Awareness and Use of The Essential Electronic Agricultural Library (TEEAL) Database among Faculty Members in Federal University, Kashere and Federal College of Education (Technical), Gombe, Nigeria.

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Abstract

The study investigated the extent of awareness and use of The Essential Electronic Agricultural Library (TEEAL) resources by faculty members of Federal University, Kashere and Federal College of Education (Technical) Gombe. A survey design was adopted for the study. The questionnaire was used as data collection instrument. The population of the study consists of all the 85 teaching staff in the Faculty of Agriculture and School of Vocational Education of both institutions. A total of 85 questionnaires distributed but 82 were returned duly filled. The data collected was analyzed through simply percentage and descriptive studies. The study reveals that the faculty members under study are using TEEAL resources satisfactorily. Awareness level was greater than usage because of lack of search skills, difficulty in finding relevant information in the database, recurrent power outage and lack of support from library staff. The study recommends that the library should focus on user orientation and training on effective use of e-databases, awareness and orientation should be a continuous effort, and libraries should think outside the box and find an alternative source of power supply such as a standby generator, inverter or solar energy system.

Keywords: **TEEAL, database, awareness, access, use of information resources, faculty members, library,**

Introduction

The library and information centers (LICs) play important roles by extending the required information services quickly and efficiently to their users. Presently many academic libraries in Nigeria have access to electronic information resources in multiple ways either offline or online. Effective use of electronic information resources (EIRs) has a great impact on the quality of research output in any academic activities. The use of database information resources have granted educational institutions an extraordinary capability and eliminated constraints of time and distance. Library users frequently prefer access to e-database information which provides information that is up to date, international in scope and at times not available elsewhere because they see these resources as easier to access and search. Electronic information sources can be seen as the most recent development in information technology and that they are available in various forms like e-books, digital libraries, online journal magazine, e-learning tutors and online text. User studies continue to be an essential area of library and information science research, as

studying the information-seeking behavior of specific user groups has contributed to the development of a variety of library services (Tahir, Mahmood & Shafique, 2008). Similarly, Kwadzo (2015) observed that many studies have been undertaken on electronic databases in the areas of awareness, usage, relevance, access, preference, orientations and training, and evaluation among others. It is found in the literature that there are sometimes a gap between awareness and usage of digital resources. Either users are aware of the resources and use them, users are aware and do not use them, or users are unaware of them and therefore do not use them. Study by Nisha and Ali (2013) on awareness and use of e-journals by IIT Delhi and Delhi University library users found that clients were aware of and used the e-databases available to them.

According to Akpojotor (2016) awareness of the changes in technology in recent years has dramatically altered how information is accessed, stored and disseminated. Whereas information provision and usage in academic libraries was previously based upon the collection of physical library materials, it is now increasingly the case that academic libraries are moving into the virtual arena. Awareness is knowledge about something that exists or understanding of a situation or subject at the present time based on information or experience. It can also be seen as knowledge or perception of a situation, fact, consciousness, recognition, realization, grasp and acknowledgement concern about and well-informed interest or familiarity in a particular situation or development (Ani & Ahiauzu, 2008). On the reasons for using academic databases by the Academics. Musa, Ahmad, Yunusa and Hamisu (2015) reported the reasons / purpose for using electronic databases by the academics. It was discovered that research activities, thesis writing, lecture note, teaching, preparing writing for publication were the major reasons for the use of electronic databases, whereas self development, preparing note and community development were the least frequency. However, many people use electronic databases purposely for research activities and thesis writing. Most of the universities provide electronic resources to their users to support teaching, research and development (Naqvi, 2012).

On the challenges associated with the use of academic databases in libraries, the major problems identified by the users of electronic resources according to Adeniji, Babalola and Ajayi (2015) are recurrent power outages challenges faced by the librarians in the utilization of e-resource in their university, this is followed by limited bandwidth, insufficient funds, inability to download information, and network problems. The above finding corroborate the work of Kwadzo (2015) about the awareness and usage of electronic databases by graduate students of the University of Ghana to include lack of awareness, searching skills and inadequate ICT infrastructure and bad downloading time

Therefore, the objective of this study is to investigate the awareness and use of The Essential Electronic Agricultural Library (TEEAL) by faculty members in the faculty of Agriculture Federal University, Kashere and Federal College of Education (Technical) Gombe from their academic libraries.

Federal University, Kashere and Federal College of Education (Technical) Gombe through their Libraries are committed to the provision of quality information resources and services in support of teaching, learning, research and creative work in the University. This is achieved through the acquisition of information resources in all formats as well as provision of access to the recorded knowledge in prints and electronic formats. The libraries under studies subscribes to several electronic databases on CD-ROM or online. Famous among these is "The Essential Electronic Agricultural Library" (TEEAL), otherwise known as "Library in a box". It is a full-text database that provides instant access to about 140 of the world's most important scholarly agricultural journals. The database makes it possible for research libraries in developing countries to have access to relatively current agricultural journals in an offline database on the following subjects:

- ✓ Agricultural economics
- ✓ Agricultural engineering
- ✓ Agroforestry
- ✓ Animal science
- ✓ Aquaculture
- ✓ Biotechnology

- ✓ Crop science
- ✓ development
- ✓ Entomology
- ✓ Genetics and genomics
- ✓ Horticulture
- ✓ Microbiology
- ✓ Natural resources

- ✓ Nutrition and food science
- ✓ Physiopathology
- ✓ Plant breeding
- ✓ Plant physiology
- ✓ Soil science and
- ✓ Veterinary medicine

However, TEEAL awareness and utilization have their associated challenges, especially in Nigeria academic community, which prevents effective utilization of resources; and make users prefer the traditional print information resources.

Statement of the Problem

The use of electronic databases as information resources cannot be overemphasized. This is because they contain not only information materials that are current but often reliable and are visible around the globe. These databases contain information in eBooks, journals and magazines in both professional and academic fields. This makes researchers and scholars to make their own input as they are often cited and attract more contributions from the academia and the professionals. To make effective use of these databases, people must be aware of their existence and the value of these information resources. TEEAL is an electronic database in agriculture and other related fields that brings together journal articles from different publishers worldwide and made available to low income countries for awareness and accessibility or usage. Many higher institutions in Nigeria are beneficiaries of these databases including Federal University, Kashere and the Federal College of Education (Technical), Gombe. The essence of this research is to find out whether the faculties or academics are aware of this database and also to find out the extent of usage of this database. This will help in suggesting the methods in which this rich valuable information resource will be put to use by readers, especially the faculty staff.

Research Objectives

The main objective of this research is to investigate the awareness and extent of use of TEEAL database resources by the faculty members of the Faculty and School of Agriculture in Federal University, Kashere and Federal College of Education (Technical) respectively in Gombe - Nigeria. Specifically, the study intends to:

1. investigate the extent of awareness of TEEAL among the faculty members of the institutions under study;
2. determine the extent to which faculty members access TEEAL resources in the institutions under study,
3. identify reason(s) for which TEEAL resources are used by faculty members under study;
4. find out challenges associated with the use of TEEAL resources by the faculty members under study.

Research Questions

This research intends to answer the following questions:

1. To what extent are faculty members in the faculty and school of Agriculture aware of TEEAL in the libraries under study?
2. To what extent do faculty members access TEEAL in the libraries under study?
3. For what reasons are TEEAL resources used by the faculty members under study?
4. What are the challenges associated with the use of TEEAL resources by the faculty members under study.

Methodology

A survey design was adopted for the study. The population of the study consists of all the 52 and 33 teaching staff in the Faculty of Agriculture, Federal University, Kashere and School of Vocational education, Federal College of Education (Technical) Gombe respectively, giving a total of 85 respondents. The instrument used for the study is a questionnaire which was administered to the total population of 85 academic staff in the two TEEAL beneficiary tertiary institutions in Gombe State. The researchers used all the eighty five (85) population for the study of the faculty and school of Vocational Education in both institutions. Thus 85 questionnaires were administered to the respondents in the institutions. Eighty two (82) questionnaires representing ninety seven (97%) were returned and found usable.

Findings and discussion

The data were collected from the teaching staff of the faculty and school of vocational education in Federal University, Kashere and Federal College of Education Technical Gombe respectively. Majority of the respondents (58%) are Masters Degree holders with different academic rank and

27% of the respondents have Ph.D with 4 at the professorial rank among them from the university. While 15% have B. Sc / B. Tech Agriculture as part of the respondents.

Table 1: awareness level of respondents about TEEAL database

Variables	Frequency	Percentage (%)
Aware	69	84.4%
Not aware	10	12%
Undecided	3	3.6%
Total	82	100%

The above table 1 indicates the knowledge of respondents about the TEEAL database which they were asked whether they have ever heard about it. The results revealed that majority are aware of the database, as 84.4% responded positive, at the same time 12% responded in the negative. Only 3.6% respondents indicated their indecision on whether they know about TEEAL database or not. It was realized that faculty members were quite knowledgeable about the TEEAL availability in their respective institute's libraries. The finding that 69 (84.4%) of respondents are aware of the database concurred with findings by Nisha & Ali (2013), and Kwafoa, Osman and Afful-Arthur (2014) that recorded over 90% awareness of the databases in their institutions.

Table 2: source of information about TEEAL database

Variables	Frequency /82	Percentage (%)
Through library website	14	17%
Through Institution website	25	31%
Through librarian / library staff	60	73.2%
Notice board	2	2.4%
Workshop, seminar or conference	6	7.3

The findings on table 2 illustrate that significant respondents got information about the TEEAL database from librarians (73.2%). This is in order because librarians are expected to spearhead the awareness creation and recommend use of the databases and enhance greater collaboration between library patrons. This finding is contrary to that of Kwadzo (2015) in study of "awareness and usage of electronic databases by geography and resource development information studies graduate students in the University of Ghana" which reported smaller percentages of 34% for library staff and 15.4% for OPAC in awareness creation.

Table 3: level of satisfaction with the TEEAL resources access in the library

Variables	Frequency	Percentage (%)
Satisfied	63	77%
Undecided	1	1%
Not satisfied	18	22%
Total	**82**	**100%**

The respondents were asked to specify their level of satisfaction with access of TEEAL information resources in the library. The survey result on table 3 shows that 77% of the faculty members are satisfied with the access provided to the resources, while 22% of them are not satisfied. Higher positive response by the teaching staff on satisfaction with accessing of TEEAL database from the library was not surprising since the libraries are relatively well equipped to cater for the information needs of patrons to enhance research, teaching and learning.

Table 4: Frequency of Using TEEAL in the Library

Variables	Frequency	Percentage (%)
Daily	10	12.5%
Weekly	38	46.3%
Monthly	18	21.9%
Rarely	9	10.9%
Never	7	8.5%
Total	**82**	**100%**

Table 4 shows that 46.3% of the respondents use TEEAL weekly, this is followed by respondents who use it monthly 21%. While only 8.5% of respondents never use TEEAL information resources. The likely reason for not using TEEAL is that they may be aware of the TEEAL availability in their institutions library..

Table 5: reason(s) for using TEEAL information resources in the library

Reason(s) / Variables	Frequency / 82	Percentage (%)
Research work	69	84%
Instructional preparation	44	54%
Update knowledge	55	67%
Personal development	57	70%
General reading and leisure	07	9%
Class assignment	02	2.4%
Examination	04	5%
Entertainment	00	00%

The above table allows multiple choices. The findings on table 5 reveals reasons that most respondents have attributed to their usage of TEEAL database in their libraries to include research work which is 84% and personal development at 70%, instructional preparation is54%. The study further reveals that, none of respondents use TEEAL resources for entertainment; this is followed by 5% respondents who use the database for examination respectively. Reason for low usage of TEEAL for examination and entertainment could be that information resources available in the database are not related to aforementioned subjects and the generally available ones did not treat content relevant to the respondents, thus not so significant.

Hence, the main objectives of using TEEAL resources by faculty members is to enhance and support research, teaching and learning within and outside the academic environment.

Table 6: challenges faced by faculty members when using TEEAL resources in the library

Variables	Freq. / 82	Percentage (%)
Lack of availability	8	9.7%
Lack of awareness	10	12.2%
Lack of search skills	57	70%
Lack of interest	3	3.7%
Lack of assistance	18	22%
Difficulty in finding relevant information	46	56%
System failure / not suitable	2	2.4%
Power outage	75	92%
Limited time / Library time is not suitable	5	6%

The findings on table 6 identified major problems faced by the users of TEEAL resources to include recurrent power outages with 92% responses topping the list of the challenges faced by the academic staff in accessing and use of TEEAL resources in their institutions, this is followed by lack of search skills or techniques in accessing the database at 70% and difficulty in finding relevant information is 56%. The above findings corroborate the work of Adetoun (2010) where they identified some hindrances that the academic staff in south west universities faced in using e-resources with exception of low bandwidth because TEEAL information resources can be accesses offline on the intranet network of a library. Few respondents (9.7%) mentioned their challenges as lack of availability of the resources; this indicates that those respondents are not aware of TEEAL database existence in their institution's library. They number is even low than the respondents of 12% that indicate that they are not aware of the resources as earlier stated on table 1.

Conclusion

The study investigated the awareness and use of TEEAL resources among faculty members of Federal University, Kashere and Federal College of Education (Technical), Gombe. TEEAL database resources are considered very important tools for enhancing and supporting research, teaching and learning in the academic environment under study. Therefore, faculty members are heavily dependent on TEEAL and other e-resources for their research and teaching activities because it contains relevant, easy access and up-to-date information. The study reveals that the faculty members under study are aware of and using TEEAL resources satisfactorily. Awareness level was generally greater than usage because of some difficulties users are having in the use of the TEEAL resources like lack of search skills, difficulty in finding relevant information in the database, recurrent power outage and as few respondents reported lack support/help from library staff.

Recommendations

This research is an attempt to look at the level of awareness and usage of TEEAL database in the libraries under study. It discovered that though many academics are aware of the database but the usage is not very encouraging and therefore recommends the library should look at every possible means of satisfying every customer through focusing on user orientation and training on effective use of e-databases and greater promotion of resources should be done on priority basis. Thus, informing faculty members of what is available and how database resources are used by means of comprehensive training. Awareness and orientation should be a continuous effort, since the institution recruits new staff on a regular basis. The academic libraries should also think outside the box and find an alternative way to generate power supply such as a standby generator, inverter or solar energy system; that will make conducive environment for access and use of library database resources.

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