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Influence of Institutional Support Measures on Use of Digital Library System among Undergraduates in Federal Universities in South-West, Nigeria

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Abstract: *This study investigates the factors influencing the adoption of digital library systems among undergraduate students in federal universities in South-West, Nigeria. Focusing on institutional support measures such as resource support, technical support, management support, and training and development support, the research aims to identify barriers and facilitators affecting students' use with digital libraries. Despite the availability of these resources, many students continue to rely on traditional libraries. Descriptive research was employed with proportionate stratified random sampling across six universities using the Krejcie and Morgan sample size guide with 3.84 undergraduates from Federal Universities in South-West, Nigeria. Data were analyzed using descriptive and inferential statistics. Results indicated significant influences: Resource support with weighted mean of 2.87, management support (2.87), training & development (2.86), Technical support (2.86) and Institutional support high and positive correlation ($R = 0.752$), coefficient of determination ($Adj. R^2 = 0.564$), level of confidence ($B = 0.726$, $p < 0.05$). The findings reveal significant correlations between perceived benefits and usage rates, alongside challenges related to institutional support and use of digital library system with existing academic practices. The study concludes with recommendations for educational institutions, librarians, and policymakers to enhance digital library accessibility and user engagement. By addressing these factors, universities can better support students in maximizing the potential of digital resources for their academic success.*

Keywords: Digital library system, institutional support, technical support, resource support, training and development support, management support

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Introduction

The digital library is also perfect for learning in a globalized world. This is because of the opportunities it provides for users, including undergraduates for collaboration and interaction. Digital libraries often offer interactive features, allowing students to engage in collaborative learning, share resources, and participate in online discussions with their peers and instructors. The adoption and use of digital libraries among Nigerian undergraduates play a significant role in shaping their access to information, learning experiences, and academic success (Okeji, & Mayowa-Adebara, 2021). The use of digital libraries by undergraduate students is seen in their motivation to use digital libraries which in itself is composed of specific stimulus such as perceived ease of use and perceived usefulness of digital libraries. All of these are expected to contribute to actual use of digital libraries. The actual use of digital libraries among Nigerian can be examined from the perspective of frequency and purpose of use (Kudu, et al., 2020).

Nigerian undergraduates vary in the frequency and duration of their usage of digital libraries. Some may utilize them on a daily basis, while others may access them periodically based on their specific academic requirements. Measuring the frequency of use is therefore relative as researcher have adopted metrics such as daily, weekly, monthly etc. while other simply stick with 'regularly, always, rare, often etc. This means that the frequency of use of digital libraries among undergraduates may vary based on their specific needs. For instance, students in science-related courses may use digital libraries more frequently than those in the humanities and vice versa. Researchers have also suggested the purpose of using the digital library as a measure of use. The purpose of using digital libraries is regarded as a measure of use (Oluwaseye, 2019). It focuses the readiness and ability of information users to meet various information needs with the use of digital libraries. For undergraduate students, the information needs often revolve around completing assignments, preparing for tests and examinations, writing term papers and final projects. It also covers the needs for personal development, keeping abreast of latest information in their fields and career development information among others (Tahar, et al., 2020). The purpose of use would therefore be to meet these information needs. Students who use digital resources to meet all these needs would naturally report a higher level of use than those with limited purpose of use. It is however essential to point out that behind all of this is the motivation to use which is made up of perceived ease of use and perceived usefulness. Institutional support refers to the policies, practices, physical facilities, software, or processes provided by a large organization, such as a university that enable successful learning or other activities. It is a term used to describe the support provided by institutions to their members or stakeholders. In this sense, institutional support refers to the assistance, resources, and structures provided by universities to support the activities and operations of their component units. It encompasses the policies, programs, services, and initiatives implemented by institutions to create a supportive and conducive environment for learning and growth (Stephan, Uhlaner, & Stride. 2015).

Objectives of the study

The aim of the study is to determine the influence of institutional support (resources support, management support, and training and development support) on use of digital libraries among undergraduates of federal universities in South-West Nigeria.

Scope of the Study

The study aims to determine the influence of institutional support on use of digital libraries system among undergraduates of federal universities in south west Nigeria. The dependent variable for this study is the use of digital libraries system which is measured by frequency of use, purpose of use, perceived ease of use and perceived usefulness. The independent variable is institutional support which is measured by resources support, management support, and training and development support. The geographical scope of the study is South-West, Nigeria while the population of the study is the undergraduate students in federal universities within the geographical zone.

Literature review

The concept of institutional support has been defined from different perspectives based on the background and aim of the definer. The issue is that the term 'institution' means various thing. Institution can connote either an organisation or authority with the prerogative of enabling or encumbering a process. As an element of the economic environment, the words institutional support relates to industry and business. Government agencies and organizations play a significant role in the way businesses operate because of their choices and active support in the form of laws and regulations as well as financial and nonfinancial assistance (Reddy, 2022). At the organisational level, institutional support is defined as set of policies, practices and resources made available by the organization to aid in the smooth accomplishment of various organisational processes. It is also a set of resources made available by the organization to its members in order to facilitate their task performance. According to this author, the support encompasses the management policies, leadership style and administrative competence of support staff. In the digital environment, institutional support also includes the provision of necessary infrastructure and equipment relevant to certain tasks in the organisations (Dias , 2021). Indeed, several definitions of institutional support shows that it is made up of several components with each author picking that which is the most relevant to their needs.

One definition which attempts to be all encompassing simply defined institutional support as all the supports a person receives from the management as a member of an organization (Fell, Lukianova & Kapilevich, 2021). This definition is however considered too wide and difficult to quantify. More clarity can however be found in other definitions such as the one which defined institutional support as all administrative, legal, financial, and physical resources provided to students in order to help them with their study and thereby speed up their completion time¹. In a similar definition, relating to employees, it was defined as any assistance offered by the employer, which may include but is not limited to, training, technical assistance, additional salary, and services that make it simpler for the employees to do their duties (Atibuni , 2020). From all the foregoing, it can be deduced that institutional support includes policies, infrastructural, financial, developmental and motivational support

provided by parent institutions for librarians engaged in digital library services to effectively carry out their duties. Institutional support is assistance provided to the library and its staff by their parent body or employer outside of their core terms of the agreement to improve their work performance, which can influence their commitment to the organization and have positive effects on the development of the library and its collection to meet the information needs of their patrons (Atibuni, 2020). This is supported by the submission of another author who stated that institutional support refers to the organizational active encouragements in the form of policies, laws and financial and non-monetary assistance that motivate personnel to do their duties in an efficient and productive manner. Any organization, especially academic institutions, hoping to gain the loyalty of its staff must be prepared to provide necessary assistance. When it comes to institutional support, examples include funding, training and development, infrastructural facilities and financial rewards for job well done.

Institutional support is essential for academic libraries to provide the greatest services to their users and the broader community, including infrastructure, employee training, timely promotion and favourable institutional policy. In order to better serve the information needs of its patrons, libraries need institutional support. In this context, institutional support is defined as "assistance provided to the library and its personnel by the parent body or employers outside of the core terms of the agreement to improve their well-being (Mwilongo, 2018). When a library receives funding from its parent organization, it shifts the responsibility for its upkeep from the individual staff members to the organization as a whole. To some extent, funding is considered the most important aspect of digital library services, which may explain why a scholar opined that library collections will continue to shrink without adequate funding (Khan & Bhatti, 2015). One of the most important elements of institutional support that can enhance or hinder effective development of digital libraries is the availability of the required funding. For the most part, government funding are used in public university libraries in order to increase the quality of services for the university's community. In the case of private institutions, proprietors are responsible for all financial decisions, regardless of whether a budget is in place. If academic libraries are to meet the objectives of providing the most relevant and effective digital library services, adequate funding is important for the acquisition of necessary equipment and facilities, for procurement and e-resources and other sundry expenses. Where finance is missing, it is impracticable to manage library service of any kind and where it is inadequate; the effectiveness of that service is bound to be negatively affected.

Consequently, it is imperative for both the librarians and the parent institution to collaborate in order to guarantee that the required finances are made available for the delivery of information services to library clientele (Mwilongo, 2018).

However, despite rising maintenance expenses, an increase in the number of students, inflation, and administrative expenditures, patterns in Nigeria's university education financing showed no progressive development in funds allocated to university libraries. Since the quality of education in Nigerian institutions is negatively impacted by underfunding, it is imperative to realize this (Falola, 2020). Academic libraries often receive limited budget allocations from government authorities or educational institutions. Inadequate funding restricts the ability of libraries to acquire new resources, update technology infrastructure, and maintain the library facilities. The little fund

allocated to libraries is also affected by inflation and other economic factors which can impact the purchasing power of academic libraries. Rising costs of books, journals, databases, and library materials make it challenging to maintain a comprehensive and up-to-date collection within the available budget. Libraries require funding for infrastructure maintenance, including physical space, furniture, and equipment (Khan & Bhatti, 2016). Additionally, investments in technology infrastructure, such as computers, software, internet connectivity, and digital library systems, require ongoing funding to keep pace with technological advancements. Many of the resources needed for digital libraries are imported so they are easily affected by fluctuations in the foreign exchange market. Many academic libraries in Nigeria rely on subscriptions to access digital resources, such as electronic journals and databases. However, the high costs of subscriptions, especially for international resources, pose a challenge for libraries with limited funding. The inability to afford these subscriptions can limit the range of resources available to library users (2020).

There is also an increasing need for materials and information, which cannot be provided at the current level of funding. To support graduate and research programs in academic libraries, the library must acquire adequate materials to suit user needs while also striving for comprehensiveness in some disciplines. This cannot be accomplished without a budget substantial enough to support it. Although research grants and contracts are vital sources of cash for academic institutions, it has been discovered that very little of this funding is passed to the library (Ajayi, 2021). This is a concern because universities with increased wealth from research grants place a great strain on their libraries to offer research material and information. As the library's collection shifts from print-based materials to electronic-based items, it also fundamentally alters the structure of the library and raises strategic considerations regarding the bounds of both services and collections. During the 21st century, the proliferation of Web 2.0 technologies, notably social media and user-generated content, has expedited the shift from local collections to networked information. To take advantage of the opportunities offered by the information age, it is important that libraries have access to a wide range of infrastructural facilities. The institutional support was also used to describe all organisational active encouragements in form of policies, regulations, monetary and non-monetary help that propel employees to perform their responsibilities in a very effective and productive manner. Any organisation including the institutions of higher learning that want to earn their employees commitment must be ready to give adequate support (Falola et al, 2020). Institutional support is as wide and varied as organisational culture and practices. In this study institutional support will be examined along the line of resources support, management support, technical support and, training and development.

One of the most important elements of institutional support that can enhance or hinder effective digital library services is the availability of the required resources. For the most part, government funding are used in federal university libraries in order to increase the quality of services for the university's community. In the case of private institutions, proprietors are responsible for all financial decisions, regardless of whether a budget is in place. If academic libraries are to meet the objectives of providing the most relevant and effective collections, adequate funding is important for the acquisition of necessary resources and facilities needed for a robust digital library. Where finance is missing, it is impracticable to manage digital library service; the

effectiveness of that service is bound to be negatively affected. Consequently, it is imperative for both the librarians and the parent institution to collaborate in order to guarantee that the required resources are made available in term of human and material resources such as the equipment and facilities needed to ensure the delivery of information services to library clientele. However, despite rising maintenance expenses, an increase in the number of students, inflation patterns in Nigeria's university education financing showed no progressive development in funds allocated to university libraries (Nnadozie, 2019). Even when the financial support is sorted and all the equipment and facilities have been acquired, there is need for a robust management support. Management support refers to the active backing and involvement of organizational leaders, managers, and decision-makers in supporting and facilitating the successful execution of projects, initiatives, or strategies within a company or institution. It is a critical element in achieving positive outcomes and fostering a productive work environment. It involves allocating the necessary resources, empowering librarians by granting them the authority and autonomy to make decisions to ensure effective management of digital libraries. It also includes motivation from management and advocacy by top official in support of the digital library development and deployment.

Management support is a fundamental factor in driving successful outcomes in any organization. When leaders actively engage and demonstrate their commitment to the digital library projects, and the capacity development of librarian, it fosters a positive and productive work environment that can lead to increased efficiency, innovation, and overall success. The implication is that university management can actually boost the use of digital libraries among students by supporting sound initiatives from the library aiming at achieving such purposes.

Technical support refers to the assistance and services provided to users of technology products or services. It involves resolving technical issues, answering queries, and providing guidance to ensure smooth and effective usage of technology. Technical support plays a crucial role in helping individuals and organizations overcome technical challenges, optimize performance, and maximize the benefits of technology. In academic libraries, technical support is necessary for effective digital library services. While librarians develop and collect digital resources to update the library, they should also have all necessary support to ensure that the facilities they are using keep working optimally. This is why there is a need for technical support professionals who are skilled in troubleshooting and resolving technical issues. They analyze problems, identify the root causes, and apply appropriate solutions to restore functionality. This may involve diagnosing software or hardware problems, addressing network connectivity issues, or resolving compatibility conflicts. Their expertise enables them to guide users step-by-step in resolving technical challenges.

Technical support can also assist librarians in the installation and configuration of various software relating to the digital library. They provide guidance on system requirements, installation procedures, and setup configurations. By offering clear instructions and troubleshooting tips during the installation process, technical support ensures a smooth and successful operation of the digital library. Most importantly, technical support is needed in providing guidance and training to enhance librarians' understanding of technology behind the digital library so that they can better explain

the same to their clients. As a result, there is need for experts who can provide explanations, demonstrations, and tutorials on how to effectively utilize software applications, utilize features, or navigate complex systems. This helps users maximize their productivity and use technology to its full potential. Furthermore as digital libraries are expected to be operational in perpetuity, technical support is needed to ensure that librarians stay up to date with the latest software updates and upgrades. They would need assistance in downloading and installing updates, which often include bug fixes, security patches, and performance enhancements. By providing guidance on the update process, technical support will help librarians maintain a secure and optimized digital library environment. In many cases, technical support can provide remote assistance to users. Through remote access tools, support professionals can connect to a user's device and diagnose and resolve issues remotely. This convenient and efficient method saves time and minimizes disruptions for users.

Training and development for librarians play a critical role in enhancing their professional skills, knowledge, and abilities to meet the evolving needs of digital library services. It involves providing structured learning opportunities and resources to librarians that empower them to excel in their roles and contribute effectively to the library's mission. Training support can be in the form of continuing education programmes, technology use, leadership and management skills and others. Continuing education programs which offer librarians opportunities to enhance their knowledge and skills in various areas is crucial in this aspect. These programs may include workshops, seminars, conferences, webinars, and online courses. They cover a wide range of topics such as information literacy, cataloging and classification, digital librarianship, emerging technologies, collection development, and research methodologies. Continuing education programs allow librarians to stay updated with industry trends, best practices, and new developments in digital library science (Ajayi, 2021). Mentoring programs can also be established to pair experienced librarians with newer professionals especially in the aspect of providing effective digital library services. Mentors provide guidance, support, and advice based on their experience, helping mentees navigate their career paths and develop specific skills. Peer learning initiatives encourage librarians to share their expertise and learn from each other's experiences through informal knowledge sharing sessions, study groups, or online discussion forums. Such interactions foster a collaborative learning environment and promote professional development.

The mentoring support can also be leverage to create for technology skills transfer between librarians. Effective digital library services requires librarians to be proficient in using various technologies and digital tools. Training programs should be provided to enhance librarians' skills in utilizing library management systems, digital resources, databases, online catalogs, research tools, and emerging technologies relevant to digital library services. This enables librarians to effectively leverage technology in their daily work, enhance user experiences, and adapt to evolving digital trends (Tom-George, 2020). The variables considered so far to enhance digital library use have focused on the technological and institutional in term of system characteristics and institutional support respectively.

Methodology

Descriptive survey design was adopted for the study research. The population of the study are undergraduate students in the Federal universities in South-West, Nigeria. The statistics were retrieved from the matriculated list of undergraduates obtained from the Academic Affairs office in Registry department of the various institutions. The universities included are: University of Ibadan, University of Lagos, Obafemi Awolowo University, Ile Ife, Federal University of Technology, Akure, Federal University of Agriculture Abeokuta, Federal University, Oye-Ekiti.

Result and Analysis

Table 1: Level of institutional support for digital library service provision in federal universities in South-West, Nigeria

Resources support	Very High Extent	High Extent	Low Extent	Very Extent	Low	Mean
The institution provides adequate financial resources to maintain e-library	192 (62.5%)	75 (24.4%)	21 (6.8%)	19 (6.2%)		3.43
The institution allocates sufficient staff and personnel for the curation and management of digital library resources	53 (17.3%)	151 (49.2%)	83 (27.0%)	20 (6.5%)		2.77
The libraries have access to fund and to expand digital library collections and services	92 (30.0%)	85 (27.7%)	93 (30.3%)	37 (12.1%)		2.76
The institution actively seeks external funding and partnerships to supplement resources for digital library development	56 (18.2%)	108 (35.2%)	84 (27.4%)	59 (19.2%)		2.52
Section mean						2.87
Management support	Very High Extent	High Extent	Low Extent	Very Extent	Low	Mean
Institutional leadership actively supports the strategic goals and initiatives of the digital library	166 (54.1%)	85 (27.7%)	36 (11.7%)	20 (6.5%)		3.29

There is a clear governance structure in place that ensures effective decision-making and accountability for digital library management	54 (17.6%)	156 (50.8%)	73 (23.8%)	24 (7.8%)		2.78
The institution's leadership communicates a clear vision for the digital library's role and importance within the institution	125 (40.7%)	73 (23.8%)	77 (25.1%)	32 (10.4%)		2.95
The institution leadership allocates sufficient staff and personnel for the management of digital library resources	34 (11.1%)	130 (42.3%)	80 (26.1%)	63 (20.5%)		2.44
Section mean						2.87
Training and development	Very High Extent	High Extent	Low Extent	Very Extent	Low	Mean
The institution offers training programs and opportunities for digital library staff to enhance their skills and knowledge	164 (53.4%)	83 (27.0%)	32 (10.4%)	28 (9.1%)		3.25
Professional development in digital library technologies and practices is encouraged and supported by the institution	100 (32.6%)	115 (37.5%)	56 (18.2%)	36 (11.7%)		2.91
There is a well-defined career path for digital library staff that enhances opportunities for advancement and growth	62 (20.2%)	119 (38.8%)	88 (28.7%)	38 (12.4%)		2.67
The university support training programmes regularly	77 (25.1%)	92 (30.0%)	76 (24.8%)	62 (20.2%)		2.60
Section mean						2.86
Technical support	Very High Extent	High Extent	Low Extent	Very Extent	Low	Mean

The institution provides adequate technical infrastructure and support for digital library systems and platforms	164 (53.4%)	93 (30.3%)	36 (11.7%)	14 (4.6%)	3.33
Technical issues and challenges related to the digital library are addressed promptly and effectively by the institution	55 (17.9%)	131 (42.7%)	97 (31.6%)	24 (7.8%)	2.71
Digital library users have access to reliable technical support and assistance when encountering issues or seeking guidance	77 (25.1%)	113 (36.8%)	81 (26.4%)	36 (11.7%)	2.75
Technical issues are adequately taken care of by the institution	72 (23.5%)	104 (33.9%)	64 (20.8%)	67 (21.8%)	2.59
Section Mean					2.85
Grand mean					2.86

Decision rule: < 2.5 = low; 2.5 = moderate; > 2.5 = high

Note: Very High Extent (4), High Extent (3), Low Extent (2), Very Low Extent (1)

Source: Field Survey, 2024

Hypotheses Testing

Regression analysis for influence of institutional support for digital library service provision on use of digital libraries system among undergraduates of federal universities in South-West, Nigeria

Model Summary

Model	R	R Square	Adjusted Square	R	Std. Error of the Estimate
1	.752 ^a	.565	.564		.25741

a. Predictors: (Constant), Institutional Support

ANOVA^b

Model		Sum of Squares	Df	Mean Square	F	Sig.
1	Regression	26.287	1	26.287	396.708	.000 ^a
	Residual	20.210	305	.066		
	Total	46.497	306			

a. Predictors: (Constant), Institutional Support

b. Dependent Variable: Use of Digital Libraries System

Coefficients^a

Model	B	Unstandardized		Standardized		
		Coefficients	Std. Error	Beta	t	Sig.
1	(Constant)	.849	.105		8.072	.000
	Institutional Support	.726	.036	.752	19.918	.000

a. Dependent Variable: Use of Digital Libraries System

Source: Field Survey, 2024

Institutional support for digital library service provision has a high and positive correlation ($R = 0.752$) with use of digital libraries system among undergraduates of federal universities in South-West, Nigeria. Also, the coefficient of determination ($\text{Adj. } R^2 = 0.564$) shows that institutional support for digital library service provision explains 56.4% of the total variance in the use of digital libraries system among undergraduates of federal universities in South-West, Nigeria. The other 43.6% variation in use of digital libraries system among undergraduates of federal universities in South-West, Nigeria is explained by factors not investigated in this study. Table above shows that, overall, the model is significant. More so, Table 4.8c shows that, if all other factor are constant, a unit change in institutional support for digital library service provision will lead to 0.726 increase in the use of digital libraries system among undergraduates of federal universities in South-West, Nigeria at 95% level of confidence ($B = 0.726$, $p < 0.05$). Therefore, according to the result of the regression analysis, the null hypothesis two, which states that there will be no significant influence of institutional support for digital library service provision on use of digital libraries system among undergraduates of federal universities in South-West, Nigeria is rejected.

Recommendations

1. Institution should provide necessary facilities like internet connectivity, conducive learning environment, stable electricity, funding for staff training, in-house and off-shore conferences with the aim of equipping library staff with necessary skills and so on.
2. Institutions should also offer regular workshops, seminars, and training sessions focused on developing information literacy skills among students, faculty, and staff.
3. Libraries should ensures that digital library systems are accessible to all users, including those with disabilities, by incorporating features such as screen reader compatibility, text-to-speech options, and customizable text sizes.
4. There should be regular update and upgrade of digital library systems to keep pace with technological advancements and user expectations. The place of feedback mechanism should also be provided for the library to be more user-oriented.

Conclusion

Institutional support plays a pivotal role in the successful adoption and utilization of digital library services. This support includes funding, policy development, technical infrastructure, and user support services. Thus, educational institutions need to commit to sustained investment and strategic planning to bolster digital library services,

ensuring they are well-funded, well-maintained, and effectively integrated into the academic environment. Furthermore, Information literacy skills are fundamental for students to effectively navigate, evaluate, and utilize digital library resources. These skills encompass critical thinking, digital literacy, and the ability to discern the quality and relevance of information. Therefore, Libraries and educational institutions must collaborate to embed information literacy into the curriculum and provide comprehensive training programs to enhance students' capabilities in this area. There should be no recommendation in the conclusion. The conclusion should be based solely on the results of the study

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