



Availability and Accesibility of E- Resources in Nigeria Libraries: Certified Librarians Perspetive

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ABSTRACT

This paper presents the results of a cross section survey of librarians designed to investigate availability and accessibility of e- resources in Nigeria Libraries. A social survey method of research was adopted for the study and the questionnaire as a research instrument was used. A systematic random sampling technique was used to determine respondents in the survey. The result revealed that availability and accessibility of e- resources are yet to be available and accessible to some libraries in Nigeria despite the fact that 56% of the respondents attested that e- resources are very much available and accessible in their libraries. Likewise, findings revealed that majority of the participants were academic staff 56% while 46% are non- teaching staff. The findings showed that e - resources are available in two major formats PDF and HTML whereas 67% of respondents preferred PDF format for accessing e-resources, whereas 26% of respondents preferred HTML format; and 7% have no preference. It also, indicated that majority 55% of respondents are highly satisfied with the infrastructure provided by the libraries for accessing e-resources at different levels. The study recommends that Library Stakeholders, libraries management and librarians should ensure that e-resources were available and accessible to others libraries were e-resources are lacking for efficiency and effective service delivery among others.

Keywords: Electronic resources, Availability, Accessibility, Non- academic librarians, Certified librarians perception.

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1. INTRODUCTION

Electronic resources are the electronic representation of information. There are available in various forms like e-books, digital libraries, online journal magazine, on line test and e-learning tutors. Because of the effective presentation with multimedia tools, these e-resources have become the source of information. Kumar and Kumar (2008) opined that electronic resources delivers the collection of information as full text databases, e-journals, image collections, multimedia in the form of CD, tape, internet, web technology etc. E-resources may include e-journals, e-discussions, e-news, data archives, e-mail on line chatting, etc. can be called as an

e-resources. Electronic information source are a wide range of products going from electronic periodicals to CD-ROMs, from mailing list to databases, all of them having a common feature of being used and sometime modified by a computer.

2. OBJECTIVES OF STUDY

The main objectives of the present study are as follows:

1. To examine the level of availability and accessibility of e- resources in Nigeria Libraries
2. To determine the preferred format for accessing e-resources
3. To access satisfaction levels of librarians about infrastructure to support the access of e-resources.
4. To suggest suitable recommendations to improve facilities and services related to accessing e-resources.

3. RESEARCH QUESTIONS

1. What are the level of availability and accessibility of e- resources in Nigeria Libraries?
2. What are the preferred format for accessing e-resources
3. What are the satisfaction levels of librarians about infrastructure to support the access of e- resources?
4. Suggest suitable recommendations to improve facilities and services related to accessing e- resources?

4. LITERATURE REVIEW

An electronic resource is any information source that a library provides access to in an electronic format. It could also mean any material in digital format that are accessible electronically [Meadow and Yuan \(1997\)](#). Any library especially academic library purchases subscription to many electronic information resources in order to provide members of the academic community (students and most especially academic staff) access to them free of charge. There are also some electronic resources that are non-fee based that academic libraries also provide access to. When these electronic resources are acquired, maintained and controlled at the library, they become the library's electronic resources. Examples include e-full text journals, e-books, e-technical and e-research journals, e-newspaper, e-dictionaries, e- encyclopaedias, digital images, online databases in varied digital formats, Adobe documents, web pages (htm, .html, .asp, and so on) to mention a few. Due to licensing agreement regulations, only faculty, students and staff can access library resources. Many of the databases allow users to create personal profile in order to keep tracts of new contents facilitated through electronic mail. Electronic information resources are products of information and communication technologies (ICTs) and they have been found to be relevant to the teaching, learning and research processes in universities.

According to [Meadow and Yuan \(1997\)](#) as reported by [Popoola \(2008\)](#) information is a message that changes the recipient's knowledge base. This means that information increases significantly the existing knowledge of the user. [Popoola and Zaid \(2007\)](#) that the ability of libraries to render effective information services, such as current awareness, documents delivery, photocopy services, Internet and E-mail, facsimile, selective dissemination of information (SDI), bindery, online database searching, translation, technical report writing, user education, current contents listing, consultancy and so on has correlation with resources 'availability. The quality of teaching, learning and research in any academic or research institution depends, to a large extent, on its library's information resources and services. Information availability, accessibility and use

are essential to effective teaching and research. The use of library resources and services has been established by studies such as those of Meadow and Yuan (1997) and Popoola (2008) "to have relationship with research/publications outputs of academic staff and researchers in any academic and research environment". Popoola (2008) revealed that highly productive scholars are more information rich than their counterparts. Information richness here is considered in terms of the abundance of information resources available and accessible to the user as well as their quality in terms of their intellectual contents. Consideration is placed on regency, relevance, coverage of the sources as well as authority of the authors. If the institutional information services fail to meet the needs of the academic staff, they would use other available systems. However, be used with a high sense of evaluation because the information resources and services available in the institutional information systems must be capable of supporting research activities in the institutions. Information is an essential commodity that is needed for improved teaching and research productivity of academic staff and researchers. Popoola (2008) found out that there are main and interaction effects of the use of information sources and services on research output of academic staff. He concluded that the use of information sources or services will improve the research output of the researchers. He further stated that if the information sources and services available in the institutional information systems or elsewhere are used by academic staff, their research output will be more significantly enhanced. Libraries are now investing heavily on electronic resources especially academic libraries where users are exposed to various electronic resources outlets via Internet. This development is noticeable in the developed nations of the world. African countries and other developing nations are still struggling to bridge the digital divide that is preventing them from the full benefits of electronic era. However, several efforts have been made to launch African universities into the digital society with several initiatives by national and international bodies toward providing the required networked infrastructure that would enable them have access to free or heavily discounted journals and databases through programmes like AGORA, eIFL, HINARI and PERI (Rosenberg, 2005). According to Bar-Ilan, Peritz, and Wolman (2003) the most active users of electronic journals are the younger members of the teaching and research staff. In a related study, Dilek-Kayaoglu (2008) in a research on use of electronic journals by faculty at Istanbul University, revealed that majority of respondents supported the transition from print to electronic resources. The literature on electronic resources reported the following user-centered barriers to e-resources use included: a lack of skills in how to use information sources, a lack of appropriate reward for electronic scholarly communication, a lack of consistent technical support and provision and a lack of time to spend on searching for information. Nevertheless, Roy (2006) discussing information accessibility as proposed by Dodge, stated that it is based on access to relevant resources at the right time. The constraints identified included insufficient number of terminals available for use despite high demand and inadequate electricity supply. Studies have also been carried out on the use of electronic resources by teachers, librarians, students and research scholars of universities and research organizations. Seventy-eight per-cent (78%) of the respondents feel that the use of the UGC – Info net e-journals has created high dependency value on their research work and they needed current article alert services and electronic document supply services (Madhusudhan, 2008). In the context of developing countries, Okello-Obura and Magara (2008) investigated electronic information access and utilization at the East African School of Library and Information Science, Makerere University, Uganda. Out of the 250 targeted students, 190 responded, giving a response rate of

76%. The study revealed that users derived a lot of benefits from electronic resources gaining access to a wider range of information and improved academic performance as a result of access to quality information. [Thanuskodi, \(2012\)](#) in his study established that the majority of users are aware about the availability of e-resources and e-resources are available in two major formats PDF and HTML. It was observed that 64.44% of respondent's preferred PDF format for using e-resources, whereas 25.00 % of respondents preferred HTML format; and 10.56% have no preference. In the same study 50.56% of respondents are highly satisfied with the infrastructure provided by the library for accessing e-resources at different levels.

4.1. Electronic Resources in Nigeria Library

With the advent of the Internet, researchers and academics have recognized the capabilities of the information and communication technologies as efficient means to share results and to get around barriers by full transfer of intellectual property rights from the author to the publisher, it is also a means of improving the slow turn-over of traditional publishing. E-journals relatively provide efficient access to information and, thus they are easy to distribute to library patrons than traditional print; in the financial stringent environment of higher education system, electronic journals have become a medium which is cheaper than the traditional printed journals ([Ellis and Oldman, 2005](#)).

4.2. The Internet

According to [Jensen's Report \(2007\)](#) 54 countries in Africa had Internet connectivity. By the year 2009 however, internet penetration as a percentage of the total population of Africa was still 1.4% compared to the world average penetration of 12.7%. The internet has provided a wider access to global information resources such as online database, e-journals, e-prints and other sources of digital information, these resources are not effectively .The internet is very useful as a communications tool in the Universities among librarians and library clientele. It is the most efficient means of electronic document delivery ([Al Fadhli and Johnson, 2006](#)). [Jagboro \(2003\)](#) had also emphasized the emerging reliance and attitude of users to electronic resources. In a study she conducted in some Nigerian Universities, it was found that 45.2% of respondents accessed electronic resources from cybercafés. Though this attitude, according to her is due to the proximity of cybercafés to user facilities.

4.3. Online Database

The most effective way to provide access to electronic books/journals in University libraries is through subscription to online databases which can be accessed through the internet. Online databases are a collection of electronic information sources (e-journals/e-books) by publishers from various fields and disciplines, ([Afolabi, 2007](#)). Some of these databases are provided free of charge to libraries in developing countries by their publishers or vendors. Some of these include NARI, <http://www.healthinternetwork.org/scipub.php> AGORA: <http://www.agininternetwork.org/en/>. Other require subscription fee such as emerald database, <http://www.emeraldinsight.com> and <http://www.blackwell-synergy.com> among others. Access to these databases provides researchers with thousands of scholarly articles in their field of specialization or research ([Fatoki, 2004](#)). For librarians to utilize the growing range of

electronic resources they must acquire and practice the skills necessary to exploit them [Okello-Obura and Magara \(2008\)](#)

4.4. CD-ROM Database

[\(Afolabi, \(2007\)\)](#) stated that CD-ROM databases allow users access to relevant databases without robust Internet connectivity in libraries. It is therefore cost effective than online databases as information could be accessed off-line without paying for telecommunications fee. [Ali \(2005\)](#) found out that 83% of students surveyed felt that using this source saved them time, and found it relatively easy to use. Two thirds of those surveyed stated that if the CD-ROM was busy, they would wait for it to become free rather than use the print tool. However, a study of online searching of scientific information in science and technology libraries of Delhi reveals a sizeable number of users (almost 60%) are facing numerous problems while browsing electronic information, such as lack of knowledge about the resources, lack of trained staff and inadequate terminals. New modes of teaching, learning and accessing information have emerged as a result of internet and World Wide Web [\(Afolabi, \(2007\)\)](#). CD-ROM databases are important tools for identifying the bibliographic details of potentially useful documents and ensure easy access to large volumes of literature for research.

5. RESEARCH METHODS

This study was carried out using a social survey method. The research instrument adopted for the study was questionnaire. The instrument was structured to assess relevant information about availability and accessibility of e- resources in Nigeria libraries. It was validated using expert opinion. The reliability of the instrument was tested using test-retest method. Fifteen questionnaires were administered to librarians in Abuja the capital city of Nigeria. The completed questionnaire was returned and re-administered to the same set of librarians, and the responses were the same with the previous ones. The population of the study was the 530 certified librarians of Nigeria from various libraries across the countries that were inducted by the Librarians' Registration Council of Nigeria (LRCN) on 13th October, 2015. A systematic random sampling was used to select the librarians involved in the survey. The questionnaire was administered to one out of every three librarians being inducted on the day. A total of 315 questionnaires were distributed to librarians and 273, representing 87% response rate, were completed and returned. The data collected were analysed using descriptive statistical tools such as, bar chart, tables, percentages and frequency distribution.

6. FINDINGS AND DISCUSSION

The total number of duly completed and returned questionnaire copies was two hundred and seventy three (273). This represents a response rate of 87%. Statistical package for the social sciences (SPSS) application software was used for the analysis, and simple percentage was adopted for easy analysis and interpretation.

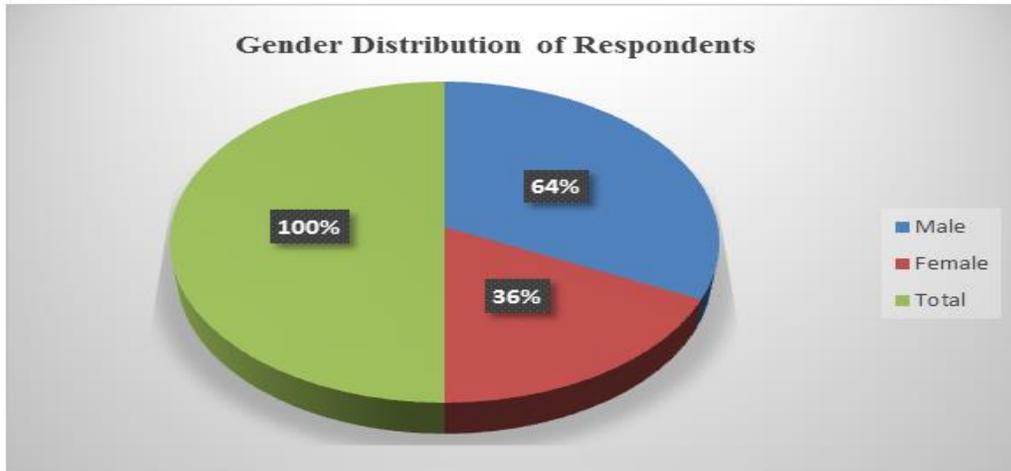


Figure-1. Gender Distribution of Respondents

Figure 1: Showed that 64% of respondents are male while 36% are female. This represents the gender distribution of librarians involved in the survey.

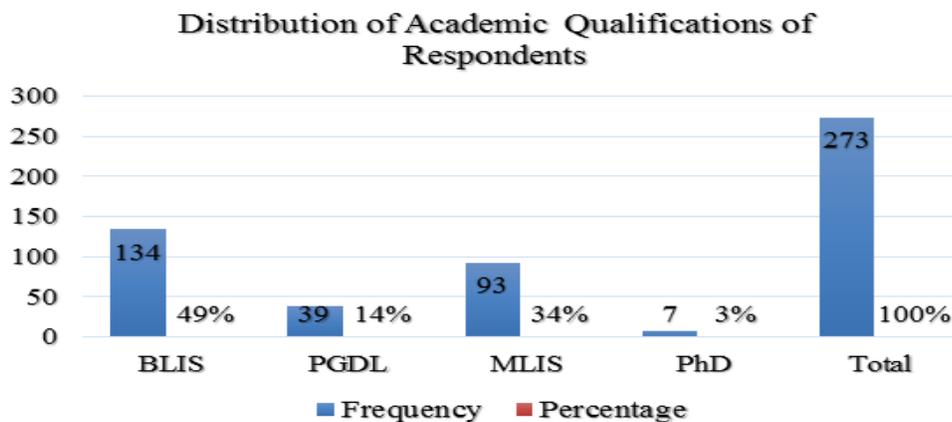


Figure-2. Distribution of Academic Qualifications of Respondents

As observed from figure 2, majorities 49% of the respondents have first degree in library science whereas 34% had masters in library science while 14% had post graduate diploma in library science and 3% had Doctor of Philosophy in library science.

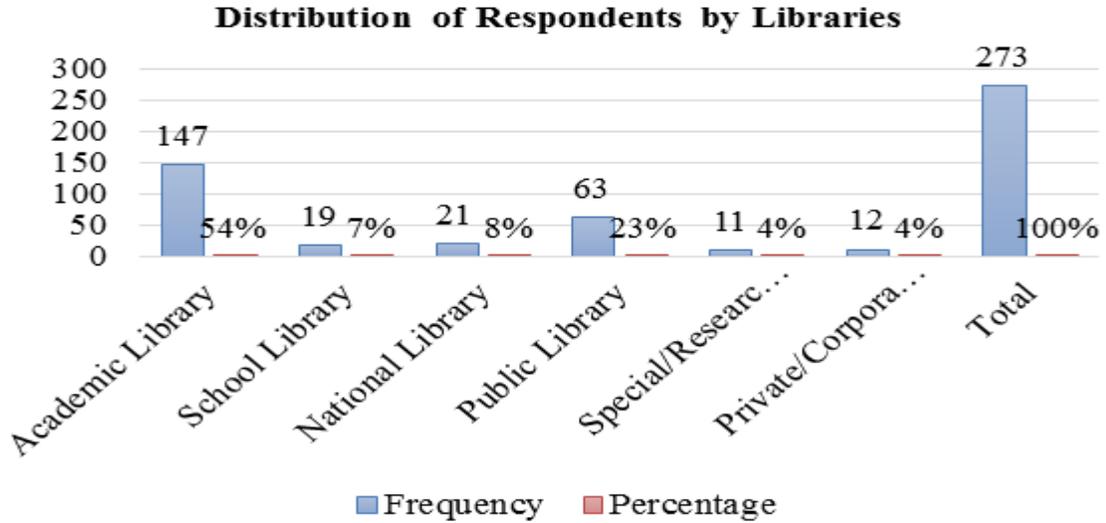


Figure-3. Distribution of Respondents by Libraries

As noted above, respondents in the survey cut across the different types of libraries that are available in Nigeria. A larger percentage 54% of the respondents are from academic libraries while other categories were equally represented. This includes public libraries 23% while National library 8% whereas school libraries were 7% while private/ corporate and special/research libraries were 4%.

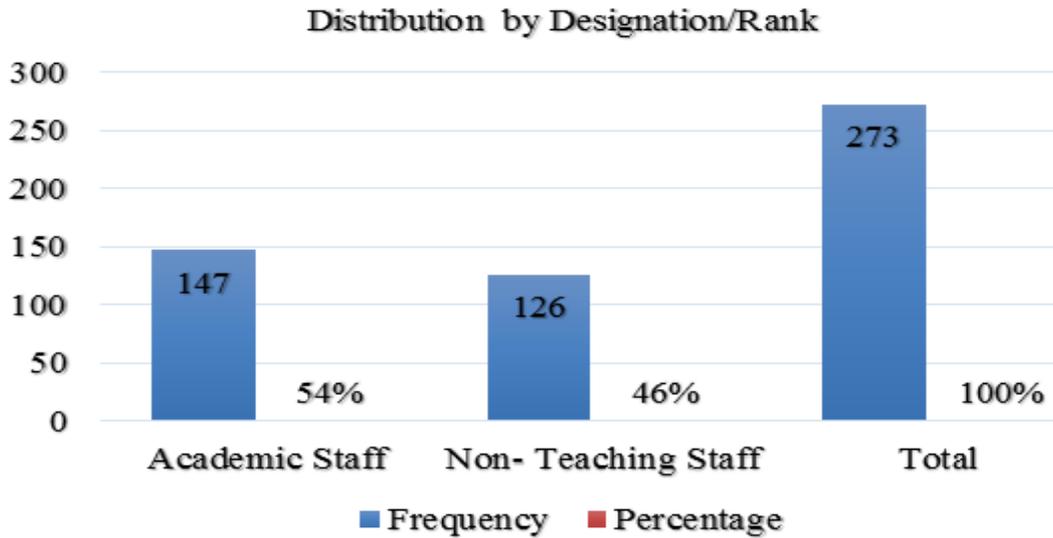


Figure-4. Distribution by Designation/Rank

As observed from figure 4, majorities 54% of the participants were academics staff while 46% of participants were non-teaching staff. It could therefore be deduced from the data that majority of participants were academic staff.

Levels of availability of e-resources in the libraries

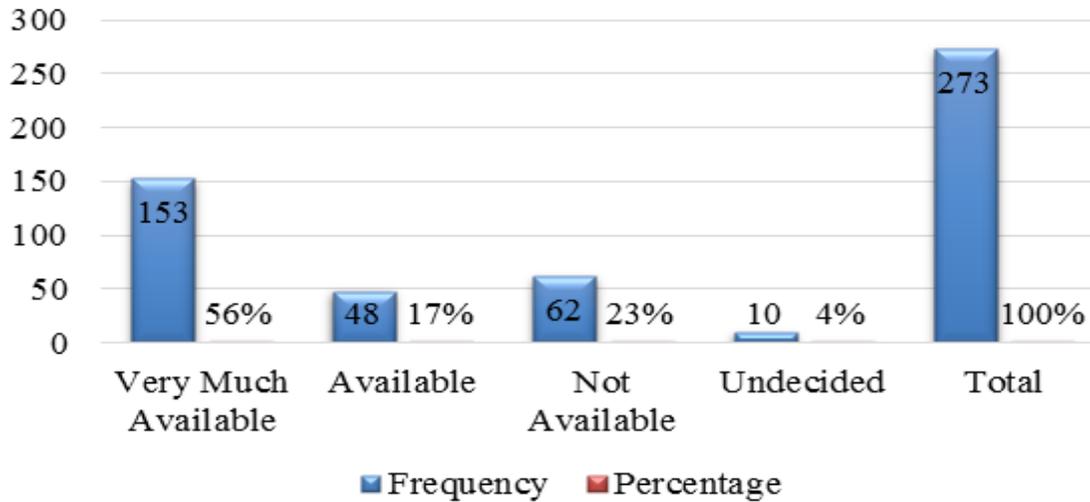


Figure-5. Levels of availability of e- resources in the libraries

Fig 5 showed that majorities 56% of the participants attested that e- resources are very much available in their libraries whereas 23% of the participants refuted that e- resources are not available while 4% of the participants are undecided. It could be concluded that availability and accessibility of e- resources in libraries are yet to be available and accessible to some libraries in Nigeria.

Levels of accessibility of e-resources in the libraries

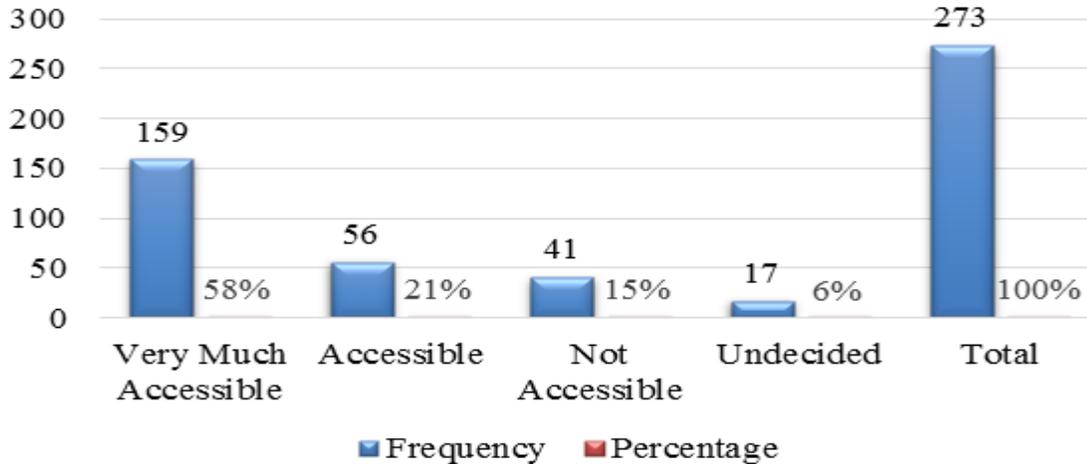


Figure-6. Levels of Accessibility of e-resources in the Libraries

Fig 6 showed that majorities 58% of the participants attested that e- resources were accessible in their libraries whereas 15% of the participants refuted that e- resources are not accessible in their libraries while 6% of the participants are undecided. Indication is that those libraries where e- resources were not available, not accessible and undecided may be due to the nature of services they rendered or they were not academic libraries.

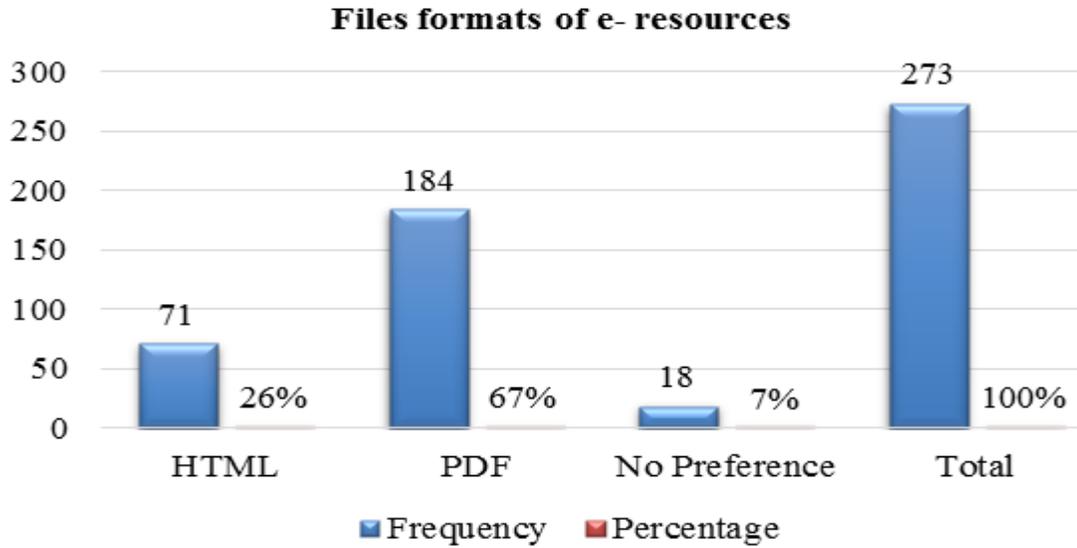


Figure-7. Files Formats of e- resources

Figure 7, showed that e - resources are available in two major formats PDF and HTML. It was observed from the analysis that 67% of respondents preferred PDF format for accessing e-resources, whereas 26% of respondents preferred HTML format; and 7% have no preference.

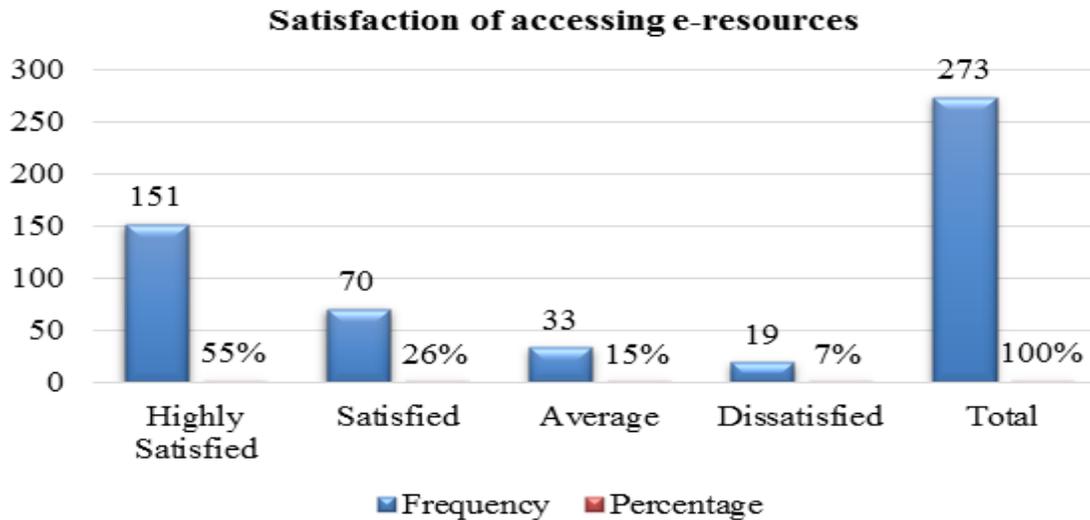


Figure-8. Satisfaction of accessing e- resources

Figure 8: It was observed that majority 55% of respondents are highly satisfied with the infrastructure provided by the libraries for accessing e-resources at different levels whereas only 7% of respondents are dissatisfied with the same.

7. DISCUSSION OF FINDINGS

Findings revealed that majorities 56% of the participants attested that e- resources are very much available in their libraries whereas 23% of the participants refuted that e- resources are not available while 4%

of the participants are undecided. It could be concluded that availability and accessibility of e- resources in libraries are yet to be available and accessible to some libraries in Nigeria. The result showed that e - resources are available in two major formats PDF and HTML and 67% of respondents preferred PDF format for accessing e-resources, whereas 26% of respondents preferred HTML format; and 7% have no preference.

The findings also, revealed that majority 55% of respondents are highly satisfied with the infrastructure provided by the libraries for accessing e-resources at different levels whereas only 7% of respondents are dissatisfied with the same. This is in line with finding of [Thanuskodi. \(2012\)](#) opined that 50.56% of respondents are highly satisfied with the infrastructure provided by the library for accessing e-resources at different levels.

8. CONCLUSIONS

Now a day's internet has emerged as most powerful medium for storage and retrieval of information. Therefore, prospect of e-resources availability and accessibility in the library rests on the level of knowledge of librarians to efficiently and effectively manage the new technologies to deliver services to the satisfaction of clients. Also, greater efforts are needed by the Library Information Stakeholders, Institutions and government to successfully equip and empower librarians with adequate skills to manage electronic libraries.

9. RECOMMENDATIONS

1. Library Stakeholders, libraries management and librarians should ensure that e-resources were available and accessible to others libraries were e-resources are lacking for efficiency and effective service delivery.
2. The Libraries management should as a matter of importance acquire, subscribe and create access to electronic resources.
3. The libraries management should conduct user study programs to know more about electronic resource needs of users.
4. Libraries in Nigerian should regularly evaluates the quality, adequacy, and accessibility of their library's information resources and services in other to meet up with the quality of library services stipulated by IFLA which was the aim of this study.
5. The libraries management should provide funds for subscription to more electronic primary and secondary sources.

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