjab, Lahore, respondents were to requested to mention the availability of computers to them either at home or the office. It was found that 4% had computers at home, 28% at the office, and 24% had both one at home and office. Only 7% claimed not to have access to computer at all. Thus, encouragingly, 93% of the faculty members had access to computers either at home or office. Also, on the frequency of use of the electronic resources, respondents were asked to mention the amount of time they were spending on using the electronic resources. It was found that 59% used electronic resources for minimum of one to two hours per day.

Access to, and use of electronic resources can be influenced by individual, institutional and technical factors. According to Kabede (2007), individual access to electronic resources may be

greatly influenced by the characteristics surrounding the user, the channel of information and the environment. Individual user characteristics such as levels of computer literacy and information literacy, language proficiency and preference for some information formats over others can also influence access and use of electronic resources. Electronic resource characteristics may influence an individual's accessibility and usage. The other factor influencing the accessibility of electronic resources is the characteristic of the information carrier. CD or DVD-ROMs and web pages are some of the formats of electronic resources (Sife, Lwoga & Sanga, 2007).

Accessing electronic resources in these formats or sources depends on the availability of devices needed for reading, connectivity and one's literacy level. The accessibility and usage of electronic resources can also be influenced by the financial capability of an individual or institution for purchasing devices, such as computers, to access these resources and for subscriptions paid to the publisher for access to a resource like an internet provider (Martin, 2010). When there is a financial constraint on the procurement of these devices, accessibility and usage of electronic resources may be low. Users' awareness of the existence of electronic resources is also an important factor in the usage of such resources. Tyagi (2011) described some skills an individual needs to possess for retrieving information and evaluating outputs of the search process. Mardis, Hoffman and Marshall (2008) described these skills as the competencies needed by individual to access electronic resources. These competencies, as described by Mardis, Hoffman and Marshall include information literacy skills which include the skills to formulate a search, identify appropriate information sources, select the right search tools, employ suitable search strategies and evaluate the results. These uniform findings are motivational for these findings.

## **Methodology**

A survey research design was adopted. The design was considered appropriate because it seeks to gain insight into a phenomenon as a means of providing basic information on the focus of the study. The population of the study comprised 3,807 academic staff in the nine public polytechnics in South-West, Nigeria. The multistage sampling technique was employed in the study. The technique was considered appropriate because it allows for a random sampling technique at different levels or stages Krejcie and Morgan's formula was used to determine the sample size of 720. A simple random sampling technique was used to select six out of the nine polytechnics in South-West, Nigeria ensuring that at least a polytechnic is selected in each of the six states in South-West. Next, a simple random sampling technique was used to select two schools/colleges from each polytechnic. The selected schools/colleges are school of science and school of Business management studies. The two schools/colleges were selected because they are common all the selected polytechnics. Then, four departments were randomly selected from each of the selected schools/colleges. The selected departments are Computer science, Mathematics and Statistics, Food technology, Science Laboratory Technology (SLT) in the school/colleges of sciences while department of Accountancy, Banking and Finance, Marketing and Business administration were selected from the school/college of management sciences

Lastly, the proportionate allocation was used to select 720 respondents from the polytechnics. A structured questionnaire was used as the instrument for data collection. Out of the 720 copies of the questionnaire administered, 633 (87%) were retrieved and used for analyses. Data were analysed using descriptive and inferential (multiple regression) statistics

**Presentation of Research Questions**

**Research Question 1: How accessible are the Electronic resources to Academic Staff of Polytechnics in South-West, Nigeria?**

**Table 1 Accessibility of Electronic Resources to Academic Staff of Polytechnics**

S/N	Electronic Resources	Readily Accessible	Accessible	Rarely Accessible	Not Accessible	Mean	S.D
1	Search engines	204 32.2%	253 40.0%	129 20.4%	47 7.4%	2.97	.91
2	CD-ROM	207 32.7%	219 34.6%	130 20.5%	77 12.2%	2.88	1.00
3	E-Books	206 32.5%	217 34.3%	123 19.4%	87 13.7%	2.86	1.02
4	E-Journals	189 29.9%	180 28.4%	146 23.1%	118 18.6%	2.70	1.09
5	E-Newspaper	132 20.9%	273 43.1%	127 20.1%	101 16.0%	2.69	.98
6	E-Magazines	118 18.6%	287 45.3%	121 19.1%	107 16.9%	2.66	.91
7	Web pages	106 16.7%	266 42.0%	120 19.0%	141 22.3%	2.53	1.02
8	Electronic Dissertation	120 19.0%	216 34.1%	162 25.6%	135 21.3%	2.51	1.03
9	OPAC	138 21.8%	174 27.5%	172 27.2%	149 23.5%	2.48	1.08
10	Multimedia products	121 19.1%	210 33.2%	156 24.6%	146 23.1%	2.48	1.05
11	E-Clippings	123 19.4%	193 30.5%	165 26.1%	152 24.0%	2.45	1.06
12	Institutional repository	94 14.8%	208 32.9%	193 30.5%	138 21.8%	2.41	.99
13	Electronic bulletin board	100 15.8%	199 31.4%	178 28.1%	156 24.6%	2.38	1.02
14	Image	86	224	156	167	2.36	1.0



	collection	13.6%	35.4%	24.6%	26.4%		2
15	Electronic ref sources	88 13.9%	215 34.0%	145 22.9%	185 29.2%	2.33	1.0 4
16	Electronic Database	84 13.3%	216 34.1%	152 24.0%	181 28.6%	2.32	1.0 3
17	Statistical database	88 13.9%	209 33.0%	145 22.9%	191 30.2%	2.31	1.0 5
18	Web 2.0	68 10.7%	220 34.8%	173 27.3%	172 27.2%	2.29	.98
19	Indexing and abstracting databases	81 12.8%	202 31.9%	162 25.6%	188 29.7%	2.28	1.0 3
20	Listsery or e-mail alert	77 12.2%	218 34.4%	131 20.7%	207 32.7%	2.26	1.0 4
21	Blogs	75 11.8%	200 31.6%	160 25.3%	198 31.3%	2.24	1.0 2
22	E-Patent	84 13.3%	174 27.5%	166 26.2%	209 33.0%	2.21	1.0 5
	Overall mean = 2.48						

Table 1 explained the accessibility of electronic information resources to the academic staff of polytechnic in South-west, Nigeria. The table disclosed that the majority of the academic staff have access to the internet search engines with (mean=2.97, SD=.91), this is ranked highest by the mean scores rating. This means that the internet resource is the most accessible of all the resources available. Also, CD-ROM is accessible to the majority of the respondents with the (mean=2.88 and SD=1.00). E-Books is another resource that is accessible to the majority of the respondents with (mean=2.86, SD=1.02). Several of them also access the e-journals and e-newspapers with (mean=2.70, SD=1.09) and (mean=2.69, SD=.98) respectively. Some of the academic staff have access to e-magazines with (mean=2.66, SD=.91). The table also disclosed that e-patent with (mean=2.21, SD=1.05) is the least accessed of the electronic information resources, this was followed by blogs and listserv with (mean=2.24, SD=1.02) and (mean=2.26, SD=1.04) respectively

It means that there is a high level of accessibility of electronic resources among academic staff of polytechnics in South-West Nigeria as scale 1-10 shows a high level of accessibility towards the electronic resources while scale 11-22 shows a moderate level of accessibility towards the use of electronic resources among academic staff of polytechnics in South-West, Nigeria

**Research Question 2: What is the purpose of use of electronic resources among Academic Staff of polytechnics in South West, Nigeria?**

**Table 2: Purpose of Use of Electronic Resources among Academic Staff of Polytechnics**

S/N	Purpose	Yes	No
1	Article publication	483 76.3%	150 23.7%
4	Knowledge update	441 69.7%	192 30.3%
6	General update on new research areas	439 69.4%	194 30.6%
2	Conference/workshop papers	414 65.4%	219 34.6%
5	Prepare seminar papers	404 63.8%	229 36.2%
3	Prepare lecture note	402 63.5%	231 36.5%
7	International collaboration in teaching and research	354 55.9%	279 44.1%
8	Administrative activities	329 52.0%	304 48.0%

Table 2 explained the purpose of using electronic information resources among academic staff of polytechnics. The Table reveals that polytechnic academic staff uses electronic information resources for article publication with 150(23.7%) indicating NO, while 483 (76.3%) indicate YES, is the major purpose for which academic staff use electronic resources. While conference/workshop papers with 219(34.6%) indicate NO, 414(65.4%) indicating YES is the next to article publication. Also, to prepare lecture note indicates 402(63.5%) and for knowledge update is YES with 441(69.7%) while for administrative activities indicate is 329(52.0%). This shows that electronic resources are hardly used for administrative activities. The implication of this is that academic staff of polytechnic uses electronic information resources majorly for article publication since publication is a prerequisite for promotion and their research productivity.

**Test of Hypotheses**

H01: Information Accessibility will not influence Electronic Information Resources Use of Academic Staff in Selected Polytechnics in South-West, Nigeria



**Table 3: Influence of Information Accessibility on Electronic Information Resources Use of Academic Staff of Selected Polytechnics in South-West, Nigeria**

	Unstandardized Coefficient		Stand. Coefficient	T	Sig.	Remark
	B	Std. Error	Beta Contribution			
(Constant)	12.607	1.898		6.641	.000	Sig .
Information Accessibility	.714	.033	.650	21.458	.000	Sig

$R^2 = .422$ , Adjusted  $R^2 = .421$ ,  $F = 460.440$ ,  $p < .05$

In Table 3, the model accounted for 42.2% of the variation in the dependent variable of electronic information resources use accounted for by the independent variable (information accessibility). The table further shows that the regression model influencing the dependent variable well F-ratio of 460.440 (significant at 0.05 level) indicating that information accessibility significantly influence electronic information resources use of academic staff of selected polytechnics of South-West, Nigeria. In addition, Information Accessibility ( $\beta = .650$ ,  $p < .05$ ) significantly influence the use of electronic information resources by academic staff of selected polytechnics in South-West, Nigeria

Therefore, the null hypothesis is rejected. This implies that increase in information accessibility will result in increased use of electronic information resources by the academic staff of selected polytechnics in South-West, Nigeria.

### Discussion of Findings

This section discussed the findings of this study with relevance to findings of the previous studies. The study was designed to find out the levels of accessibility of electronic resources, the purpose of use of electronic resources; the effect of information accessibility on the use of electronic resources; by academic staff of polytechnics in South-West, Nigeria. The accessibility of the electronic resources to the academic staff of polytechnic in South-West, Nigeria showed that the search engines are the most accessible resources and followed by the CD ROM. The result of this finding is in contrast to the findings of Palmer and Saniller (2003) that investigated the impact of electronic resources on research process and activities. The study revealed 69 out of the 90 questionnaire surveys distributed to the respondents agreed that electronic periodicals are the most utilized among the researchers while the study by Reed and Tanner (2001) found out that the electronic resources mostly accessible is the CD ROM

The findings on the purpose of use of electronic resources revealed that the article publication is the major purpose for which academic staff uses the electronic resources. The result of these

findings contradicts the findings of Mulla (2011) on academics in Tanzanian universities which revealed that the majority of the faculty members used the electronic information resources for searching relevant information in their areas of specialization, for communication and teaching purposes. The findings also corroborated the findings of Oduwole (2004) who examined the electronic resources facilities and their impact on the research outputs of an agricultural scientist at the University of Agriculture, Abeokuta, Nigeria The study revealed that respondents use electronic resources to find research materials such as journals and conference proceedings, followed by sending and receiving of electronic mails (e-mail).

This study revealed that information accessibility positively influenced electronic resources use of an academic staff of polytechnics in South-West, Nigeria. In line with the findings of this study, empirical pieces of evidence abounds that access to information has a great impact on electronic resources use (Braddon-Mitchell & West, 2004; Burden, 2000; Hamilton & Pors, 2003; Jones, 1999). These findings also corroborated the position of Ajegbomogun and Popoola (2014) that carried out a study on the influence of self-efficacy, accessibility of internet resources on research productivity of academic staff of universities which shows a strong correlation between information accessibility and internet resources utilization.

## Conclusion

Electronic resources have indeed become a valuable tool among academic staff for teaching and research activities with many advantages over traditional resources. However, a low level of information accessibility could undermine the use of electronic resources by academic staff in polytechnics in South-West, Nigeria. The study revealed that information accessibility influenced the use of electronic information resources among the academic staff of polytechnic in South-West Nigeria. Based on the findings in this study there is the need for the management of the polytechnic libraries to create more awareness on the various electronic resources accessible to academic staffs other than the most utilised internet search engine to further enhance and increase its utilisation among academic staff of polytechnics in South-west, Nigeria.

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### **Authors' Biography**

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Dr Ahmed Olakunle Simisaye has PhD in Information and Resources Management from Babcock University, Ilisan, Nigeria. He is presently an Associate Professor in the Department of Library and Information Science of Tai Solarin University of Education, Nigeria. Dr Simisaye has supervised projects both at undergraduate and post-graduate levels. He has published some papers in local peer review journals in Library and Information Science. He has also presented on contemporary issues on library and information science in local and international conferences. Research interest of Dr Simisaye is: Information literacy, Information and Communication technology in libraries and information centres, Information Use and Research productivity. He is a certified Librarian in Nigeria and member of Nigerian Library Association (NLA). He is also a member of National Association of Library Information Science Educators in Nigeria.

