ACCESSIBILITY AND UTILIZATION OF INTERNET SERVICE IN NIGERIA LIBRARIES: AN EMPIRICAL STUDY

Habib Shehu[CLN]	**Enite Anita Urhefe,** [CLN]	**Aworo Promise**[CLN]
Department of Library and	Librarian, Federal University	College of Education, Agbor
Information Technology	of Petroleum Resources	P.M.B 2090, Delta State
The Federal Polytechnic Nasarawa	Effurun (*FUPRE*) **NIGERIA**	**NIGERIA**
P.M.B 001, **NIGERIA**		

ABSTRACT

Recently certified librarians are revolutionizing the library profession by collaborating with peers and colleagues from all ages to make things happen. This paper investigates certified librarians perception on accessibility and utilization of internet service in Nigeria libraries. The design of the study is cross sectional survey and the population consists of 364, 1st Conference of Certified Librarians by Librarians' Registration Council of Nigeria (LRCN) held in 2014.The instrument used to generate data is the questionnaire and the data generated was analyzed using frequency, bar charts, table, percentages and mean. The outcome of the study reveals that majority of the participants were from academic library asserted that internet was very accessible to them. Whereas some libraries indicated that internet was not accessible to them at all. It also found that the participants strongly agreed that the reasons for which staff used the internet in Nigeria libraries are for research purpose, for current awareness services/ update of knowledge and to develop personal competencies among other. It also revealed that, lack of search skills, information overload, power outage, irrelevant information, difficulties in navigation of website, inaccessibility of some sites and unavailability/ inaccessibility of the internet services were some of the challenges faced by the staff in Nigeria libraries.

Keywords: Accessibility; Utilization; Internet Services; Nigerian Libraries; Certified Librarians Perspective.

INTRODUCTION

Information is increasingly becoming a critical determinant of the success of human endeavour. It is crucial to the performance of academics who are both consumers and producers of information. Information and documentation including printed and online materials are the most important means to control and access scientific result. For the academics to have rightful information, the university libraries have a part to play. The vision, mission and strategies which are selected by universities as a guide for meeting the core function of teaching, learning, research and providing information form the foundation on which the role of the university library is established. Based on these functions, Oyewusi and Oyeboade (2009) emphasised that the primary purpose of university libraries is to support teaching, learning and research in ways consistent with, and supportive of the institution's mission and goals. In other words library resources and services should be sufficient in quality, depth, diversity and currency to support the institution curriculum. In line with this, Aino (2006) opted that university libraries are expected to provide information materials in all kinds of format, providing wider access of information in form of electronic journals, books, full text journals, CD-ROM, databases and internet. Failure to have access to information has numerous consequences like duplication of research work, frustration, low morale and low productivity in research and teaching. This lack of access to information has resulted to academics seeking for information in the cyber-café, which they feel offers similar information access services. In addition Popoola (cited in Oyewusi and Oyeboade, 2009)

submits that the inability of university libraries to meet the information requirements of some library users might have force them to use personal collections including internet resources when conducting research. This implies that if the libraries neglect to match library services capabilities to users' needs, then the libraries run the risk of being marginalized and therefore users will seek alternative competitive offerings in order to satisfy their many academic needs. Broadly-Preton and Barnes (2002) was of opinion that the success of organization depends on ability to respond to the needs of customers more effectively and organization must avoid complacency at all cost. In order for university libraries to fulfill their objectives, there is need to improve on library services. The paper is then aimed at finding out the extent computer services that are available in the university libraries and the extent university libraries meet researchers' information needs.

LITERATURE REVIEW

The Internet serves as a useful tool in support of the various educational activities that ranged from research to teaching. Anderson and Reed (1998) noted that the Internet technology and computers has made it possible for students to be active learners and allowed instructors to be facilitators. Jackson, et al. (2011) remarked that the Internet will level the educational playing field due to its availability to everyone, everywhere, and any time, irrespective of gender, race/ethnicity, income or other socio-demographic characteristics. Thus, the Internet is a vital tool that will propel University education to greater heights as the world move further into the knowledge-based economy. Universities worldwide now invest a lot on internet access because it reduces the time between the production and utilization of knowledge; improves co-operation and exchange of ideas with fellow researchers in other institutions, regions or countries, furthers the sharing of information; and promotes multidisciplinary research. Bon (2007) states that the Internet can substitute for expensive hardcopy libraries, by availing students' access to scholarly information resources. Today, survival in academics without the Internet is hardly imaginable. The Internet has found useful applications in online data repositories, library catalogues, journals, news services, student and financial administration systems, online supported or solely online conducted teaching, as well as in digital communication with fellow students and lecturers. Other contemporary uses of Internet by students include purchasing, entertainment, and even dating. The investigation of how the internet fits into the daily life of staff and students at educational institutions is worthwhile when one considers the ubiquitous and all pervasive communications tool features of the internet. Consequently, studies have been carried out in many places to understand how University students and staff use the Internet, the purposes for which the students and staff use the Internet, the search engines used, their internet skills as well as problems that hinder efficient internet use among other. The internet is very useful to university students and staff in Nigeria because it enables them to have access to timely, accurate and relevant information that cannot be obtained from library shelves. Chan and Fu (2009) noted that Internet searching helps university students to boost their intellectual development and job preparation. Due to the endless nature of information resources on the Internet, libraries are increasingly investing in provision of Internet services and resources to enable their clients have better access to the information. However, Aguolu and Aguolu (2002) asserted that resources may be available in the library and sometimes there may be identified bibliography relevant to one's area of interest, but the user may not be able to locate the material. The students revealed in the interview that the slow Internet connections increased the time spent on Internet and invariably the cost of usage is increased. That the non provision of free Internet facilities for them in the University unlike their counterparts in some neighborhood Universities that enjoy their intuitional Internet free of charge is a very serious impediment

limiting Internet use. Similar constraints have been identified by other researchers in varying degrees (Omotayo, 2006; Luambano and Nawe, 2004). Omotayo (2006) found that the major barriers to efficient Internet use by students include slowness of the server and payment for the access time. Luambo and Nawe (2004) also observed that the slow Internet connections attributable to small bandwidth is a major factor hindering Internet access and use in Africa. Aguolu and Aguolu (2002) therefore identified five major possible types of inaccessibility which include conceptual, linguistic, critical, bibliographic, and physical inaccessibility. However, availability of information does not imply that such information is readily accessible for utilization by users who need them.

UTILIZATION OF INTERNET INFORMATION IN NIGERIA

University education is geared towards the production of a complete intellectual, capable of independent learning and research. Prior to the use of Information and Communications Technology (ICT) for acquisition, processing and dissemination of information, university research, teaching and learning were restricted to information due to materials available to students' dominical institutions library or by extension, those materials made available through inter-lending. However with globalization through the Internet, Carbo (2003) informed that the world is shrinking resulting to immediacy of information. Thus, multimedia resources can be created, and information can be communicated instantaneously. The mode of acquiring and disseminating information for university education changed from physically available prints to e-materials with virtual reality. As a result of that Akintunde (2002), asserted that any attempt to have meaningful academic communication can be successful only by the use of ICT which presents information in real time and space.

Youngsters especially students and researchers spend most of their time in cyber café and because this is not available in the university community, they risk travelling a further distance to transact one business or another on the internet. These members of the university community use the Internet for the resources it provides which according to Ikoro (2002), include e-mailing, world wide web browsing, telephoning, and telex/video conferencing and others. Available also in the internet are audio broadcasting, news and discussion/chart group, face-book YouTube and twitter resources. Using those resources available on the internet, Cisse (2004) noted that students and researchers are disposed to access maximum information and communicate at world level. Thus they can debate democratically and freely while being exposed to happenings in their fields of activities as well as other subjects. Chifwepa (2003) discovered a high use of internet by the staff of the University of Zambia where 35 out of 37 staff made use of internet. Their major motivation for such use was convenience (82.91%); usefulness (80.05%); free access to information and software (71.4%); and ease of use (68.6%). In Nigeria, Jagdoro (2004), in his own research ascertained that 45.2% of graduate students access the Internet at the cyber café in the university where only 8.2% used the library Internet facilities. A greater percentage (38.24%) did that only on monthly basis where 39.7% spent one hour on each visit.

IMPORTANCE OF THE INTERNET TO ACADEMIC AND LIBRARIES

The Internet has become a universal publishing, distribution, real-time communications and broadcasting medium. It can also be used to gather information from users and the World Wide Web which is seen as a mainstay of Internet. This now offers streaming multimedia play back and may include streaming video, graphics, photographic, images texts and so on (Botto, 1999). IT Encyclopedia (2001) in the same vein defines Internet as an essentially

whole bunch of computers connected together by wires which they can talk over. Ezomo (2006) asserts that Internet is the gateway for libraries and information centers to enter the electronic information era and provides information generated by different organizations, institutes, research centers, and individuals all over the world. Internet is also conceived as a rich, multi-layered, complex, ever-changing textual environment. The Internet provides several opportunities for the academia in research, lecturing or teaching. It is a mechanism for information dissemination and a medium for collaborative interaction between individuals and their computers without regard for geographic limitation of space (Leiner, Cerf, Clark, Kahn, Kleinrock & Lynch; Postel, 2000; Singh, 2002). Information is created on the Internet which ranges from simple e-mail messages to sophisticate 'documents' (sites) incorporating sounds, images and words. Massaquoi (2006) also confirms that 84 percent of journal articles and 97 percent of completed research works are now available on the Internet. He adds that making use of the Internet helps in conducting research, publishing articles and exchanging ideas. Similarly, (University Libraries, 2003) as cited by Yusuf (2006) says that the Internet provides wide range opportunities for easy access of relevant and current literature, wide range of instruments, online opportunity for validation of instrument, simulation of an on-going research, and so on.

However the integration of new technology especially computer and internet into the library is a major force change in the nature of librarianship and careers of information professionals Dolon and Schumacher (as cited in Aharony, 2006). The question is to what extent the university libraries in Nigeria meet research information needs, within this era. The new information environment requires that librarians now have new opportunities and new roles to play. The professional image of the librarians is one of the topics that concern them, which is management of information. Aharony (2006) enumerated the roles of librarians as follows, items that relate to information retrieved, building and managing sites, information filtering, matching processed information to the client's personal profile, instruction in and use of information resources, reference, indexing and classification. These roles are challenges to librarians in the rapidly evolving environment of networked information, information explosion, remote access and fast growing needs to help users to use information effectively. OCLC (as cited in Oyewusi and Oyeboade, 2009) emphasized that study had shown that libraries were seen as been more trustworthy/credible in providing more accurate information. World Book Encyclopedia (2005) emphasized the concern over the internet about the accuracy and the appropriateness of the materials available in internet which may be misleading inaccurate or even fraudulent.

OBJECTIVES OF THE STUDY

The objective of this study is to investigate certified librarians perception on accessibility and utilization of internet service in Nigeria libraries. It is also aimed to determine the extent to which point of internet access influence its use, to identify access to internet services by staff of the libraries, as well as factors inspiring use of internet services. Also, for what purpose the staff accesses the internet and find out challenges faced by staff while accessing the internet services in Nigeria libraries.

METHODOLOGY

This study was carried out using a social survey method. The research instrument adopted for the study was questionnaire. The instrument was structured to assess relevant information about certified librarian's perception on accessibility and utilization of internet in Nigeria

libraries. It was validated using expert opinion. The reliability of the instrument was tested using test-retest method. Twenty five questionnaires were administered to librarians in Abuja, the capital city of Nigeria. The completed questionnaire were returned and re-administered to the same set of librarians, and the responses were the same with the previous ones. The population of the study was 364 (1st Conference of Certified Librarians of Nigeria) from various libraries and institutions across Nigeria by the Librarians' Registration Council of Nigeria (LRCN) on the 18th– 23rd May, 2014. A total of 321 respondents were selected out of the total population. The researcher administered and collected the questionnaire from the respondents. Thus there was 92% response rate were completed and returned.

DATA ANALYSIS AND DISCUSSION

Out of 321 copies of the questionnaire that were administered to, 1st conference of certified librarians in Nigeria, 296 (92%) were retrieved. The data from the retrieved questionnaire are hereby analyzed using simple statistic like frequencies, bar chart, tables and percentages for easy interpretation.
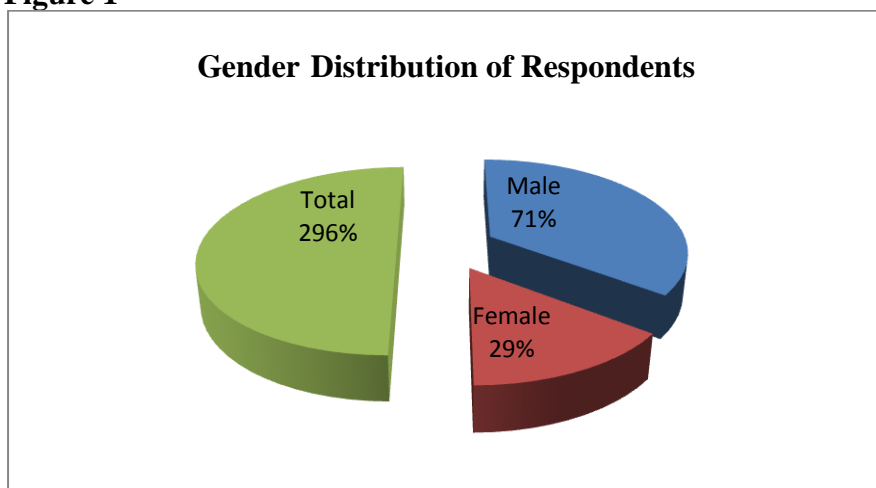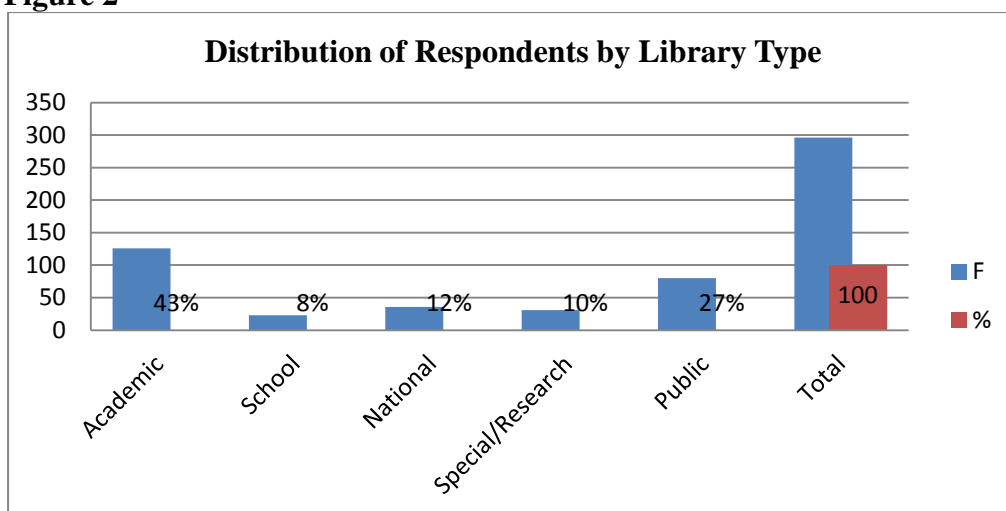
Figure 1

Fig. 1 shows that (71%) of the respondents are male while (29%) are female. This represents the gender distribution of participants involved in the survey

Figure 2

It is shows from fig 2 that majority (43%) of the respondents were from academic library while (27%) were from public library whereas (12%) were from national library while (10%) were from special/ research library and (8%) were from school library

Figure 3

Distribution of Respondents by Job Title
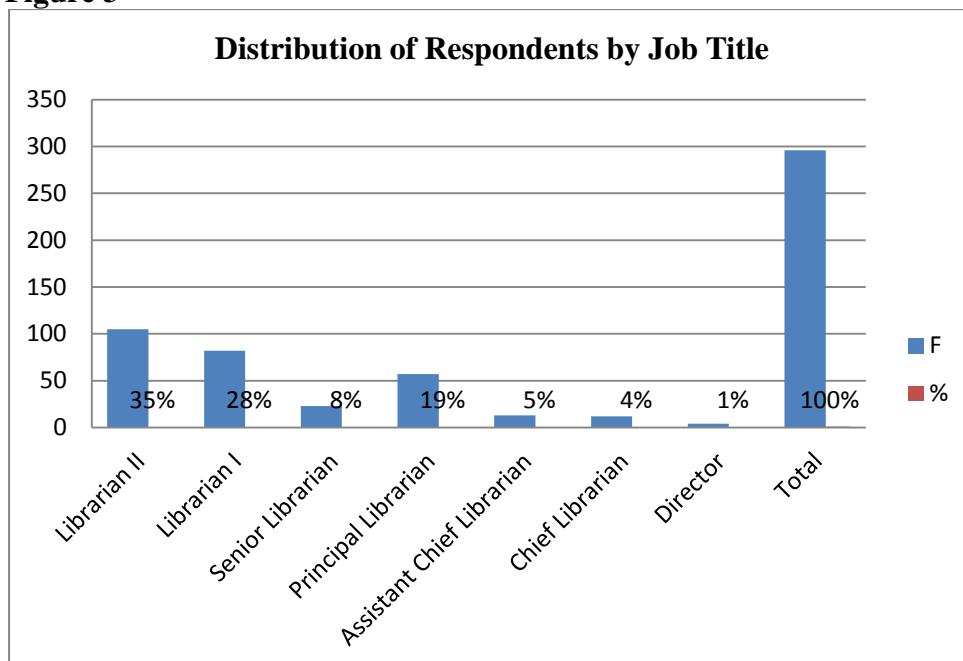
It is obvious from fig 3, that (35%) of the respondents were librarian II, (28%) of the respondents were librarian I, while (19%) of the respondents were principal librarian whereas (5%) of the respondent were assistant chief librarian, (4%) of the respondents were chief librarian while (1%) of the respondents were director from various libraries and institutions across Nigeria libraries.

Figure 4

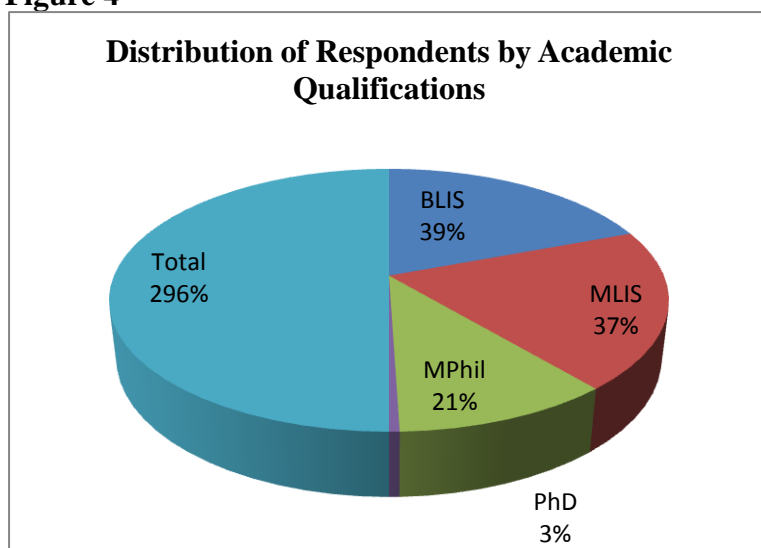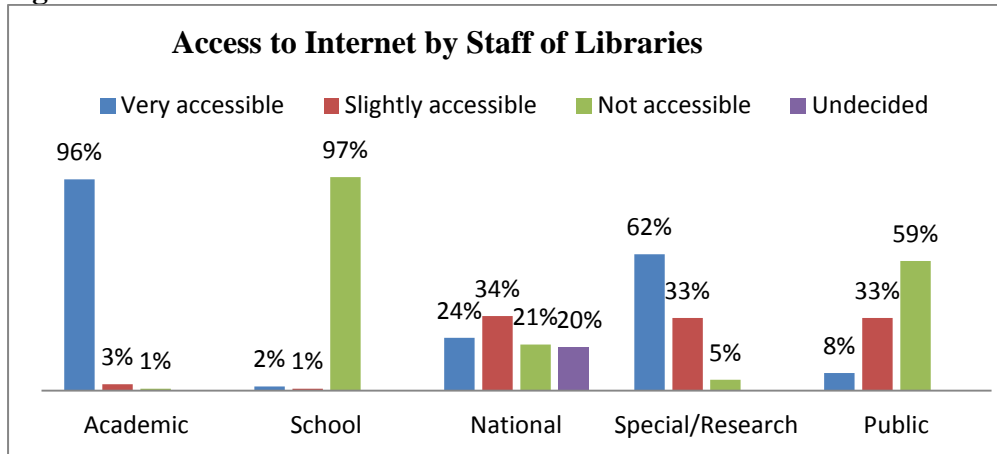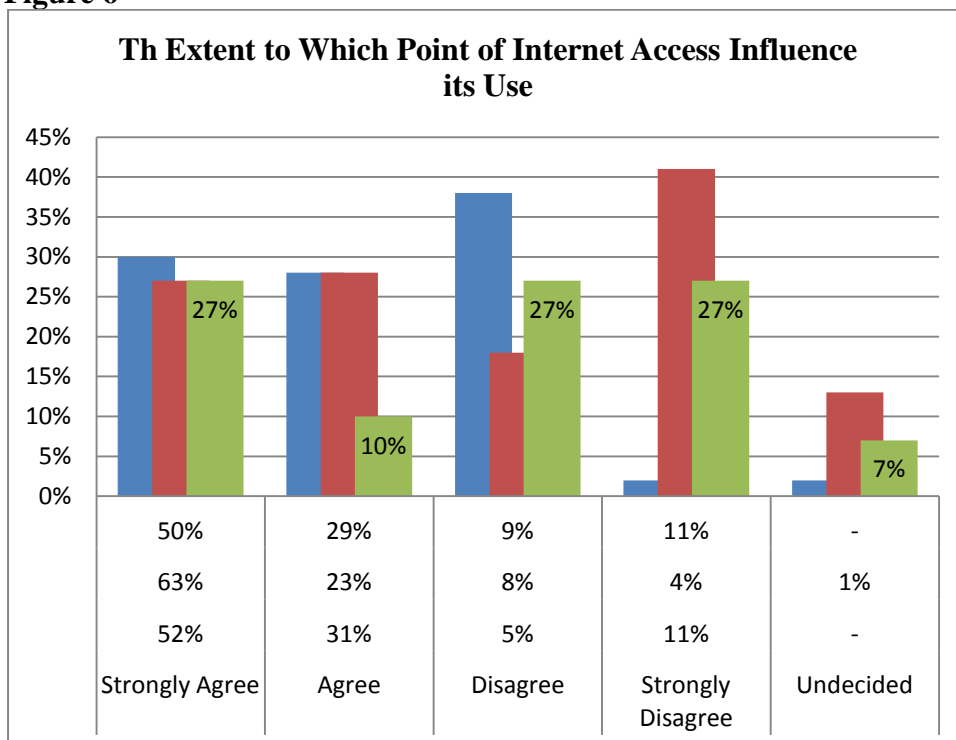Distribution of Respondents by Academic Qualifications

Fig 4, shows that majority (39%) of the respondents had master's degree while (37%) had first degree in library and information science whereas (21%) had Mphil and (3%) had Doctorate degrees (Ph.D.)

Figure 5

Access to Internet by Staff of Libraries

Result from fig 5 indicated that (96%) from academic library, (62%) from special/ research library, (24%) from national library, (8%) from public library and (2%) from school library asserted that internet was very accessible while (97%) from school library, (59%) from public library, (21%) from national library and (1%) from academic library reveals that internet was not accessible whereas (20%) from national library never decided.

Figure 6

The Extent to Which Point of Internet Access Influence its Use

	Strongly Agree	Agree	Disagree	Strongly Disagree	Undecided
	50%	29%	9%	11%	-
	63%	23%	8%	4%	1%
	52%	31%	5%	11%	-

The result from fig 6, shows the extent to which point of internet access influence its usage in Nigeria libraries, (52%, 63%, 50%, 30%, 27%) of the participants of the total respondents used for this study strongly agreed that they accessed the internet via personal laptop, cybercafé, library internet facilities, personal subscription to internet, friend/ colleagues laptop and through mobile phone whereas (31%, 23%, 29%, 28%, 10%) were agreed that they accessed internet through library internet facilities, through friends/colleagues' laptops, personal laptop, cyber café and through mobile phone meanwhile, (5%, 8%, 9%, 38%, 18%, 27%) of the participants disagreed and strongly disagreed that they used personal laptop,
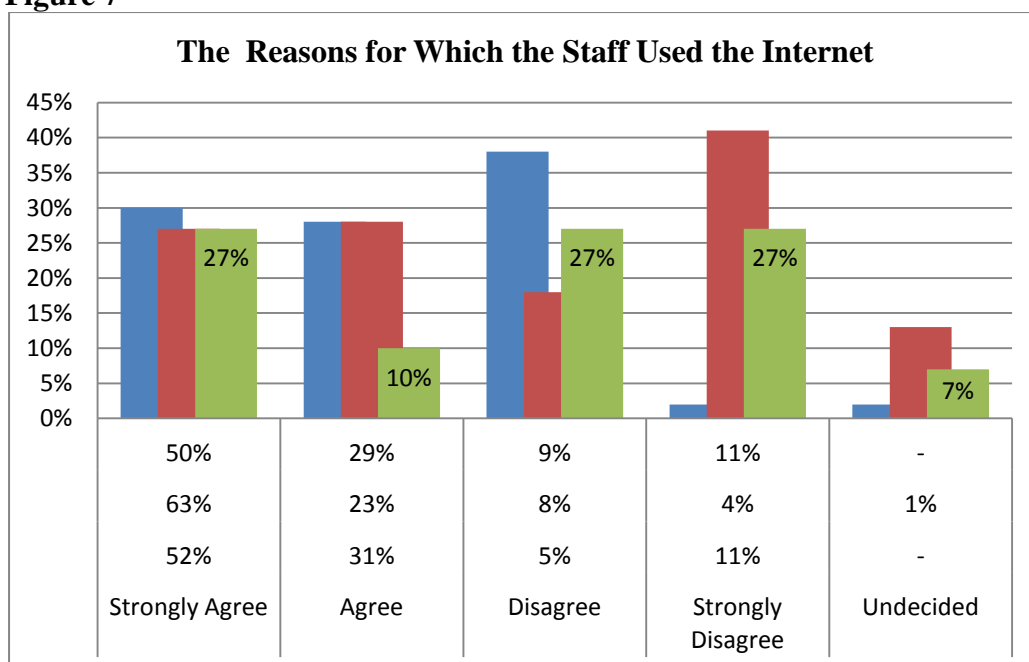
cybercafé, library internet facilities, friends/colleagues' laptops and mobile phone while (1%,2%, 13%, 7%) of the participants never decided

Table 1: Factors Inspiring Use of Internet Service in the Libraries.

ITEMS	Strongly Agree	Agree	Disagree	Strongly Disagree	Undecided
The Internet contains more information	273(92%)	23(8%)	-	-	-
Availability of internet in the library	154(52%)	94(32%)	25(21%)	23(25%)	-
The Internet is more convenient to use	263(89%)	33(11%)	-	-	-
Free access to the Internet	149(50%)	98(33%)	21(7%)	28(9%)	-
Usefulness	296(100%)	-	-	-	-
Ease of use	271(92%)	25(8%)	-	-	-

The result from the table 1, revealed that (92%, 52%, 89%, 50%, 100% and 92%) were strongly agreed and agreed on the factors that inspired the use of internet services in Nigeria libraries such as the internet contain more information, availability of internet in the library, the internet is more convenience to use, free access to internet, usefulness and ease to use while (21%, 25%, 9%, and 7%) of the respondents were disagreed and strongly disagreed that the following did not inspire them to use the internet such as availability of the internet, free access to the internet.

Figure 7

The Reasons for Which the Staff Used the Internet

	Strongly Agree	Agree	Disagree	Strongly Disagree	Undecided
	50%	29%	9%	11%	-
	63%	23%	8%	4%	1%
	52%	31%	5%	11%	-

The result from figure 7, revealed that(67%, 56%, 97%, 45%, 32%, 52%, 94%) of the participants strongly agreed and agreed that they used the internet for research purpose, to gather information for literature review, for current awareness/update knowledge, sending and receiving of mail, for information to supplement course materials, to publish article and to develop personal competencies whereas (6%, 21%, 15%, 16%, 4%) were disagreed and strongly disagreed that they did not use the internet for research purpose, to gather information for literature review, for current awareness/ updating knowledge, sending and receiving mail, for information to supplement course materials, to publish article as well as to develop personal competencies due to unavailability and lack of inaccessibility of internet in library while (9%, 18% and 9%) of the participants never decided.
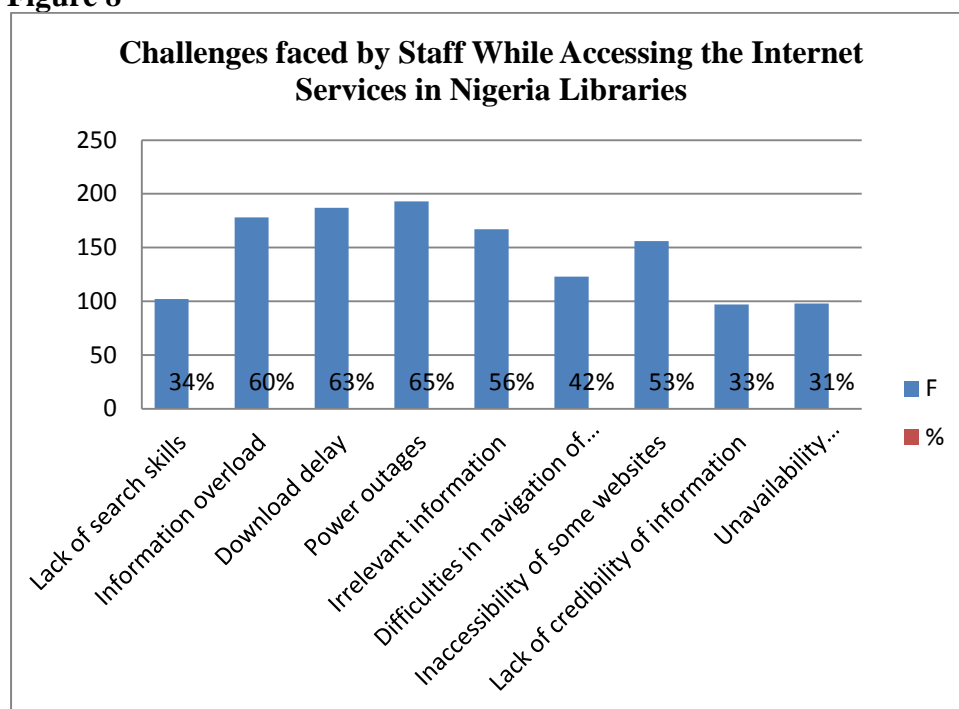
Figure 8

Figure 8, revealed that (34%) identified lack of search skills, (60%) information overload (63%) indicated download delay whereas (65%) emphasis on power outages while (56%) indicated irrelevant information, (42%) indicated difficulties in navigation of some website, (53%) emphasis on inaccessibility of some website, (33%) indicated lack of creditability of information while (31%) indicated unavailability/inaccessibility of internet were some of the numerous challenges facing staff while accessing the internet in Nigeria libraries.

DISCUSSION OF FINDINGS

The findings revealed that, majority (96%) of the participants were from academic library said that the internet is very accessible to them whereas some libraries did not have access to internet service in their library e.g school library, public library, research/special library and national library indicated that internet is not accessible to them at all. The result is at variance with the study conducted by Anyira (2011) on internet services in Nigerian private universities: a case study. It was reported that (42. %) of the respondents said that the internet was slightly accessible to them, another (42%) of them said that the internet was not accessible to them. However, (96%) of the respondents agreed that the internet was very

accessible to them while the result of Bukky (2006), who worked on a survey of internet access and usage among undergraduates in an African university, the result of his findings revealed that out of the 664 respondents, 596 (90%) had access to the Internet facilities. Only 68 respondents had no access to Internet facilities. Only (11%) respondents had never used the Internet facilities at the time of carrying out this study. The result of the findings on influence of point of access on its usage indicated that most respondents involved in the study had access to cybercafé and had personal laptop which in turn led to its usage, this result is in agreement with the study carried out by Jagboro (2003) who studied internet usage in Nigerian universities: a case study of Obafemi Awolowo university. It was found that Cybercafés had the highest score of 45%. However, the findings in table 1, revealed that (92%, 89%, 100% and 92%) of the participants were strongly agreed that, internet contain more information, internet is more convenient to use and internet is usefulness in the library and internet is easy to use. The result from figure 8 revealed that, (67%, 97%, 94%) were strongly agreed on the reasons for which staff used the internet in Nigeria libraries such as for research purpose, for current awareness purpose/ update of knowledge and to develop personal competencies among other. This finding is in line with Chifwepa (2003) discovered a high use of internet by the staff of the University of Zambia where 35 out of 37 staff made use of internet. Their major motivation for such use was convenience (91%); usefulness (80%); free access to information and software (71%); and ease of use (67%).

The findings in figure 8, highlighted several challenges faced by the staff while accessing the internet in Nigeria libraries. The majority indicated power outage (65%) followed by information overloaded (63%). This is in line with (Omotayo, 2006; Luambano and Nawe, 2004). Omotayo (2006) found that the major challenges faced the internet users include power outage and information over loaded. Luambo and Nawe (2004) also observed that the slow Internet connections attributable to small bandwidth is a major factor hindering Internet access and use in Africa.

CONCLUSION AND RECOMMENDATIONS

This paper focused on accessibility and utilization of internet services in Nigeria libraries. It dealt extensively with the important themes and variables related to this research such as accessibility and utilization of Internet, utilization of Internet information in Nigeria and It was paramount for this kind of study to be conducted so as to determine the extent to which Internet services were available to staff , find out whether point of internet access influenced its usages, determine the factors that inspiring the use of the internet and find out the challenges and purpose for which internet was used by staff in the library. The library should train and retrain its librarians on ICT so that they could possess relevant skills for present day work demand and to be able to guide students on the use of Internet services and resources.

RECOMMENDATIONS

➢ Libraries administrator should as a matter of urgency made internet facility available to other libraries such as school library, public library, special/ research library and national library. This is to enable them to carry out research and enhance effective and efficiency service delivery.
➢ There should be more training, awareness, exposure or workshops on the use of other search engines which are seldom or never used in the Internet to improve and enrich their search for literatures for their academic work.

➢ Government should provide uninterrupted power supply in libraries and higher institutions of learning.
➢ Efforts should be made to increase the speed of the Internet access and shorten the time it takes to view and download web pages.

REFERENCES

Aguolu, C.C. & Aguolu, I.E (2002). Libraries and Information Management in Nigeria. Maiduguri: Ed-Linform Services.

Aharony, N. (2006). The librarian and the information scientist: different perceptions among Israeli information science students. *Library and Information Science Research* .28: 235-248

Aino, L. O. (2006). Acquisition of Electronic Resources in a Library Consortium: some Obstacles to its implementation in Africa. Conference, Library Consortia Standing Conference of African University Libraries, Western Area. Proceedings of SCAULWA 2005 Library Consortia Standing Conference of African University Libraries, Western Area.

Akintunde, S. (2002). *Say it again: We just took off" Nigerian libraries* 36(2)

Anderson, D. K., & Reed, W. M. (1998): The effects of Internet instruction, prior computer experience, and learning style on teachers' internet attitudes and knowledge. *Journal of Educational Computing Research, 19 (.3), 227 – 246.*

Botto F. (1999). *Dictionary of Multimedia and Internet Application: A guide for developers and users*. New York, John Wiley

Bukky Olufemi Omotayo (2006). A survey of Internet access and usage among undergraduates in an African university. The International Information & Library Review (2006) 38, 215–224

Broady-Preston, J. and Barnes, E. (2002). Creating and sustaining competitive advantage in libraries: Wales a case study. IFCA publication 99: K.G. Saur Munchen, pp.309-315.

Carbo T (2003). The Future of Librarianship. A view from a school of library and information science. *Library Connect* 1(4): 5

Chifwepa V (2003). The use of the Internet and Internet by teaching staff of the University of Zambia. *Afr. J. Archives Inf. Sci.* 13(2): 119-132.

Cisse C (2004). *Access to electronic information and information research.* SCALWA Newsletter 5(1): 14-17.

Cronin, B. (2001). Bibliometric and beyond: some thoughts on web-based citation analysis. *Journal of Information Science.* 27(11): 1-7.

Emojorho, D. and Nwalo, K. I. N. (2009). Availability and use of ICTs in collection management in university and special libraries in Niger-Delta region, Nigeria. *Library Philosophy and Practice*

Encyclopedia (2001). Retrieved July 7th, 2010, from www.encyclopedia.com/topic/information_technology.aspx

Ezomo, E.O. (2006). *Collection development in an* automated environment. A Compendium of Papers Presented at the 2006 National Interactive Seminar, National Library of Nigeria, Jos, 2nd-5thMay. Information technology

Ikoro F.M. (2002). Information sources for effective teaching and learning in Nigerian languages. *Lang. Librarianship J.* 1 (2): 21-29.

Isaac Echezonam Anyira (2011) Internet Services in Nigerian Private Universities: A Case Study. *Library Philosophy and Practice 2011*

Jackson, L.A., von Eye, A., Witt, E.A., Zhao, Y., & Fitzgerald, H.E. (2011). A longitudinal study of the effects of Internet use and videogame playing on academic performance

and the roles of gender, race and income in these relationships. Computer in human behaviour Vol 27 no 1,227-239.

Jagdoro K.O (2004). *A study of Internet usage in Nigerian universities: A case study of Obafemi Awolowo University Ile-Ife, Nigeria.* UNESCO, Paris. (http://firstmonday.org/issues/issue8-2/jagdoro/index.html.

Leiner B. M, Cerf V. G, Clark D.D, Kahn R. E, Kleinrock L, Lynch D. C, Postel J.. L. G. *Roberts and S.Wolff, 2000. A brief history of internet, at http/www.isoc.org/internet/history/brief.shtml*.

Luambano, I., & Nawe, J. (2004). Internet use by students of the University of Dar es Salaam. *Library Hi Tech News*, 10: 13-17.

Massaquoi, J.G. (2006). *Trends and advances in engineering education in Africa.* Retrieved from http://world .1million paper.com on 28/10/2009

Oyewusi, F. O. and Oyeboade, S.A. (2009). An empirical study of accessibility and use of library resources by undergraduates in a Nigerian State University of Technology. *Library Philosophy and Practice*

Prasher, R. G. (2003). *Indian libraries in IT environment*. Ludhiyana www.internet-resources.com/writers/ www.internet-resources.com/writers/258