

CHAPTER NINE

AWARENESS OF AND ATTITUDE TO OPEN ACCESS PUBLISHING AS CORRELATES OF LIBRARIANS RESEARCH OUTPUT IN SOUTH WEST NIGERIA

Abstract

The emergence of Open Access publishing has brought about a change in publishing trend from the fee-based limited circulation of research communication to the level of free, globally available online information. The use of open access publishing system has also afforded researchers extensive visibility and usage of research findings to researchers with a more diverse audience. And this has made Open Access (OA) to be one of the buzzwords in scholarly publication. Research and scholarly publications is very essential aspect of academics librarians. More importantly, as academics it is demanded for them to carry out researches that will impact on their services and communicate such findings to the academic world. It has been claimed in literature that OA has had a great impact on research, teaching and learning in higher education through increased and easier access to scholarly research output. Regardless of this claimed advantage,

there were initial reservations about open access publication in Nigeria. This paper therefore seeks to examine the level of awareness of librarians in South West Nigeria of Open Access Publishing. It also seeks to examine their attitudes to Open Access Publishing as well as to determine how the interplay of these two factors affect their research output, using librarians working in academic libraries in Southwest, Nigeria. The study employed the instrument of questionnaire for data gathering. Analysis of data indicate that the relationship between open access publishing awareness and research output was significant [$r(62) = .53, p < .01$]. This was such that as the awareness of open access publishing by librarian increases, there tend to be an increase in their research publications also. However, while participants have positive attitude towards open access, the type of attitude librarians portray towards open access do not relate with either an increase or decrease in their research publications.

Background

Librarianship, especially in academic setting, is a service delivery activity that requires constant examination, evaluation and further learning in order to have an effective service delivery. The goals of academic libraries usually stem from the goal of the mother institution and the duty of the library and librarians is to assist the institution achieve its set goals by academic and research support. The library as a service unit in academic environment needs effective communication with and building strong relationship with the patrons (Mehta, 2010). More importantly Librarians especially in the academic setting whether in Colleges or universities are academics that are involved in scholarly communication not only to improve on their service delivery but also to support the research mission of their institutions and help to increase the research productivity and impact of faculty by aiding them in their research activities (Dawson, 2014). In Nigeria, research and scholarly publications is a very essential aspect of academic librarianship. Apart from the fact that they need to read research reports relevant to their areas, in other to keep abreast of latest developments in the field; as academics, it is demanded of them to carry out researches that will impact on their services and communicate such findings to the academic world. More relevant is the "publish or perish" mantra which is still very much a reality in the lives of academics in Nigeria. This indicates that Librarians in Nigeria do not only deal with scholarly materials by relating with publishers and making available the materials for use by library patrons, they are also involved in the creation and communication of scholarly information.

The system of creation, quality evaluation and information disseminated within the academic community otherwise referred to as scholarly communication has continued to evolve over time with its attendant changing in the ways things are done. With the introduction of information technology, there were changes in the way things are done on a wide spectrum of life activities and this did not leave out scholarly communication. The major development of digitisation brought with it the observable change in the way information are created and disseminated which also brought in the open access publishing system. The Budapest Open Access Initiative (2001), described OA as literature that is freely available on the public internet, permitting any users to read, download, copy, distribute and use them for any other lawful purpose, without financial, legal or technical barriers other than lack of the internet itself. With the open access influence, not only are research outputs made more available especially with digitisation but the erstwhile local production of research output has become more global especially with the use of the internet. Thus, researcher could publish their research outputs in media with global access and at the same time able to access research reports from all around the world free of charge.

The emergence of Open Access initiatives has majorly been attributed to the unwelcoming attitudes of commercial publishers' penchant for exorbitant charges for publishing articles, high cost of accessing print journals, limited access to other researchers' scholarly work and time lapse to publish research findings (Moller, 2006). With Open Access, ssituations are changing from main dependence on the traditional journal publication system which were fee based and somehow limited in their circulation to a more widely accessible toll free and online access to research outputs. As noted by Kassahun and Nsala (2015), Open Access publishing has recorded a great impact on research, teaching and learning in higher education through increased and easier access to scholarly research output. Although literature has indicated that librarians' research output in Nigeria is generally low (Oduwole and Ikhizama, 2007), it is believed that this has impacted positively on the availability of research output available to researchers as well as the publishing outlet that could be used to communicate their research reports. This is further supported by the fact that the OA system provides fair access to all information by all and especially developing nations.

It is important to stress that the Open Access initiative was faced with some initial reservations from some academic quarters in Nigeria, with their reservations bothering on the authority and reliability of open access journals. The belief was that whatever was provided free of charge could be anything but of good quality, more so that they were used to the traditional fee paying publishing system. Also, the traditional pay-for-access model ensures adequate compensation to authors and publishers while ensuring scholarly reputation through peer review arrangement and editing of articles (Kassahun and Nsala, 2015). However, with continued awareness campaign through workshop on open access, the open access system is becoming acceptable. Part of the evidence that the system is being accepted is the fact that while it is becoming a commonplace for Nigerian University libraries to set up their own repositories, more and more open access journals are been accepted for

promotion of academics. However, the level of awareness and attitude to and acceptability of Open Access publishing in Nigeria still remain outstanding issues for research. This was corroborated by Bashorun, Jain, Sebina and Kalusopa (2016) who noted that despite the ~~potential of OA publishing, its adoption and use is still low~~. Awareness and attitude are two main important factors that may affect the use of scholarly publications. Awareness simply refers to having knowledge of the existence of something or being conscious that something exists, while attitude simply describe our disposition in terms of the level of like or dislike we have for something which in turn determines our behavior towards that thing. Attitude is also defined in terms of being either positive or negative. Awareness has also been established to have significant relationship with attitude and behavior towards an issue (Dinev, Goo, Hu & Nam, 2006). Obuh and Bozimo (2013) in corroboration of Fullard (2007) also posited that awareness is an important factor in usage of OA scholarly communication. The implication of this is that the level of awareness about OA will have significant effect on the users' attitude and behavior to it in respect of readership and publishing. To this extent this study intends to examine the awareness level of Librarians who are information gatekeepers to OA and their attitude towards OA in relation to their publishing output.

• Problem Statement

There were initial reservations from Nigerian academics in embracing open access publishing. The belief was that whatever was provided free of charge could be anything but of good quality more so that they were used to the traditional fee paying publishing system. There are even concerns among Librarians about the originality and the contents of in OA resources. Also, the traditional publishing system only provided a limited number of publishing channels not only to read from but also to publish in. It has been claimed that OA has had a great impact on research, teaching and learning through increased and easier access to scholarly research output. However, conflicting evidences also abound in literature on the level of awareness about OA in Nigeria. Also, among the few studies carried out on issues of open access in Nigeria, none has really focused on librarians who are evidently recognised gatekeepers of information. This study attempts to provide further empirical evidence on awareness and attitude to OA as well as fill the existing gap in literature as it relates to Librarians.

Research Objectives

The objectives of the study are to:

1. Determine the level of awareness of librarians on Open Access
2. Examine the level of research productivity of librarians in South West Nigerian universities
3. examine the attitudes of Librarians to Open Access Publishing
4. Determine the relationship between awareness of open access publishing, attitude to OA and the publishing output of librarians

Research Questions

The following research questions were set to guide the study:

1. What is the level of awareness of librarians on open access publishing?
2. What type of attitude do librarians in Nigeria have towards OA?
3. What is the level of research output of librarians

Hypothesis

The following null hypotheses were set to guide the study:

1. There is no significant relationship between open access publishing awareness and research output of academic librarians in South West Nigeria
2. There is no significant relationship between librarians' attitude towards open access and their publishing output.
3. There is no significant relationship among librarians' attitude as well as their awareness of OA and their publishing output

Review of Literature

Literature has indicated that awareness, attitude have significant influence on the adoption and use of OA publishing. However, there are conflicting findings on issues of awareness and attitude to OA. While some studies found low level of awareness about OA in their participants, others indicated fairly high level of awareness. A study by Bashorun, Jain, Sebina and Kalusopa (2016) on 317 academic staff in universities in southwest Nigeria showed that awareness, attitude, performance expectancy, Internet self-efficacy and facilitating conditions significantly influenced the adoption and use of OA publishing. The study also revealed that there is low awareness about OA among academic staff in Nigerian universities. In the same vein, Obuh and Bozimo (2012) examined the awareness and use of open access scholarly publications by one hundred and forty one (141) Library and Information Science (LIS) lecturers in southern Nigeria. The study revealed a high level of usage of open access publications by both senior and junior LIS lecturers and that their high level of awareness affected their tendency to use open access publications. Furthermore, Mohammed (2013) investigated the awareness and use of Open Access scholarly publications by postgraduate students in Ahmadu Bello University, Zaria. The study found that majority of the respondent are not aware of the major sources of OA publications.

In relation to attitude, Palmer, Dill, & Christie (2015) reported on the results of a survey conducted on academic librarians' attitudes toward open access principles and related behaviours. The study showed that the respondents' attitude were largely positive towards open access. Furthermore, Sheikh (2017) also analysed the awareness, use and attitudes of Pakistani faculty members towards scholarly open access using the faculty members of 21 universities and higher education institutions located in Islamabad. The study revealed that ~~the attitudes of faculty members towards open access were very positive. This shows that~~ people have majorly positive attitude towards open access. Studies on publication output of

librarians have also produced different results. While Oduwole and Ikhizama's (2007) survey on research output of librarians in Nigerian Agricultural Research Institutes showed that the librarians' research output was generally low, a similar study by Okpe, Simisaye & Otuza (2013) which examined the growth of academic librarians' research output in Nigeria showed that while most faculty members have been able to publish or attain at least 10 publications within a ten year period, journal articles was the major type of publication by the participants. The study also showed that the higher the designation the more their research output in Babcock university. A related study by Okeji (2019) which examined the research productivity of authors in the field of Library and Information Science in Nigeria, showed that only few authors are productive in the field of Library and Information Science in Nigeria. Out of the 153 recognized universities in Nigeria, only few universities are productive. From the findings of studies above, it could be concluded that though there are conflicting evidence on the level of awareness about OA, the attitude of participants to OA is more of positive than negative. In the same vein, it could be concluded that publishing output of librarians is generally low. However, the present study will help to provide further empirical evidence on the awareness and attitude of librarians to OA and the position of their research output.

Methodology

The study employed the survey design using the instrument of questionnaire to collect data from sixty four academic librarians scattered over ten tertiary institutions in the Southwestern part of Nigeria. The questionnaire consists of five sections. While section A requested for demographic information of participants, section B consist of questions on OA awareness by participants. Sections C and D sought answers on participants' attitude to OA and their publishing output respectively. Section E however presented a list of 46 OA journals selected from DOAJ to measure the how aware participants were about them as well as how much they have published in them. It is important to stress here that Sections B, C and D were adapted from a questionnaire by Dawson (2014) on Open Access Publishing. Data collected were analysed using simple percentages and Pearson Correlation.

Findings and Discussions

The participants in this study comprised sixty four librarians from eight University, one polytechnic and one college of education libraries. The participants included 42 (65.6%) males and 22 (34.4%) females while their ranks on the job range from Librarian II to University Librarian. This presented in table 1.

Table 1: Population of the Study

SN	Institution	Number	%
1	AAUA	5	7.8
2	UNILAG	10	15.6
3	Elizade Uni Lib	7	10.9
4	UNIMED Ondo	4	6.25
5	TASUED	8	12.5
6	LAUTECH	4	6.25
7	FUNAAB	8	12.5
8	FUTA	8	12.5
9	Fed Poly Ado	5	7.8
10	Gani Bello Lib, Abeokuta	6	9.4
Total		64	100

In all there were 8 University Librarians, 10 Deputy University Librarians, 16 Principal Librarians, 10 Senior Librarians, 12 Librarians I and 8 Librarians II.

Research Question 1: What is the level of awareness of librarians on open access publishing?

The level of awareness was measured by the OA awareness section of the questionnaire which sought answers to the participants understanding of open access its philosophy and open access publishing. Analysis of the responses showed that while 31(48.4%) understood what open Access stood for, 22(34.4%) had some knowledge while 11(17.2%) were either not aware of it or not sure what it stands for. However, 56(87.5%) claimed to be aware that OA provides opportunity to publish one's work free of charge, for free access to others and makes others' works free accessible. This presented in table 2.

Table 2: Awareness about Open Access

S/N	Item	Yes%	No%
1	Awareness about journals that allow authors to publish their works without paying and make their individual articles open access freely	50(78.1)	14(21.9)
2	Awareness that OA provides opportunity to publish your work for free access to others and makes others' works freely accessible to you	56(87.5)	8(12.5)

This is an indication that the level of awareness of participants about OA is a bit high. This was further complimented by asking participants about their awareness of open access journal title. Out of the 46 journal titles listed, the top ten journals enjoyed awareness from not less than 40% of the participants. This is shown in table 3.

Table 3: Ranked awareness of open access journals

S/N	Journal Title	Well Aware %	Not Sure %	Not aware %
1	Library Philosophy and Practice	40(66.6)	-	24(40)
2	AGRIS on-line Papers in Economics and Informatics	38(59.4)	7(10.7)	19(29.7)
3	JLIS.it: Italian Journal of Library and Information Science	36(56.3)	7(10.7)	21(32.8)
4	Interlending & Document Supply	31(48.4)	13(21.6)	20(31.3)
5	The Journal of Community Informatics	28(43.8)	9(14.1)	27(42.2)
6	Information Research	27(42.2)	8(12.5)	29(45.3)
7	InULA Notes: Indiana University Librarians Association	27(42.2)	10(16.6)	27(42.2)
8	Brazilian Journal of Information Science,	27(42.2)	9(14.1)	28(43.8)
9	Indian Streams Research Journal	27(42.2)	11(17.2)	26(40.6)
10	Annals of Library and Information Studies	26(40.6)	8(12.5)	30(46.9)

From table 3, *Library Philosophy and Practice* enjoy the highest awareness by 66.6% of the participants, followed by *AGRIS* and *JLIS* with awareness by 59.4% and 56.3% of the participants respectively. Even the *Annals of Library and Information Studies* which ranked tenth enjoyed awareness by 40.6% of the participants. This certainly is an indication of a growing awareness about OA journals among librarians in Nigeria.. This finding corroborates the findings of Obuh and Bozimo (2012) that there is high level of awareness of OA by Library and Information Science (LIS) lecturers but contradicts the findings of Mohammed (2013) that majority of the respondent are not aware of the major sources of OA publications. It also contradicts the findings of a study by Bashorun, Jain, Sebina and Kalusopa (2016) which revealed that there is low awareness about OA among academic staff. This implication of this is that the awareness campaigns that were mounted along the years are yielding fruits as there is an increasing awareness about OA.

Research question 2: What type of attitude do librarians in Nigeria have towards OA?

The measurement of participants' attitude to OA started with measuring their level of support for the philosophy of OA. Results showed that 23 (35.9) participants have very

strong support while 17(26.6%) have strong support for this philosophy. However, 19(29.7%) do not support the philosophy while only 5 (7.8%) were not sure of their support. This shows that about 62% of the participants have positive disposition towards the philosophy of OA. This is also supported by the measurement of their attitude as presented in table 4.

Table 4: Attitude of librarians in Nigeria have towards OA

S/N	Attitude	Strongly Agree%	Agree %	Strongly Disagree %	Disagree %	Don't Know%
1	Results of research should be made available for all to read without barriers	37 (57.8)	20(31.3)	1(1.6)	-	6 (9.4)
2	Open access leads to the publication of poor quality research	4 (6.3)	10(15.6)	14 (21.9)	30 (46.9)	6 (9.4)
3	Open access will increase the citations to, and impact of my publications	21 (32.8)	33(51.6)	2 (3.1)	1 (1.6)	7 (10.9)
4	Open access publications are not properly peer-reviewed	6 (9.4)	12(18.8)	11 (17.2)	28 (43.8)	7 (10.9)
5	Open access does not affect the quality of research	17 (26.6)	18(28.1)	11 (17.2)	10 (15.6)	8 (12.5)
6	My current tenure and promotion standards discourage me from making my publications open access	9 (14.1)	7 (10.9)	11 (17.2)	27 (42.2)	10(15.6)
7	Open access journal are more widely accessible than fee paying journals	32 (50)	18(28.1)	3 (4.7)	3 (4.7)	8 (12.5)
8	Open access journals make research work easier	36 (56.3)	18(28.1)	1 (1.6)	1 (1.6)	8 (12.5)

Table 4 indicates that the participants have more positive disposition towards making research reports available without barriers, open access journals being widely accessible, open access journals making research work easier as well as open access increasing impact of publications. They however indicated more negative disposition towards open access leading to poor quality and open access being not properly reviewed. This corroborates studies by Palmer, Dill, & Christie (2015) as well as Sheikh (2017) which showed positive attitude of participants to OA. This shows that the participants have more overall positive attitude towards OA than negative. This also implies that the initial fears and resentment about open access in Nigeria is fading away.

Research question 3: What is the level of publishing output of librarians?

In response to the number of publications in the last five years, only 65% of the participants have published peer-reviewed journal articles in the last five years in all, while 17% and 19% respectively have contributed to books and published in conference proceedings. This is further supported by table 5.

Table 5: Publishing output of librarians

S/N	Publication	Yes %	No %	1-5 %	6-10 %	11 -15 %	Above 16 %
1	Published peer-reviewed journal article	42(65.6)	22(34.4)	24(37.5)	11(17.2)	7 (10.9)	7 (10.9)
2	Published a book	5 (7.8)	59(92.2)	19(29.7)	3 (4.7)	1 (1.6)	1 (1.6)
3	Contributed a chapter to an edited book	17(26.6)	47(73.4)	28(43.8)	2 (3.1)	3 (4.7)	1 (1.6)
4	Published a paper in a conference proceedings	19(29.7)	45(70.3)	31(48.4)	5 (7.8)	2 (3.1)	-
5	Given a conference presentation or poster	15(23.4)	49(76.6)	24(37.5)	10(15.6)	6 (9.4)	-

It is important to stress here that, the high percentage of participants that have published journal articles is understandable as journal articles remain a major publication requirement for promotion of librarians. However, out of the 65% that have published peer reviewed journal articles in the last five years, only 13(20.3%) claimed to have published 10 journal articles and above, 8(12.5%) claimed to have published between 7 and 9 articles while 20(31.3) have published between one and three articles. This shows that generally, the research output of librarians is low. This corroborates the findings of Oduwale and Ikhizama (2007). It also corroborates the findings of studies by Okpe, Simisaye & Otuza (2013) and Okeji (2019) who all reported that the publication output of library professionals is low and that journal articles was the major type of publications by the participants.

Hypothesis 1: There is no significant relationship between open access publishing awareness and research output of academic librarians in South West Nigeria

Correlation analysis between OA awareness and research output by the participants showed that the relationship between open access publishing awareness and research output was significant [$r(62) = .53, p < .01$]. This is shown in table 6.

Table 6: Summary of Correlation showing the relationship between Open Access Publishing Awareness and Research Output

Variables	Mean	SD	N	Df	R	P
OAP Awareness	44.75	26.759	64	62	.525**	< .01
Research Output	45.94	12.794				

This positive relationship negates the formulated null hypothesis 1 and thus, the hypothesis was rejected. The findings further showed that increase in awareness directly resulted in increase in publication. The situation was such that as the awareness of open access publishing by librarians increases, there tend to be an increase in their research publication output also. This confirms the findings of an earlier study by Obuh and Bozimo (2012) that the high level of awareness about OA by LIS lecturers affected their tendency to use open access publications.

Hypothesis 2: There is no significant relationship between librarians' attitude towards open access and their publishing output.

Analysis of data reveals that the relationship between attitude towards open access and research output was not significant [$r(62) = 0.062, p > .05$]. This is shown in Table 7.

Table 7: Summary of Correlation Showing the Relationship between Attitude and Publishing Output

Variables	Mean	SD	N	Df	R	p
Attitude towards Open Access	27.94	4.283	64	62	.062	> .05
Publishing Output	45.94	12.794				

This result confirmed null hypothesis 2 that there is no significant relationship between librarians' attitude towards open access and their publishing output. Thus, the hypothesis was accepted. This indicates that the attitude of librarians towards open access publishing does not have any effect on their publishing output. Despite the expectations that the OA development would account for increase in publication output, this study has shown that the type of attitude librarians portray towards open access does not relate with either an increase or decrease in their research publications.

Hypothesis 3: There is no significant relationship among librarians' attitude as well as their awareness of OA and their publishing output Analysis of correlation among attitude, awareness of OA and publication output of librarians' attitude as well as their awareness of OA and their publishing output revealed a significant relationship between awareness and publishing output while the relationship between attitude and publishing output is not significant. This is presented in table 8.

Table 8: Summary of Correlation Showing the relationship among librarians' attitude to and awareness of OA and publishing output

Variables		Research Output	OA Awareness	Attitude towards Open Access
Research Output	Pearson Correlation	1	.525**	.062
	Sig. (2-tailed)		.000	.629
	N	64	64	64
OA Awareness	Pearson Correlation	.525**	1	.353**
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.000		.004
	N	64	64	64
Attitude towards Open Access	Pearson Correlation	.062	.353**	1
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.629	.004	
	N	64	64	64

*. Correlation is significant at the 0.05 level (2-tailed).

**. Correlation is significant at the 0.01 level (2-tailed).

From the table above, it is evident that while there is a significant relationship between awareness and publishing output, the relationship between attitude and publishing output is not significant. This implies that relationship only exists between only two of the three variables. Therefore the hypothesis is accepted. This also shows that while awareness of OA may have effects on the publishing output of librarians, their attitude does not have any significant effect as far as their publishing output is concerned.

Conclusion and Recommendations

The findings of this study have shown that librarians in southwest Nigeria have a high level of awareness about OA. They also have positive attitude to OA. Moreover, awareness about OA is a significant factor in the publishing output of librarians in Nigeria. There is also an increasing awareness about OA which has also resulted in increased scholarly publication output of librarians. Also attitude to OA does not have any significant effect as far as the publishing output of librarians is concerned. However, even in the face of growing awareness about OA, the publishing output of librarians is still low. Based on the findings, it is therefore recommended that:

1. Efforts should be made to assist librarians to increase their publishing output as scholarly communication remains an essential part of their profession. Libraries should organise seminars on scholarly publication for librarians
2. Libraries should organise trainings at intervals on the benefits of OA publishing. This will help to have increased awareness about OA
3. Libraries should make it compulsory for library professionals to deposit their publications in their respective institutions' open access repositories

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