

UTILIZATION OF LOCAL JOURNALS BY ACADEMIC STAFF IN NIGERIAN UNIVERSITIES: A CRITICAL REVIEW

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ABSTRACT: *Utilisation of local journal by academic staff of Nigerian universities is an academic obligation that cannot be overlooked because it is an academic task that must be done for academic, teaching, learning, research and self-development purposes. The objectives of the study include the assessment of the level of the utilisation of local journals, proliferation of local journals, identify the problems confronting academic staff in accessing and utilising local journals, recommends possible solution to the identified problems. The research instruments used for the study were questionnaire, observation and interview. One hundred and eighty-five (185) copies of questionnaires were distributed while one hundred and twenty (120) copies were retrieved and found useful representing 64.9 percent. The methodology used for data analysis was simple percentage and summation weighted index (SWI). The results revealed that frequency usage of local journal was 37.8 percent while 42.3 percent have access to local journals. Please write a deductive summary of your major findings here instead of reporting data! Local journals continue to be an important source of information for academic staff in Nigeria. However, there is proliferation of local journals to the detriment of quality intellectual contents. It was recommended that peer reviewers should be encouraged, make space for advertisement like seminars, workshop, conferences etc, and reviewers should improve their review process for prompt publication.*

KEYWORDS: Utilization, local journals, international journals, academic staff, third world journals, information sharing.

INTRODUCTION

Ogunniyi, Akerele, and Afolabi (2011) stated that of all the serials subscribed by any library, journals are the most important to researchers because much of the articles therein are products of research and it may never appear in any other publications. Academic journals according to the College at Brockport (2013) are periodicals in which researchers publish articles on their work. Research articles that discuss recent findings are published in journal. Also, journals publication contains theoretical discussions and articles that critically review already published work. Journals are typically peer-reviewed which means that articles published in them were read and critically examined by more than one reviewer to ensure that it is in accordance to acceptable standard for publication (Bamidele, et. al., 2013).

However, there is the phenomenon of over-production, presumably envisioned by the growth of knowledge and increasing specialisation of academic study this is in response to the

noticeable trends of the emergence of several journals. Journals remain the fastest way to communicate research findings by authors and researchers. Journals offer authors and readers some advantages over the monograph, however, there appears to be undue proliferation of journal titles, with some publishers with limited coverage, geographical spread of authorship and doubtful review and editorial policy, thus causing considerable concern. If this is left unchecked, it is assumed would aggravate the already identified problem of marginalization of third world journals which are little cited (impact factor) or indexed in major international indexes, (Ajayi & Omotayo 2008).

Ogunniyi, Akerele and Afolabi (2011) investigated the use of serial publications by the academic staff of School of Arts and Social Sciences in Adeyemi College of Education, Ondo State, Nigeria. The researchers found out that 66.7% of the respondents used the serial section while 33.3% did not. Majority of the respondents, 21 (70%) used serials section for research purpose while 1(3.3%) used it for relaxation and be acquainted with current information. The research concluded that, there were some academic staff in the College who do not use the serials section of the library because of their notion that the journals were old, scanty, improperly arranged and lack of professionals to assist them. Professional bodies of each field of learning float journals for the interest, promotion of research developments, information sharing, and recognition of professional contributions to knowledge within and outside the country. They are good information resources for teaching and learning purposes. Journals published within the country are tagged “on-shore” publications, while those published outside the country are referred to as “offshore” publications. It is therefore necessary to assess the utilization of local journals by academic staff of selected universities in Nigerian.

Objectives of the study

The objectives of this study are to:

- i. explore the reasons why academic staff patronize local journals;
- ii. find out the frequency of use of local journals by academic staff;
- iii. find out how accessible the local journals are to academic staff;
- iv. identify the purpose of using local journals by academic staff;
- v. compare local journal preference with foreign journals by academic staff;
- vi. Unleash the proliferation of local journals by academic staff.

Research Questions

For the purpose of this study, the following research questions are generated:

- i. What are the reasons why academic staffs patronize local journals?
- ii. What is the frequency of use of local journals by academic staff?
- iii. How accessible are the local journals to academic staff?
- iv. What are the purposes of using local journals by academic staff?
- v. Do academic staffs prefer local journals to foreign journals?
- vi. Are local journals proliferated by academic staff?

LITERATURE REVIEW

In the opinion of Tomney and Burton (1998) that the continuing increase in titles is no longer simply a reflection of increasing knowledge and specialisation but compounded by some recent changes in the university funding structure, and the publish or perish trend. The latter has put increasing pressure on academics to publish articles and reporting recent research findings.

Some of the resulting articles are the result of genuine research or experience which find their way into reputable journals (now impact factor journals), others are not so good, but are due to the authors anxiety to get published by all means. Publishers over commercialisation tendency have also not helped the situation as quantity seem to be replacing quality.

The utilisation of journals by researchers worldwide had contributed in no small measure to the birth, processing, growth, utilisation and preservation of information for knowledge generation in research and academic advancement. Ode and Ape (2013) opined that the ability to find, evaluate, use, and share information is an essential product of information literacy skills. Also, Igwe and Onah (2013) asserted that, it is no longer debatable that we are in the globalisation era where the creation, distribution, use, integration and manipulation of information represents a significant activity that determines who gets what, when and how thereby resulting to a class of information rich and information poor societies. In the realisation of academic prowess and research breakthroughs, academic staff of higher institutions all over the world turned research papers into journals. The sharing of ideas, information and knowledge locally and internationally brought about local journals (on-shore) and international journals (offshore). Malemia (2014) in his research findings agreed that majority of academics prefer local publications and the use of electronic journals for teaching and learning while, Borrego (2007) reported that, a high proportion of teaching and research staff are aware of the collection of electronic journals and there is an increasing preference for the electronic to the detriment of the printed format. Fagbola, et. al.(2013) posited that a nation's capability to accelerate its socio-economic development process, and gain competitive advantage depends very much on how it can develop, integrate, use and sell information, knowledge and technology in one form or the other. Stiwell, (2000) stated that, through journals, researchers access important information about recent developments in their fields. Journals also are used to assess the productivity and contributions of researchers in academic communities. Brady, et. al.. (2006) submitted in their research that, although the initial use of paper journal increased with the advent of e-journals, a shift in use pattern occurred in favour of electronic format and now 94% of all journals used in these disciplines is via electronic format, but Madu, (2004) instead suggested interlibrary loan, joint acquisition, central cataloguing, cooperative exchange of library materials. The importance of local journal in the promotion and development of research developments is the framework on which scientific and technological development is built upon. In the same vein, Bwalya (2013) opined that rapid development of the (WWW) World Wide Web offers universities unparalleled possibilities for communication with internal and external audiences like in the publication of local and international journals. Eze and Aja (2014) positioned that, effective communication is of great importance in teaching and learning situations, but Brown (2007) noted that individual e-journal subscription are generally more expensive than their hard copy equivalent due to the addition of Value Added Tax(VAT) and occasionally publishers have more concern over loss of multiple copy revenue. This study is set out to access the utilisation of local journals by academic staff of some selected Nigerian universities and to analyse the trend in the emergence of quality and sustenance of academic local journals in Nigeria. Hence the study will help academic libraries to provide an estimate of the importance of research journals to the community and aid to access the importance of specific journals.

METHODOLOGY

The study used a survey method in which questionnaire was designed to elicit information on utilisation of local journals by the respondents. The population for the study 671 lecturers from six (6) universities and they include 619 Senior Lecturers and above, 52 Senior Librarians and above from which a total of 185 (27.6%) Respondents were selected using stratified sampling technique and each given a copy of the questionnaire to fill. A total of 185 copies of questionnaire were distributed to all the selected respondents in their various universities. The questionnaires were developed, pre-tested, validated and used to collect data relating to the objectives of the study. Simple percentage and a summation weighted index (SWI) were used to analyse the data. One hundred and twenty (120) questionnaires were returned and found to be usable, representing 64.9 percent.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

The result of the study shows that an average working experience of the respondents was (15) years. Halve of them hold PhD degree while 45.8 percent hold Masters degree and the remaining 5.0 per cent were holders of Bachelors degree. This study considers all categories of lecturers as perpetual users of local journals because everyone is required to publish papers in either local or foreign journals. Hence, 26.0percent were Lecturer 1, almost 23.0 (22.7%) percent fell in the category of Senior Lecturer. Those in the cadre of Lecturer 11 were just a little above 21.1 percent. Interestingly, 10.3 and 8.1 percent were Professors and Readers respectively while the remaining were Assistant Lecturers. The survey also reveals that 53.8 percent of the respondents had used local journals severally and 46.2 percent had never used local journals for publication. Some of the reasons given why lecturers do not use local journals includes local journals are not readily available and, because of poor quality of content. However, those who used local journals based their argument on whether it is a professional journal, popularity and listing in databases. Furthermore, the respondents were required to state the number of articles published yearly 49.5 percent publish between 2 to 5 papers, the rest did not .It further reveals that Assistant Lecturers to Senior Lecturers are leading in yearly publication .This is as a result of desperate efforts to climb to higher level in academic ladder. This corroborates Tomney and Burton (1998) opined that publish or perish trend has put increase pressure on academics to publish articles and report recent research findings The researchers sought to know the range of publications by individual respondents. The result indicated that 27.1percent of them had published between 1 to 5 papers, almost seventeen 16.9 percent had between 6 and 10 published articles. Moreover, the highest number of publications was 36 and above with 14.4percent. One can infer from this result that the lecturers were involved in paper writing.

Reasons for Utilizing Local Journals

There could be several reasons why lecturers may or may not use local or foreign journals. The instrument used allowed the respondents to tick some perceived variables for using journals. The results were analysed using the statistical method of Summation Weighted Average (SWA).Five ratings, namely Strongly Agree, Agree, Undecided, Disagree, Corresponding to scales of preference of 5, 4, 3, 2, 1.respectively, were adopted. Table 1.below shows that local journals are cheaper to purchase than foreign journals tops the ranking with an index of 2.53, followed by ‘editorial polices and rules, foreign journals are not better than local journal (2.20).It is easier to get articles published in local journals than foreign journals had an index of 2.16, while local journals are more readily available and accessible than foreign journals had the lowest index of 1.60. This corroborates the submission of Mabawonku (2005) that

academics should be encouraged to publish in local journals and that local journals must adopt international practice in manuscript processing and publishing. This also agrees with Aniedu & Uzuegbu (2014) that utilization of journal is central to its demand and use and that ability to use it and get result is the meaning of utilization.

Table.1: Reasons for Utilizing Local Journals.

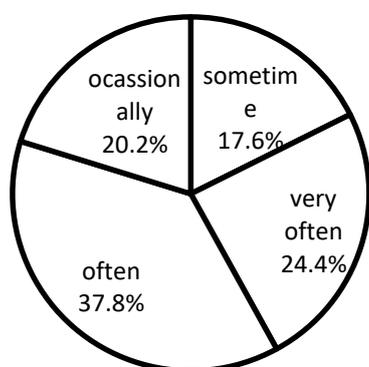
	SA(5)	A(4)	Und.(3)	D(2)	SD(1)	TOTAL	Index
In terms of cost, local journals are cheaper than foreign journals	135	280	24	20	1	460	2.53
In terms of editorial policies and rules, foreign journals are not better than local journals	90	204	30	70	6	400	2.20
It is easier to get articles published in local journals than foreign journals	125	164	33	64	8	394	2.16
In terms of quality, local journals are not comparable with foreign journals	55	180	78	58	3	274	2.05
Communication with local editors is better and faster than with foreign editors	85	152	51	74	7	369	2.03
Foreign journals editors are more biased in their review of articles sent from developing countries than local journals	75	156	66	60	10	367	2.02
In general, lecturers/academic use local journals for teaching and research more than foreign journals	85	120	45	92	4	346	1.9
Local journals review articles submitted for publication are faster than foreign journals	85	128	39	74	17	343	1.88
In terms of frequency, foreign journals are not better than local journals	65	132	21	100	15	333	1.83
Local journals have the same overall quality as foreign journals	5	108	66	108	11	298	1.64
Local journals are more readily available and accessible online than foreign journals	70	60	21	118	23	292	1.60

Frequency of Using Local Journals

The authors asked the lecturers to indicate the frequency of use of local journals. Fig.1 below shows that about thirty eight (37.8%) percent often consult local journals, in addition 24.4 percent used them very often. However, 20.2 percent and 17.6 percent consulted local journals

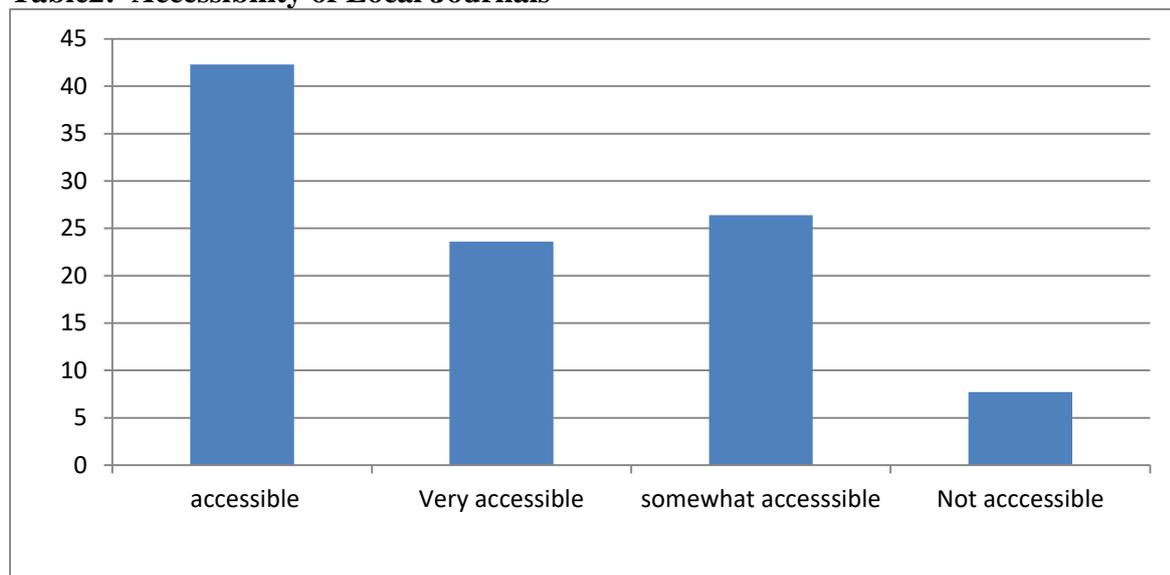
occasionally and sometimes respectively. It is evidenced from the study that there is low patronage of local journals which could be attributed to lack of Impact Factor that is one of the parameter used nowadays by the academic community in rating a journal whether foreign or local. This is at variance with Igoli (nd) submission that Nigerian academics publish most of their papers in local journals and assessments are based on publications in international journals. Stern (2013) opines that getting a paper in an international journal will get a lot more attention than just putting in into a local journal series.

Fig. 1: Frequency of using local journal



Accessibility of Local Journals

One of the challenges facing academics in developing world is accessibility and availability of both local and foreign journals. Lecturers were asked how accessible are these journals to them. Fig.2 below reveals that 42.3 percent have easy access to the local journals; almost twenty-four 23.6percent have ease and adequate access to local journals while 7.7percent had no access to local journals. It can be inferred that lecturers need various kinds of information for teaching and research for the purpose of impacting knowledge in students and self-development. To achieve this Adeoye & Popoola (2011) submit that right information must be available for the right person at the right time in its appropriate format which is the responsibilities of the library.

Table2: Accessibility of Local Journals**Purpose of Using Local Journals**

The table below clearly indicates the purpose for utilization of local journals by the lecturers. Consultation of reference materials was popular among the respondents 22.9percent; utilization in order to publish articles 22.3percent was also popular. It is also used for self-development 20.2percent. Not many lecturers use local journals for teaching and lecturing 15.6percent. It can be deduced that local journals were used sparingly for various reasons. The ability of lecturers to teach effectively relies on understanding both teachers' classroom practices and students' motivation. According to Conley (2013) the purpose of academic journals is to facilitate scholarly communication, filter from errors, and maintain the record of scientific advance.

Table.3: Purpose of Using Local Journals.

Purpose of use	Responses	Percentage (%)
Consultation for reference materials	75	22.9
Publishing of articles	73	22.3
Self development	66	20.2
To keep abreast of professional issues and development	62	18.9
Teaching and lecturing	51	15.6

Proliferation of Local Journals

Proliferation of local journals is well pronounced in developing countries due to publish or perish syndrome. Hence, lecturers were asked in their own opinion whether proliferation of journals exist. More than sixty two percent (62.2%) affirmatively confirmed the proliferation

of local journals, while about thirty-eight percent(37.8%) did not agree that there is proliferation of local journals. The lecturers were encouraged to indicate known reasons for this. Some of the reasons extracted were lecturers determination to publish constitutes twenty four percent (24.1%) as the main reason for proliferation. Increasing page charges for foreign journals, nineteen percent (19.2), while inability to publish in foreign journals (16.5percent).As earlier noted in this study, that proliferation is partly as a result of desperate bid of academic staff to publish and get promotion (Omotayo & Ajayi 2008).Many journals are floated by a few academics or individuals just to publish their works, get promotion, and after this goals is achieved such journals go into moribund.

Comparative view of Local and Foreign Journals

One of the objectives of this paper is to find out whether local journals are preferred to than foreign journals in terms of editorial policies, review process, accessibility, communication, frequency, cost and so on. The result on table 4 below shows that (i) editorial process and rules of foreign journals are not better than local (ii) review process of local journals are not better (iii) lecturers/academics do not use local journal than foreign journals for teaching & research (iv) local journals are not readily available and accessible (v) quality of local journals cannot be compared with foreign journals (vi) the cost of local journals are cheaper to foreign journals counterparts. The general opinion of the respondents was that foreign journals are available online than local journals. This is in tandem with Canada (2009) that utilization of electronic or online journals has been the order of the day and has been barrier to access to information. The initiatives that researchers, academics and institutions in developing countries benefit from. The respondents attested to the usefulness of online journals in their bid to publish and teach.

Table 4: Comparative View of Local and Foreign Journals

	Comparative view of local & foreign journals	Strongly Agree	Agree	Undecided	Disagree	Strongly Disagree	Total	Index
1.	In terms of editorial policies and rules, foreign journals are not better than local journals.	18	41	10	35	16	120	9.59
2.	In terms of frequency foreign Journals are not better than local Journals.	13	30	7	50	15	115	9.19
3.	Local journals are more readily available and accessible online than foreign journals.	10	11	7	59	23	110	8.79

4.	Local journals review article submitted for publication are faster than foreign journals.	17	28	13	37	21	116	9.27
5.	It is easier to get articles published in local journals than foreign journals.	25	32	11	41	8	117	9.35
6.	Communication with local editors is better and faster than communication with foreign editors.	07	36	17	39	17	119	9.51
7.	Foreign journals editors are more biased in their review of articles from developing countries than local journals.	15	39	22	30	10	116	9.27
8.	In general, lectures/academic use local journals for teaching and research more than foreign.	17	30	15	46	4	112	8.95
9.	In terms of quality, foreign journals are not comparable with local journals.	11	55	4	39	5	114	9.11
10.	In terms of cost local journals are cheaper to purchase than foreign.	27	70	8	10	1	116	9.27
11.	Local journals have the same overall quality with foreign journals.	1	27	20	54	13	115	9.19

CONCLUSION/RECOMMENDATIONS

Local journals represent an important resource used by academic staff in Nigerian Universities although a good number of them preferred using foreign journals for academic purposes. The local journals are relatively accessible even though it has its flaws one of such is proliferation which is precipitated by publish or perish syndrome which has watered down the quality of these journals.

Without any prejudice to the local journals, production in Nigeria, editors, reviewers and editorial boards of various local journals have a lot to do in order to improve on the quality, reviewing process and even circulation. Respondents attested to the fact that almost all local journals are not indexed nor have impact factor (I.F) which is the parameter for adjudging the quality of a journal. Easy access to quality local journals will definitely promote intellectual capacity of academic staff. The authors will like to make the following recommendations for the improvement of the local journals.

Peer reviewers should be encouraged by relevant stakeholders to review and return manuscripts in a timely way.

Journals should make space/ or advertisement in order to boost the financial base of their publication. Adverts could be for seminars, workshops, conferences, newly published books, and journals among others.

Local journals must endeavour to improve their review process, publish quality papers so that they can be listed in the ISI (Indexed journals).

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