

Impact of Awareness on the Utilization of Databases by University Sociology Lecturers in South-South, Nigeria.

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Abstract

This study investigated the impact of awareness on the utilization of databases by sociology lecturers in South-South, Nigeria. The descriptive survey method was used in the study with a population of 75 sociology lecturers. The questionnaire designed by the researcher was used for data collection while SPSS was used to analyse the data. The findings indicate that sociology lecturers are aware of Ebscohost resources (M 4.25), followed by Jstor (M 4.17), NUC Virtual resources (M 4.14), AJOL (M 4.13), and HINARI (M 4.10), while they are unaware of Best of the Web internet resource (2.53). The resources they utilized are AJOL (M 4.60) NUC Virtual collections (M 4.42), Jstor (M 4.38), Amazon (M 4.26), Ebscohost (M 4.25), and HINARI (M 4.10). Significant positive relationship was found between awareness and utilization of databases by university sociology lecturers.

Introduction

Databases are usually collections of journal and magazine articles, dissertations, reviews, and abstracts. A database consists of individual records. Each record contains all of the information in the database for an individual item, which provides a brief description of that item. Each record is composed of fields. A field defines the individual elements of each record. Using a database allows users to search for information in an organized collection. The user benefits from this organization because it provides more relevant results, through the use of subject headings and descriptors. Users can also search for keywords in specific fields, such as author and title, and limit their results using various criteria.

Databases also provide information in known sources, for example, printed magazines and journals. The content of databases has undergone a review process and the information is more reliable than information found on the Internet. Often databases provide access to full-text magazine and journal articles. An online database is a database accessible from a network, including from the Internet. It differs from a local database, held in an individual computer or its attached storage, such as a CD. Some major characteristics of online databases are that: online

databases are delivered primarily via a web browser, they are often purchased by subscription, and they embed common collaboration features such as sharing, email notifications, among others.

Anyira (2012) identified examples of sociology databases include the Directory of Open Access Journals (DOAJ) (www.doaj.org), Best of the web Sociology Directory (www.botw.org), Yahoo Sociology Directory (www.dir.yahoo.com), Google Sociology Directory (www.google.com/socialsciences), Wikipedia (www.en.wikipedia.org), Sociology Web Resources (www.siena.edu), African Journals Online (AJOL) (www.ajol.info), J-STOR African Access Initiative (www.jstor.org), Health Inter Network Access to Research Initiative (HINARI) (www.healthInternetwork.org), ebrary (www.ebrary.com), Google Books (www.books.google.com), Books Directory (www.booksdirectory.com), Ebookee (www.ebookee.org), E-Book Directory (www.ebookdirectory.com), Online Bookstore (www.freeonlinebookstore.org), socINDEX, Lexis Library, IBSS - International Bibliography of the Social Sciences, Scopus, Academic OneFile, Academic Search Premier, Alternative Press Index (current), Alternative Press Index Archive (1969-1990), HAPI (Health & Psychosocial Instruments), ICPSR - Inter-University Consortium for Political and Social Research, ProQuest Dissertations & Theses, Social Sciences Citation Index, Social Services Abstracts etc. Full-text access to most of these databases requires subscription.

Increasingly, these databases outlined above contain different local and international journals (current and back issues) and e-books that are relevant for sociological research from all over the world. According to Anyira (2012) the Directory of Open Access Journals for instance, contains 165 different sociology journals with current and back issues. Example of some open access journals in Directory of Open Access Journals include Aboriginal Policy Studies, Acta Universitatis Sapientiae : Social Analysis, Advances in Social Work, Americana (Hollywood) : the Journal of American Popular Culture, Análise Social, The Annals of Regional Science, Australian Critical Race and Whiteness Studies, Australian Review of Public Affairs, Behavior and Social Issues, Canadian Journal of Aboriginal Community-Based HIV/AIDS Research, The Canadian Journal of Sociology, Crimes and Misdemeanours : Deviance and the Law in Historical Perspective, Critical Race and Whiteness Studies, Culture and Society : Journal of Social Research, CyberPsychology & Behavior, Dhaulagiri Journal of Sociology and

Anthropology, Economic Sociology, Economic Sociology : the European Electronic Newsletter, Electronic Journal of Sociology, Ethnicity and Race in a Changing World : A Review Journal, Forced Migration Review, IDEA : A Journal of Social Issues, International Journal of Child, Youth & Family Studies, International Journal of Conflict and Violence, International Journal of Sociology of Agriculture and Food, Journal of Social Aspects of HIV/AIDS, Qualitative Sociology Review, Studies in Sociology of Science, Ufahamu : a Journal of African Studies etc (Anyira, 2012).

Statement of the Problem

It is widely accepted that online databases contain a large record of relevant information in the world in the 21st century. Although there is a wide range of up-to-date information resources in all fields of human endeavor available in diverse online databases, Kyung (2010) reported that Nigerian University Communities do not make effective use of of them. Kyung revealed that the reason for lack of use is as a result of lack of awareness of the volume of relevant information available. In support of this assertion is a recent study carried out by Microsoft Incorporated which indicated that widespread awareness of available resources on the Internet is a major factor that influences their use. This study therefore was designed to investigate:

1. The extent to which sociology lecturers are aware of online sociology databases.
2. The extent to which they use online sociology databases.
3. The relationship between awareness and utilization of online databases by sociology lecturers in South-South, Nigeria.

Objectives of the Study

1. To find out the extent to which sociology lecturers are aware of online sociology databases.
2. To determine the extent in which sociology lecturers use online sociology databases.
3. To find out the relationship between sociology lecturers' awareness and utilization of online sociology databases.

Research Questions

1. To what extent are sociology lecturers aware of online sociology databases?
2. What is the extent to which sociology lecturers utilize online sociology databases?

3. What is the relationship between sociology lecturers' awareness and utilization of online sociology databases?

Literature Review

According to BC University Library (2012) a library database is an electronic catalog or index, often contains information about published items, and is searchable. Anyira (2012) identified sociology databases to include Ebscohost, JSTOR, Directory of open access journals (DOAJ), AJOL, PsychInfo, Directory of open access repositories (DOAR), Ebrary, HINARY, Best of the web, Amazon, NUC virtual resources, and Internet public library. Materials found in this kind of database include articles from journals and magazines, electronic books, newspapers, images, reference sources. Some library databases provide abstracts of the items they index. Abstracts are summaries provided by the author or database publisher. BC University Library further stated that library databases typically provide citation information about the items they index. A citation most often consists of: Author, Title of Article, Source (Title of Publication), Publisher, Date of Publication (BC University Library, 2012). Some library databases index items across many subject areas. Most databases index materials from a specific focus or discipline. To find a database by subject, go to Databases and select the By Subject tab.

High Plains Library District (2012) stated that a library database is both an electronic catalog and the access point to information from published works. The Library noted that library databases provide access to resources across a wide spectrum of topic and subject areas. Such as: the arts, genealogy, academic research, home improvement, auto repair, business and much more. Library databases provide access to published information sources. Examples: magazines, newspapers, encyclopedias, journals and other resources. Furthermore, Library databases may provide access to full-text articles and/or article abstracts. Library databases are easily searchable as they could be searched by Keywords, Title, Author, or Subject (High Plains Library District, 2012).

On the other hand, the web database according to Kokemuller (2013) is a database application designed to be managed and accessed through the Internet. Web database applications enable site operators to manage collection of data and presentation of analytical results online.

The databases provided by the Library give users online access to valuable information including full text journal articles, e-books and abstracts. Catherall (2011) gave a brief description of the different materials that a database contains to include:

- E-Journals / E-Journal Articles: these are regularly published magazine-type publications focused on a particular academic or professional field. Each 'issue' of a journal typically contains several individual 'articles' dealing with specialist topics.
- E-Books: these are substantial academic or professional texts often written by an individual author; books made available online are typically described as E-Books.
- Reports and Data: these can include census information, reports on companies around the world, market analysis and product research and a wide range of social, economic and other trends for world regions.
- Theses & Dissertations: these include academic texts written as the substantive written project for a Masters Degree or Doctoral degree.
- Dictionaries, Encyclopedia and Reference Works: reference materials including dictionaries, factual or general encyclopedia and specialist reference works for health, law and other subject areas.
- Newspapers: these include local and world-wide national newspapers and specialist newspapers. Most Nigerian newspapers are published in print and online formats.
- Legal & Official Documents: these comprise general legal and official sources such as legislation / health and safety sources and specialist legal cases, forms, litigation and other legal sources.
- Web pages: these comprise blogs (Web discussion logs), business Web sites, organizational Web pages and reports and other freely accessible content via the World Wide Web (especially web databases).
- Bibliographic Indexes/ Abstracts: these include lists of academic and professional materials globally, including materials from a wide range of commercial collections and Web resources, these indexes provide a definitive reference to check resource publication details or identify a specialist article or paper.

Materials and Methods

This study utilized the descriptive survey method. The study was carried out in Delta and Edo States of Nigeria. Delta and Edo States were selected through a balloting process from a ballot container involving all the six South-South States with equal chance of selection. The South-South States are Akwa-Ibom, Bayelsa, Cross River, Delta, Edo, and Rivers. As a matter of fact, every state had equal chance of being selected in the process, but Delta and Edo States happened to be the ones picked. The population of the study was made up of 79 Sociology lecturers in universities in Delta and Edo States. No sampling was done in the study because the size of the population which is 75 is not too large.

The structured questionnaire used in this study was developed by the researcher. The instrument was titled awareness and use of resources questionnaire (AURQ). The response to section 2 of the questionnaire was based on a 5-point scale ranging from Highly Aware, Aware, Undecided, Unaware, and Highly Unaware. The weight of each response mode is 5 for Highly Aware, 4 for Aware, 3 for Undecided, 2 for Unaware, 1 for Highly Unaware. While, the response to section 3 of the questionnaire which deals with the extent of utilization of internet resources by sociology lecturers ranges from Very Great Extent, Great Extent, Undecided, Low Extent, and Very Low Extent. The weight of Very Great Extent is 5, Great Extent is 4, Undecided is 3, Low Extent is 2, and Very Low Extent is 1.

The questionnaire was administered on respondents through direct contact by the researcher. Out of the 79 copies of the questionnaire administered, 75 copies were duly completed and returned representing 95% return.

Data were analyzed using the mean and standard deviation. The SPSS was used for analysis of data in order to reduce error in calculation. The benchmark for decision making on the extent of awareness is Highly Aware (M= 4.5-5.0), Aware (M= 4.0-4.49), Undecided (M= 3.0-3.99), Unaware (M= 2.0-2.99), and Highly Unaware (M= 1.0-1.99), while the benchmark for decision making on the extent of utilization internet resources is Very Great Extent (M= 4.5-5.0), Great Extent (M= 4.0-4.49), Undecided (M= 3.0-3.99), Low Extent (M= 2.0-2.99), Very Low Extent (M= 1.0-1.99).

Data Analysis

Research Question 1: To what extent are sociology lecturers aware of sociology resources on the Internet?

Table 1: Mean and Standard Deviation showing the Extent of Sociology Lecturers' Awareness of Sociology Resources on the Internet

S/N	Internet Resources	Mean	Standard Deviation
1	Ebscohost	4.25	.59
2	Jstor	4.17	.93
3	DOAJ	3.38	.86
4	AJOL	4.13	.89
5	PsychInfo	3.04	.64
6	DOAR	3.24	.89
7	Ebrary	3.62	.94
8	HINARY	4.10	.87
9.	Best of the Web	2.53	1.09
10	Amazon	3.77	1.51
11	NUC Virtual Library	4.14	.91
12	Internet Public Library	3.25	1.14

Table 1 shows the extent of sociology lecturers' awareness of various sociology resources on the internet from a 5-point scale. The mean reported in the table indicated that sociology lecturers are aware of 11 out of the 12 sociology resources on the internet examined. The resources they are aware of are Ebscohost resources (M 4.25), followed by Jstor (M 4.17), NUC Virtual resources (M 4.14), AJOL (M 4.13), and HINARI (M 4.10). The ones they are undecided are Amazon (M 3.77), Ebrary (M 3.62), DOAJ (M 3.38), Internet Public Library (M 3.25), DOAR (M 3.24), and PsychInfo (M 3.04) in that order. The ones they are unaware of include Best of the Web internet resource (2.53).

Table 2

Research Question 2: What is the Extent to Which Sociology Lecturers Utilize Sociology Resources on the Internet?

Table 2: Mean and Standard Deviation showing the Extent to Which Sociology Lecturers Utilize Sociology Resources on the Internet

S/N	Internet Resources	Mean	Standard Deviation
1	Ebscohost	4.25	.49
2	Jstor	4.38	.69
3	DOAJ	2.34	.92
4	AJOL	4.60	.61
5	PsychInfo	3.02	.61
6	DOAR	2.56	1.22
7	Ebrary	2.57	1.19
8	HINARY	4.10	.84
9.	Best of the Web	2.48	1.21
10	Amazon	4.26	.68
11	NUC Virtual Library	4.42	.88
12	Internet Public Library	3.68	.93

Table 2 shows the extent to which sociology lecturers use internet sociology resources. From a 5-point scale, the mean on the table above indicate that sociology lecturers utilized 8 out of the 12 resources. The only internet material utilized to a very great extent is AJOL (M 4.60). The resources utilized to a great extent include NUC Virtual collections (M 4.42), Jstor (M 4.38), Amazon (M 4.26), Ebscohost (M 4.25), and HINARI (M 4.10). The lecturers were undecided in the utilization of internet Public Library (M 3.68), and PsychInfo (M 3.02). Four sociology resources namely DOAJ (M 2.3), Best of the Web (M 2.48), DOAR (M 2.56), and Ebrary (M 2.57) were utilized to a low extent.

Table 3

Research Question 3: What is the relationship between awareness and utilization of relevant resources by sociology lecturers?

Table 3: Mean and Standard Deviation showing the relationship between awareness and utilization of relevant resources by sociology lecturers?

Variables	N	M	SD	DF	r	Sig (2-tailed)	Decision
Awareness	12	3.63	.05	10	.80	.002	Significant
Utilization		3.54	.87				

The table above shows the relationship between awareness and utilization of relevant resources on the internet sociology lecturers. The obtained r is .80 and it is significant at .002. Therefore, the result indicates a significant positive relationship between awareness and utilization of relevant resources on the internet by university sociology lecturers.

Summary of Major Findings

After a careful analysis of data collected the following findings were made:

- The extent of sociology lecturers' awareness of various sociology resources on the internet from a 5-point scale indicated that sociology lecturers are aware of Ebscohost resources (M 4.25), followed by Jstor (M 4.17), NUC Virtual resources (M 4.14), AJOL (M 4.13), and HINARI (M 4.10). The ones they are undecided are Amazon (M 3.77), Ebrary (M 3.62), DOAJ (M 3.38), Internet Public Library (M 3.25), DOAR (M 3.24), and PsychInfo (M 3.04) in that order. The ones they are unaware of include Best of the Web internet resource (2.53).
- The extent of sociology lecturers' utilization of various sociology resources on the internet from a 5-point scale indicated that the only internet material the sociology lecturers utilized to a very great extent is AJOL (M 4.60). The resources they utilized to a great extent include NUC Virtual collections (M 4.42), Jstor (M 4.38), Amazon (M 4.26), Ebscohost (M 4.25), and HINARI (M 4.10). The lecturers were undecided in the

utilization of internet Public Library (M 3.68), and PsychInfo (M 3.02). Four sociology resources namely DOAJ (M 2.3), Best of the Web (M 2.48), DOAR (M 2.56), and Ebrary (M 2.57) were utilized to a low extent. No material was utilized as very low extent.

- The finding between awareness and utilization indicate a significant positive relationship between awareness and utilization of relevant resources on the internet by university sociology lecturers.

Conclusion

This study has established that sociology lecturers are aware of Ebscohost resources, Jstor, NUC Virtual resources, AJOL, and HINARI. Lecturers are unaware of Best of the Web internet resource. Lecturers are not highly aware or highly unaware of any of the electronic resources examined. Furthermore, sociology lecturers utilized African Journals Online (AJOL) to a very great extent, while Jstor, Amazon, Ebscohost, and HINARI were utilized to a great extent. But, DOAJ, Best of the Web, DOAR, and Ebrary were utilized to a low extent. This study found a significant positive relationship between awareness and utilization of relevant resources on the internet by university sociology lecturers. Thus, the level of awareness affects the extent of usage of internet resources.

Recommendations

The following recommendations were made in line with the conclusion reached:

1. Given that sociology lecturers in South-South, Nigeria lack knowledge of relevant information resources on the internet, university libraries should take a leading role to create awareness among sociology lecturers about relevant sociology resources available to them by conducting training and retraining programmes, workshops, audio-visual presentations etc., on regular basis. Lecturers should be divided into smaller groups according to their internet/ computer skills during the training so that the resources available can be made known to them, and steps for practical utilization demonstrated. Those who lack internet skills should be given special training on computer and internet skills first of all before the actual training. The university authority should support the

library with funds and any other assistance necessary for the success of the training. The lecturers should cooperate with the library in this regard.

2. University authorities should provide internet access in each lecturer's office to enable libraries provide electronic services to them at the comfort of their offices. Internet bandwidth and the number of internet nodes should be increased for the lecturers. This will help the library in controlling the increasing number of lecturers that visit the library physically.

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