Use of Library Information Resources and Services as Predictor of the Teaching Effectiveness of Social Scientists in Nigerian Universities

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Abstract

This study investigated the predictive relationships between teaching effectiveness and use of library information resources and services among social scientists in thirteen federal government-funded Nigerian universities. Stratified random sampling with equal allocation method coupled with self-developed questionnaire was used to collect data from 650 academic social scientists from the universities, out of which 570 responded giving a response rate of 87.7 per cent. The study found that the utilisation of library information resources and services correlated significantly with perceived teaching effectiveness of the respondents. It was also found that the utilisation of library information resources and library services contributed 49.8 per cent and 38.5 per cent respectively to the prediction of teaching effectiveness of the respondents. It was recommended that academic social scientists in the Nigerian universities should endeavour to use library resources and services to improve their teaching effectiveness.

Keywords

Library information services, social scientists, teaching effectiveness, universities, Nigeria

Introduction

Roberson (2005) defined a library as an institution that manages the intellectual products of society and processes them in such a manner that the individual can gain access to them readily. University libraries provide resources for knowledge acquisition, recreation, personal interests and interpersonal relationships of users (academic staff, non academic staff and students and library personnel}. The university library is a key component of a university system. Library information resources may be defined as those information bearing materials that are in both printed and electronic formats such as textbooks, journals, indexes, abstracts, newspapers and magazines, reports, CD-ROM databases, Internet/E-mail, videotapes/cassettes, diskettes, magnetic disk, computers, microforms, etc. These information materials are the raw materials that

libraries acquire, catalogue, stock, and make available to their patrons, as well as utilize to provide various other services. Library information services may be viewed as the activities that libraries and their personnel render to meet the information needs of their users. Such services include core and traditional library services such as reference, current awareness, selective dissemination of information (SDI), circulation of library information resources, indexing and abstracting, CD-ROM database search, translation, microfilming, bindery, as well as digital age Internet-based and business bureau services such as e-mail, world wide web, photocopying, facsimile, word-processing, etc.

Among the categories of users which university libraries serve are academic social scientists. The social sciences are a branch of knowledge concerned with the study of human beings interacting or acting in groups (Line, 2000). The social sciences, which include such subjects like Economics, Geography, Sociology, Anthropology, Political science, Psychology and Demography, aim primarily toward understanding human social behaviour, as well as the relationship between people and the social systems in which they participate. Social scientists in Nigerian universities, like other university academics, are expected to perform three main functions — teaching, research, and service (such as consultancy practice). These functions are mutually interdependent. Teaching and service are expected to be enriched by the improved subject matter knowledge obtained through research, whilst research strategies and conclusions should be enriched by the feedback from students and society. In this respect, university administrators are usually very concerned with how to motivate their academics to undertake innovative research and teach effectively. In particular, teaching effectiveness is considered important because effective teaching by lecturers would ultimately facilitate improved student learning in, and quality graduate output from, the universities to improve society.

Teaching effectiveness can be defined as the ability of a teacher to inculcate knowledge and skills in students, as well as change their behaviour for better living. Adam (1993) and Ismaila (1999) have noted that teachers' knowledge of subject matter, skill proficiency and resourcefulness could be linked to school effectiveness, teacher effectiveness and students' academic performance. In other words, one

of the requirements for the teaching effectiveness of social science teachers in universities is improved knowledge of subject matter acquired through research and service. In addition, such teachers should possess teaching skill proficiency and resourcefulness. Among the strategies that demonstrate such skills include: clear goal setting, good structuring of curriculum content, clarity of presentation of lectures, frequent questioning of students, use of exercises immediately after presentation of new content, use of evaluation, feedback and connective instruction, effective class management, etc.

Teaching effectiveness variables and indicators could be used to assess the effectiveness with which social scientists in Nigerian universities perform their teaching functions, much in the same way as the quality of their research functions is usually assessed by the quality of research activities and publications. In this regard, self evaluation by lecturers themselves and students' evaluation of their teachers' quality of teaching have been emphasized in the literature as good methods of ascertaining the teaching effectiveness of academic staff in educational institutions (Marsh, 1987; Onocha, 1995).

Problem Statement and Objectives

In the field of social science information sources and systems, especially in Africa, no effort has been made to understand how the availability and use of library information resources and services relates or contributes to the teaching effectiveness of social scientists in universities. It was in the light of this that this study investigated library information resources and services utilisation as correlates of perceived teaching effectiveness of social scientists in Nigerian universities. The specific objectives of this study were to:

(a) find out the library information resources mostly used by social scientists.

(b) determine the library information services used by social scientists.

(c) find out if the use of library information resources or library information services correlates significantly with teaching effectiveness of social scientists.

(d) ascertain the extent to which the levels of use of library information resources and services among

the social scientists could be used to predict their teaching effectiveness.

(e) determine the relative contribution of the use of library information resources and use of library information services to the prediction of teaching effectiveness of the social scientists.

The study also sought to validate the following hypotheses:

1. There is no significant multiple correlation between library information resources' utilisation, library information services utilisation and teaching effectiveness of the respondents.

2. The linear combination of library information resources utilisation and information services utilisation does not significantly predict teaching effectiveness of the respondents.

The findings from this study of how the use of library information resources and service may influence positively the teaching effectiveness of the social scientists in Nigerian universities would assist the university library managers in determining how to improve their resources and information services in support of teaching and research in the universities. The findings would also provide insight for social scientists on how their future use of the resources and service could be used to improve their teaching effectiveness. This may, in turn, promote greater collaboration between university library managers and the social scientists on strategies for more effective development, access to and use of the library resources and services.

Literature Review

The exponential growth of published literature in different academic fields all makes it difficult for the social scientists in universities to keep track, access and use relevant and qualitative information for effective teaching. Information in this context could be defined as facts, news, messages, opinions, ideas, processed data, symbols, signs and signals that are capable of improving the knowledge of a recipient on a particular subject, topic or event. Although the Internet and the Web nowadays provide access to wide range of information sources such as web pages, databases and full-text documents, university libraries are still reputed for their careful and judicious selection of information resources and the provision of library information services that support the academic programmes of their universities. Moreover, especially in developing countries, university libraries have usually pioneered the provision of Internet connectivity and access to enable students and teachers to access web resources. Accordingly, quality library information resources and services provided by university libraries are essential to ensuring quality teaching and learning in the universities. Hence, the university library would, ideally, be the main storehouse of quality resources and services for effective research, teaching and service by social scientists in the universities. However, if a university library is to provide effective information services to support teaching and research, it must have adequate information resources and sufficient highly skilled information professionals.

Social Scientists' Use of Library-based Information Resources and Services

Roberts (1980) opined that the involvement of social scientists in their own information activities has been an implicit one; in everything, it shows a substantial contrast to the scientific, technological, and medical fields, where researcher and practitioner involvement in information activities has been far greater and more profitable. Preschel and Woods (1989) reported that the academic social sciences are not at the leading edge of information dissemination technology from reasons such as: costs; interdisciplinary structure; imprecise terminology and fuzzy-edged concepts of the subject areas; and the possibly poor prospects for return on investment. Hence, academic social scientists often build up their own information collection with a wide variety of material, including conference, workshop and symposium papers, photocopied articles, pre-prints, research reports, monographs, books and electronic information downloaded from the Internet, floppy and compact discs for their own convenient use, rather than consulting information materials in their institutional libraries. Studies on information-seeking behaviour and use of some user groups point to the fact that the information-seeking process usually begins with personal collection.

Nevertheless, social scientists in the universities can best benefit maximally from the use of library information resources and services when they actually use them continuously for updating their knowledge and teaching skills. Adeleke (2005)

asserted that if the library is to contribute to the advancement of knowledge, it must not only provide the resources but also ensure effective use of the resources by its clienteles. Okiy (2000), in support of this claim, posited that for the library to perform its role adequately, its resources must be effectively utilized. Thus, the social scientists in the universities need to have access to relevant information resources in their institutional libraries and make effective use of them to improve their teaching effectiveness.

Olanlokun (1995) found that journal articles, textbooks, theses and dissertations, monographs and treaties and government documents were considered very important to the job functions of the Nigerian academics. Hobohm (1999) confirmed that social scientists relied heavily on monographs, as well as on periodical literature. A study of the information seeking behaviour of social scientists in Haryana universities by Shokeen and Kaushik (2002) reported that periodicals were the most important and used source of information, while browsing is the first preferred method of searching the required information.

Watson (2004) opined that digital reference services are very important for the use of social scientists. He further submitted that citations are the single most important source of information for social science researchers, an online citation service such as the social sciences citation index is necessary. Abstracts and indexes, online catalogue, textbooks and journals are used by academic social scientists to improve their effective teaching and research (Adekunle, 2004). Meho and Haas (2001) reported that social science faculty studying stateless nations used the world wide web and electronic mail. Social science faculty largely depend on formal sources of information, such as books journals, theses and dissertations (Folster, 1989; Haart, 1997; Shoham, 1998). Similarly, Meho and Tibbo (2003) reported that social scientists studying stateless nations relied more on their personal collection, fieldwork, other libraries, and archives than their own university library collection.

Agba, et al. (2004) reported that academic staff at Makerere University in Uganda used library electronic information resources for teaching and research. Nazan and Kurbanoglu (1998) found that social science and humanities scholars in a Turkish University preferred and used library reference materials such as encyclopedias, dictionaries and periodicals for their teaching and research in a Turkish university. Oduwole et al. (2002) confirmed that students, academic staff, administrative personnel and the public made use of Online Public Access Catalogue in University of Agriculture, Abeokuta, Nigeria for report writing, lesson preparation, research methodology and class assignments. However, Day and Bartle (1998), reported that of the 193 academics from Social Science related discipline in the seventeen higher education institutions in United Kingdom, 43 per cent of them never referred to electronic journals but made use of electronic mails.

In respect of library information services, Medina (1990) asserted that a number of library networks have experimented with the delivery of documents via fax, resulting in shorter delivery times. With the advent of information communication and technologies, some academic libraries in the Nigerian universities have been able to offer effective information services like Internet/E-mail, facsimile, telephone/telex, statistical data analysis, word processing and desktop publishing, CD-ROM database searching, current awareness, photocopying, lamination, etc. Social Scientists in universities also rely heavily on the use of statistical information in order to be able to understand human behaviour in different societies.

Teaching Effectiveness of Academics
The teaching effectiveness of the academics in the Nigerian universities has been of interest to educational evaluation experts (Obanya, 1985; Warkins, 1994; Doyle, 1983). Onocha (1997) stressed the importance of evaluation of teaching effectiveness of teachers by reiterating that the evaluation constitutes a source of information for diagnostic feedback to teachers about the effectiveness of their teaching, for measuring teaching effectiveness to be used in administrative decision making, for measuring quality of the course to be used in course improvement and curriculum development, for students in order to determine which courses to select, for teachers so that they know what teaching skills they should improve, and for scoping further research on teaching. Okpala (1999) suggested that

the evaluation of teaching effectiveness could be conducted by the teacher himself, the student (learner) or an observer.

Okpala and Onocha (1994) posited that quality teaching promotes a pattern of teacher-student interaction biased towards encouraging learner active involvement in individual and group activities (e.g. asking questions, discussing, manipulating, observing); and the teacher's active involvement in helpful activities such as explaining, demonstrating, prompting thinking and discussion, clarifying concepts, etc. Enthusiasm has also been identified as one of the characteristics of an effective teacher and is, perhaps, related to teaching excellence. Some of the parameters for measuring teaching effectiveness in the field of educational evaluation include: teacher's enthusiasm about teaching; use of humour to enhance of presentation; encouragement of students' expression of ideas; emphasis on course content in tests and examinations, recommendation of valuable reading texts; encouragement of students' questions and answers; use of teaching styles that hold student interest; careful preparation of course materials; provision of valuable knowledge, clear explanation of concepts, etc.

Haslett (1984) reported that there were four dimensions of teaching effectiveness by which students judged their teachers, namely: student/ teacher rapport, communication style, instructional style and stimulation. Their most prevailing teaching effectiveness methods used by the respondents included those that hold students' interest, recommend valuable reading texts, enhance presentation of lesson with humour, discuss current development in the field, amount others. Cawley and Zimmaro (2000) submitted that teachers who had extensive mastery of subject matter were more logical in their presentation of instruction. They provided helpful and timely feedback, and graded materials and examinations regularly.

Methodology

The population of study consisted of social scientists in the thirteen Federal Government Universities that were founded between 1948 and 1975 in Nigeria, and offered at least three of the core disciplines in the social sciences (Geography, Economics, Psychology, Political Science, Sociology and Anthropology). These universities produce about 70 per cent of the annual turnout of the Social Science graduates to the Nigerian labour market. In addition, they are first and second generation universities notable for academic excellence.

Stratified sampling technique with equal allocation method was used to select 50 social scientists from each university, making a total of 650. A self-developed questionnaire tagged the Library Information Utilisation and teaching effectiveness of Social Scientists (LIUPTESS) scale was used to collect data. The questionnaire had a Cronbach Alpha reliability coefficient of 0.72 for the Library Information Utilisation sub-scale and 0.88 for the 18-item Teaching Effectiveness sub-scale. Thirteen trained research assistants helped with the administration of the questionnaire. A total of 570 social scientists out of the 650 sampled responded and the copies of their questionnaire were found valid for analysis given a response rate of 87.7 per cent. The data collection and analysis lasted for six months, during June to November, 2005. The distribution of returned copies of the questionnaire by university and social science department is summarized in Table 1.

Table 1: Distribution of Respondents by University and Department

Data Analysis and Findings

The 570 respondents in the study comprised 433 (76%) males and 137 (24%) females. Concerning their academic qualifications, 180 (31.6%) possessed master's degrees, 68 (11.9%) possessed master of philosophy degrees, and the remaining 222 (56.5%) possessed doctor of philosophy degrees. They were aged between 32 and 64 years, with a mean age of 39 years. In terms of job status, 59 (10.4%) were Assistant Lecturers, 186 (32.6%) were Lecturers II, 122 (21.4%) were Lecturers I, 98 (17.2%) were Senior Lecturers, 60 (10.5%) were Readers/ Associate Professors, and 45 (7.9%) were Professors. Their teaching experience ranged between 3 and 32 years, with a mean teaching experience of 18.5 years.

In order to collect data on the use of different library information resources, the respondents were requested to rate their use of each of the library information resources in Table 2 on a 4-point scale: very heavily used = 4, heavily used = 3, occasionally used = 2 and never used = 1. The mean score and standard deviation score of each of the resources were then calculated, as provided in the table. The results in the table show that journals, abstracts/ indexes, textbooks and theses were the library information resources utilized most by the respondents, whereas Internet/CD-ROM databases, library staff, and references sources such as encyclopaedias, directories/handbooks and dictionaries were least used.

Table 2: Mean Scores of Library Information Resources Utilisation by the Respondents

Table 3: Mean Scores of Library Information Services Utilisation by the Respondents

The respondents were asked to rate their use of each of the library information services in Table 3 on a 4-point scale: very heavily used = 4, heavily used = 3, occasionally used = 2 and never used = 1. The mean score and standard deviation score for each of the services were then calculated, as provided in the table. The results in the table show that current awareness, selective dissemination of information, document delivery/loaning, photocopying, reference and CD-ROM database searching were, in that order, the services utilized most by the respondents, whereas translation, indexing/abstracting, bindery/microfilming were least used.

Finally, in order to assess the teaching effectiveness of the respondents, they were asked to indicate the extent to which they used each of eighteen different strategies to facilitate effective teaching and learning. They were asked to rate their

individual use of the strategies on a 4-point scale: 'very true of me' (coded 4), 'true of me' (3), 'occasionally true of me' (2), 'not true of me' (1). Table 4 presents the mean and standard deviation scores of the teaching effectiveness of the respondents.

teaching; summarising major points of course; facilitating note taking by the student; and providing valuable feedback on examination.

In order to measure the level of teaching effectiveness of each respondent, it was assumed that the greater the number of effective teaching
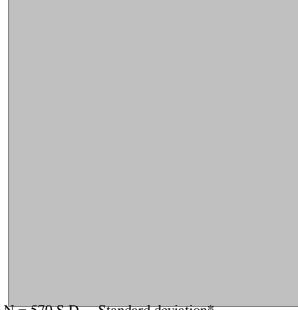
Table 4: Mean Scores of Teaching Effectiveness of the Respondents

The results in Table 4 show that the most prevalent teaching effectiveness strategy used by the respondents included: using teaching styles that hold students' interest; recommending valuable reading texts that add to course understanding of the students; enhancing presentation of lessons with humour; discussing current developments in the field; and carefully preparing course materials and presenting them in interesting ways. However, the following teaching effectiveness strategies were the least used by the respondents: contrasting the implications of various theories; utilising inputs from students in

strategies used by a respondent, the higher the overall teaching effectiveness of the teacher. Hence, the levels of use ratings given to the different strategies by each respondent were coded quantitatively and summed to obtain teaching effectiveness scores for each respondent.

Finally, in order to find out if library information resources and services' utilisation significantly correlated with the teaching effectiveness of the respondents, simple and multiple correlation analysis were carried out. The results are presented in Tables 5 and 6.

Table 5: Pearson Correlation (r) between the Variables

N = 570.S.D. – Standard deviation*
 Test was significant at 5% level.

The results show a significant positive correlation between library information resources' utilisation and teaching effectiveness of the respondents (r = 0.74, p < 0.05), and also between library services' utilisation and teaching effectiveness of the respondents (r = 0.62, p < 0.05). Further analysis (not reported in Table 5) also revealed a significant positive multiple correlation between teaching effectiveness and the library information resources utilisation and library services utilisation (r = 0.68, P < 0.05).

However, to determine the extent to which the linear combination of library resources and services' utilisation significantly predict teaching effectiveness of the respondents, multiple regression analysis were performed. Table 6 reports the results of the regression of teaching effectiveness library information resources utilisation (LIRU) and Library Information Services Utilisation (LISU).

It was found that the linear combination of the variables, library resources' utilisation and library services utilisation significantly predict teaching effectiveness of the respondents (F = 28.75, df = 2,567, p < 0.05). Also, one could infer that about 54.8 per cent (R^2 = 0.548) of the total variation in the teaching effectiveness of the respondents is attributed to a linear combination of the two variables. Furthermore, Table 7 provides information on the extent to which each of the two variables individually predicts the teaching effectiveness of the respondents.

Table 7: Relative Contribution of the Independent variables to the Prediction of Teaching Effectiveness of the Respondents

The library information resources utilisation significantly predicts teaching effectiveness of the respondents (â = 0.6825. t = 7.37, p < 0.05), and so does the library services utilisation of the respondents independently predict their teaching effectiveness (â = 0.4538, t = 5.79, p < 0.05). The estimated predictive equation of teaching effectiveness using the library information resources and library services utilisation variables is, therefore, Y = 0.1279 + 0.6825X$_1$ +

Table 6: Regression of Teaching Effectiveness on Library Information Resources Utilisation (LIRU) and Library Information Services Utilisation (LISU)

Adjusted R^2 = 0.548; Standard Error of Estimate (SEE) = 12.044.

$0.4538X_2$ where $X_1 = $ LIRU and $X_2 = $ LISU, and the value 0.1279 is the constant. In addition, the relative separate contribution of library information resources utilisation (*Beta* = 0.498 or 49.8%) is higher than that of library information services utilisation (*Beta* = 0.385 or 38.5%).

Discussion

This study found that library information resources mostly used by the respondents were journals, abstracts and indexes, textbooks, theses and dissertations, conference proceedings, technical reports, newspapers and magazines, government documents and statistical publications. This finding corroborates the assertion made by Watson (2004) that in general, social scientists rely heavily upon both journals and monographs to almost equal extent, as well as on the mass media (television, radio and newspapers), interview and experimental data, personal documents, government documents and official records for their job performance.

Hurych (1986) and Stoan (1991) had reported that, generally, less than ten per cent of both scientists and social scientists make regular use of formal information resources such as databases in even a mediated way; although at the beginning of the online information era, it was observed that social scientists were more frequent database users than natural scientists. Milne (2002) had, however, reported a very significant increase in the number of academics who used CD-ROM. This indicated that academics and, specifically, social scientists were adopting the new information formats, and that the use of such formats was becoming part of their regular information-seeking activities. The finding of this study shows that social scientists in the Nigerian universities heavily used library electronic information resources (i.e. Internet/E-mail, and CD-ROM databases), perhaps due to improved access to the more current information that the resources provide.

The study also found that the most prevailing library information services utilised by the respondents were current awareness, selective dissemination of information, document delivery/ loaning of materials, photocopying, reference, CD-ROM database searching and Internet/E-mail. The finding of this study is in agreement with that of Aya (2000), who reported that greater proportion of academic social scientists in Abuja sourced their needed information from the Internet. Popoola (2000) studied the use of information products and services in social science research in Nigerian universities and found that they utilized current awareness, statistical data analysis, referencing, E-mail/facsimile, photocopying, online database searching and selective dissemination of information in support of their research activities.

Finally, this study found significant positive correlations between teaching effectiveness and library information resources utilisation and library services utilisation by the respondents. Each of the independent variables was found to be a significant factor in predicting the teaching effectiveness of the respondents. Both variables, when taken together, strongly predict teaching effectiveness of the respondents. How might one interpret these results and their implications? One should quickly sound a warning that correlated or predicted relationships do not necessarily imply causal relationships. One may recall the conclusion by Adam (1993) and Ismaila (1999) highlighted earlier in this paper, that teachers' knowledge of subject matter, skill proficiency and resourcefulness could be linked to teacher effectiveness. The findings of the present study suggest that the academic social scientists who participated in the study tended to use effective teaching strategies to facilitate teaching and learning. Thus, a reasonable interpretation of the significant predictive relationships found in this study between high teaching effectiveness and high utilisation of library information resources and services among the social scientists may be that the utilisation of library information resources and services directly improves social scientists' knowledge of subject matter and, possibly also, teaching skill and proficiency.

Conclusion and Recommendations

Social scientists in universities require quality information in order to be able to teach effectively, undertake innovative research, and use their acquired knowledge and experience to provide expert services to society. However, the global growth of social science information in print and electronic formats means that social scientists also need quality information resources and services that could help

them to identify, access and use the required quality information. University libraries are expected to provide such resources and services which, when used effectively by social scientists, should translate into improved teaching effectiveness.

That expectation motivated this study, which investigated empirically the relationships between the use of library information resources and services and their teaching effectiveness. The findings of the study indicate that strategies and programmes to motivate social scientists in Nigerian universities to use available university library resources and services more effectively would translate into higher teaching effectiveness. It is therefore recommended that the management of the Nigerian university libraries should (a) strive to continually improve the quality of the library information resources and services provided by their libraries; (b) implement innovative user programmes to improve awareness and use of the resources and services among university academics.

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