ASSESSMENT OF COMPUTER LITERACY AND ON-LINE SEARCHING SKILLS AMONG THE UNDERGRADUATE STUDENTS OF FACULTY OF SCIENCE AHMADU BELLO UNIVERSITY, ZARIA

Abubakar, **M.** Abdullahi[1], Otoayele, Aliyu[1] and Ibrahim, Dogara[2]
[1]Centre for Energy Research and Training
Ahmadu Bello University, Zaria

Kashim Ibrahim Library
Ahmadu Bello University, Zaria

ABSTRACT

The study asserted that the use of computer in our everyday business has become very crucial and indispensable. Computer illiteracy could adversely affect the development brought by information and communication technology in teaching, learning and research. The study set to find out the level of computer literacy and online searching skills among undergraduate students of the Faculty of Science of Ahmadu Bello University, Zaria. It implored the use of questionnaire for gathering data for the study from 585 respondents. The analysis revealed that students in the Faculty of Science are competent in some identified computer operational skills especially on-line searching skills scoring 259 (44%); word processing 175(30%) while Microsoft excel records 94(16%) among others of the total respondents in the study. The study also showed that the students are satisfied with the training offered in computer literacy. It is therefore recommended among others that the various faculties in the university should mount relevant computer literacy trainings relevant to their serious field of specialization.

Majid (1999) argues that "libraries must reach a position where acquisition of information skills is acknowledged as one of the key learning objectives for every students entering a university, so that no student leaves without fully being equipped to cope with the information intensive world and the information society-as an end user".

Objective of the study

1. To find out the level of computer literacy among the undergraduate students of the faculty of science, Ahmadu Bello University, Zaria.
2. To find out whether the University has computer literacy training for undergraduate students.
3. To determine the satisfaction of the undergraduate students with the computer training given by the university.
4. To determine the use of the online resources by the undergraduate students in the university
5. To find out the challenges affecting the use of online resources by the undergraduate students of the faculty of science A.B.U Zaria

LITERATURE REVIEW

The present generations of students have by high level of digital technology that motivates them to have high level confidence while searching for information on the Internet and electronic resources. Computer literacy skills will enable them use the online resources effectively. It was observed that undergraduate students find it convenient, save time and get quick response as they move from physical collections to the digital library (Lukersiwicz, 2007).

In this Internet-dominated, information rich culture, computer literacy skills have been undervalued, for instance there is a mass of user-created content and collaborative work embedded in the digital technology that aids students to achieve their academic relevance and pursuit that has remained untapped. Ball (2007) observed that the ability to succeed is the ability to adapt, and is about embracing and leading change, and therefore in this ever changing environment, it is important to create an active, learning environment not only by maximizing space but also by ensuring it is sympathetic to the developing pedagogies and students' expectation.

Information and Communication Technology (ICT) encompasses the effective use of equipment and programs to access, retrieve, convert, store, organize, manipulate and present data and information (Gay and Blades, 2005). The increase use of computer and the level of online searching by students and academics alike is an important measure of technological development in an academic environment

According to Hagar and Asefeh (2008), computer literacy is the ability and knowledge to use the computer effectively. It also encompasses acquisition of technical skills and level of proficiency in the use of electronic documents, documentation and

online utilities (databases and search engines).

Allison (2005) pointed that, those without basic computer skill have difficult time finding job and connected with the local and global trends. It has already been demonstrated that the demand for computer-related skills has moved from insignificant to critical for academic purposes and library positions (Zhou, 1996).

Reid (1997) asserted that teaching of computer literacy to students is of paramount importance and is on the increase as a result of the dramatic increase in the use of the computer, and computer added materials and instrumentation during teaching and learning. With this computer education has gained a permanent seat in the curriculum of university education .Other benefits comprise versatility and exposure to a range of activities that has to do with learning, commercial, social, health among others. Goldman *et al.* (1999) asserted that computer usage by students primarily assists them during learning, searching and efficiently. Students became optimistic, enabled skills useful for the undergraduate students and successful with the use of electronic resources emanating from within and outside the University.

Cognizance to the importance and potentials of resources and delivered through the of computer and its related technology, Chavaz (1997) opines roles of impacting critical thinking, problem solving, prompt feedback, collaborative instructions and sharing of information. It is a long this line that Seely and Dudley (2000) observed that, these technologies offer new ways of producing, distributing and consuming academic materials that are indispensable in the life of students.

Brief Historical Background of the Faculty of Science

Faculty of science of the Ahmadu Bello University is one of the oldest faculties in the university established in 1962.It currently has nine Departments and offers courses leading to the award of B.Sc.(Hon) and B.Sc.(combine Honors) degrees .The departments in the faculty are: Department of Biochemistry, Department of Biological Sciences, Department of Chemistry, Department of Geography, Department of Geology, Department of Mathematics, Department of Microbiology, Department of Physics and Department of Textile Science and Technology.

METHODOLOGY

This paper implored the use of questionnaire to gather data in two weeks. The data derived from the research were quantified and analyzed using frequency counts, percentages, tables and discussion for each of the objectives of the study.

REPORT ON THE FINDINGS

Computer literacy among undergraduate students of the Faculty of Science in the University is central to the realization of the

objectives of the university. Students with computer skills benefit from the enormous potentialities and opportunity brought about by information and communication technology.

Computer literacy among the Undergraduate Students of Faculty of Science of Ahmadu Bello University, Zaria

Table1: Computer skills with the students in Faculty of Science

Skills	Frequency	Percentage
Word processing	175	30
On line searching	259	44
Microsoft Excel	94	16
Corel Draw	57	10
Total	**585**	**100**

Table 1 above shows that the undergraduate students of the Faculty of Science have computer skills in some identified operational tasks. Those with the on - line searching skills are 259 (44%) of the total respondents, word processing are 175 (30%), Micro Soft Excel 94 (16%) while Corel Draw has 57 (10%) of the total respondents.

The implication of this finding is that the undergraduate students in the Faculty of Science possess basic skills in computer operation. These skills enable them to interact with the computer to facilitate learning process.

The level of satisfaction of the undergraduate students of Faculty of Science in Ahmadu Bello University, Zaria with the computer skill literacy offered by the university.

Table 2: Students' satisfaction with computer training in the University.

Level of satisfaction	Frequency	Percentage (%)
Very satisfied	146	25
Satisfied	259	44
Not satisfied	160	27
Undecided	120	4
Total	**585**	**100**

According to the study as shown in table 2 above, 146 (25%) of the total respondents are "very satisfied" with computer skill training offered by the university in their faculty. In the same vein, 259 (44%) of the total respondents reported that their level of satisfaction was just "satisfied level". While those that are "not satisfied" are 160 (27%) and those that are "not decided" goes with 120 (4%) of the total respondents of the study. The implication of this finding is that the students of the Faculty of Science of Ahmadu Bello University, Zaria are satisfied with the computer skill literacy training offered to them by the University.

The use of on-line resources by the undergraduate students of the Faculty of Science of Ahmadu Bello University, Zaria.

The use of the on-line resources is ultimate to the student's learning and research in the University, as it provides the most recent information resources and findings from various fields of knowledge to the students. It

provide them relevant and current information. However the study revealed that the students in the Faculty of Science use on-line resources in their learning and research. They also access the resources in the main library of the university, Kashim Ibrahim library, and Abubakar Computer Center of the University.

The challenges in the use of online resources by the students of the Faculty of Science Ahmadu Bello University, Zaria.

The study found that the major challenges to the use of online resources are:-

1. Frequent failure of networking service.
2. Limited seating facilities for students.
3. There is frequent power failure.

These are some of the identified problems or challenges with the use of online resources in the university leading to computer anxiety among the students.

RECOMMENDATIONS

Based on the findings from the study the following recommendations were made:

1. There is the need for the Ahmadu Bello University management and the various faculties to mount relevant computer training on the various fields of specialization with the faculties.
2. The university management should provide enough seating facilities for the number of students in their various e-libraries.
3. The university should ensure regular upgrading and subscriptions to vibrant internet service provision for the increasing number of its students.
4. The university management should make the provision of solar energy as an alternative to power failure.

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