Evaluating the impact of eBook on reading motivation of students of higher learning in Nigerian Universities

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Abstract

Reading among students is a vital aspect of their learning process and should be encouraged, any effort or innovation that improves the reading motivation of students is worth sustaining. This study was carried out to evaluate the impact of ebooks on reading motivation of students in Nigerian Higher institution based on observations that the rate of reading has been dwindling and majority of youths prefer to while away time on frivolities rather than reading to widen their intelligence. The study adopted descriptive survey research method the population consist of students from University of Nigeria and University of Jos. The findings of the study showed that majority of the students studied were aware of ebooks, and they normally access them through Google books. The materials often used were textbooks and reference materials; the use them mainly for study and research. The students were motivated to use ebooks because they could read them at the comfort of their homes, it saved a lot of time for them and these books were so easy to search and had created a lot of impact as many of them agreed that it had improved their reading habits, increase the volumes of books they read and helps them to understand the text. The study therefore concluded that to encourage good reading habits among students, the universities should provide broadband Internet access and enough facilities to accommodate all the students. Librarians should intensify in their effort to create more awareness among the students.

Keywords: Ebook, reading, motivation, Universities, Nigeria

1.0.   INTRODUCTION

Through the ages, civilization has witnessed books evolve from words written on clay tablets and parchment paper to books printed from ink and more recently to electronic books (eBooks) Wheeler, 2014. Electronic resources recently have quickly gain acceptance among students of higher learning and libraries. This include ebooks, ejournals, newspaper and magazines. The rapid acquisition of eBooks has changed the interface of library catalogs by providing patrons with access to more information. Rosso (2009) enumerated the primary motivation in preferring ebooks to include mobility, saving physical space, convenience, saving time and money and ease-of-use.

Reading among students is a vital aspect of their learning process and should be encouraged, any effort or innovation that improves the reading motivation of students is worth sustaining. In Nigeria the rate of reading has been dwindling and majority of youths prefer to while away time on frivolities rather than reading to widen their intelligence no wonder President Goodluck Jonathan introduced "Bring Back the Book project" on December 20, 2010 to encourage reading (www.bringbackthebook.org). Rockinson-Szapkiw et al (2011) noted that E-books have been identified as current trend in education and they are much more appealing to this generation of students often referred to as digital natives. This was necessitated by the use of tablet PCs, smart I-phones and other ICT devices. These ICT devices make it easy and convenient for a reader to carry a textbook along while traveling. Reading with such devices has been seen to be convenient and rate of use of these devices has been on the increase. It is therefore necessary to find out the extent of use of E-books and the impact E-books have on reading motivation of students.

Armstrong E. & Lonsdale (2002) defined eBook as any piece of electronic text regardless of size or composition. These eBooks originally were electronic version of printed textbook, however, recent eBooks consists of different multimedia mode which include animation, audio narration, music and sound effects. Picton (2014) Noted that recent rapid improvements in the versatility and affordability of e-readers and tablets, along with increased access to broadband Internet have lead to a dramatic rise in household ownership of eBooks.

The study was conducted in two Universities in Nigeria- University of Jos, Plateau State, a large, multi-campus university with over 20, 000 students in about 12 faculties and University of Nigeria, Nsukka, with population of about 25,000 in 14 faculties. Both universities have been providing eBook services from multiple sources to their users.

AIM OF STUDY

The survey aimed to verify client awareness, usage level, usage patterns, purpose of eBook usage and challenges encountered in using electronic books amongst students of higher learning of the two universities.

The study was guided by five objectives as follows:

1. To identify the awareness and extent of use of E-books by students in higher education institutions.
2. To ascertain the purpose/objectives of using E-books by Nigerian students.
3. To assess the impact of E-books on the reading motivation of students.
4. To assess the impact of eBooks on reading and study habits of students
5. To examine the challenges encountered in the use of E-books among students of higher education institutions.

2.0.   LITERATURE REVIEW
2.1.   E-books

The versatility and affordability of some of these technologies and access to internet has contributed a lot to the use of mobile technology by youths, both in school and outside school. Many of them in school use them to access information for their class assignment and reading. Observations over the years as librarian has shown that greater percentage of students always flock around the library for internet access to download information materials. Most times they prefer their mobile applications where they can download and read at their convenience to using the facilities provided by the library. Picton (2014) in a survey discovered that more than half of the respondents prefer reading on an electronic device to print. This was also evidenced as the frequency of their use shows that 38.9% of the respondents they read daily on screen only 27.9% read on print. Youth prefer to read fictions on screen, since the screen can be adjusted, it creates

room for them to position and read their document in any orientation they prefer. Reading on screen is more convenient and makes more impact on reading. The visually impaired students find it flexible to zoom either in or out, their screen to increase or decrease the font sizes to suit their sight situation.

To promote reading many public libraries have embraced the use of e-books and e-readers (Doiron, 2011). This is a strategic and encouraging way to promote and create awareness and keep up with the demands of the clients. Many of the youths are home with technologies, they adopt it as a way of life encouraging them to use e-books will enhance their reading habit since they can download and read at their own pace. Therefore teachers and librarians should key into the use of these facilities to encourage reading habits. The convenience of using ebooks cannot be over emphasized, ebooks are cheaper to produce, they take less space and can be updated (Doiron, 2011), accessibility, portability and storage Clark cited in Wells (2012) listed some of the benefits of ebooks. E-readers have the ability to allow font detraction so that the features can be adjusted (Wells 2012). Most of these resources can be stored in external hard drive to avoid the situation of being out of stock. These benefits of e books make it a very useful tool to support teaching and research. Electronic books have gained popularity Zucher, Moody and Mckenna (2009) is of the view that it seems plausible e-books could facilitate acquisition of skills children acquire while listening to read-aloud or reading independently. Likewise comprehension developments e-books can go beyond the opportunities print books afforded for new vocabularies or practicing comprehension strategies. Using e books is also another way to motivate reluctant readers, there are many youths that have poor reading habits, introducing them to e-books can interest them to develop good reading habit.

2.2.   Students and Reading Culture

Gausul Hoq & Hassan defined reading as an art which provides a human being with the foundation upon which to erect his or her understanding of life as well as the elements with which to build his or her worldview. Clark and Rumbold (2006) noted that reading do not only develop personal and mental abilities but also ensures access to social, economic and civic life. Reading is a crucial venture for all humans to be able to cope with complexity and challenges of the 21st century. Holte (1998) maintained that reading adds quality to life and provides access to

culture and cultural heritage. He believed that reading empowers and emancipates citizens and brings people together.

Okeke (2000) viewed the art of reading as a priceless instrument for everyone. He opined that reading is one of the most important activities in life, through which we enter into the life and experiences of others and extend our knowledge, scope of experience, and enjoyment. Reading habits are well-planned and deliberate pattern of study which has attained a form of consistency on the part of students toward understanding academic subjects and passing at examinations. Reading habits determine the academic achievements of students to a great extent. Both reading and academic achievements are interrelated and dependent on each other. Ismail & Zainab, (2005) in their study examining the eBook usage patterns of university students opined that the use and non-use of ebooks are determined by four interacting components in a model which include technological competencies, users' own cognitive makeup, the level of access to ebooks and the types of function or use made of the ebooks.

3.0. RESEARCH METHODS

A descriptive survey research method was adopted for the study. The population of the study comprised of a total of one Hundred and Fifty four (154) respondents of both Undergraduate and Postgraduate students from University of Nigeria, Nsukka and University of Jos, Nigeria. This was achieved using purposive sampling technique to sample students that make use of the digital resources in the library. Questionnaire titled evaluating the impact of ebook on reading motivation of students of higher learning in Nigerian universities questionnaire was the instrument for data collection, it was filled in partly hardcopy edition and in online format. The questionnaires were distributed to students over a period of one week, students using the library at both Institutions.

4.0. SURVEY FINDINGS AND ANALYSIS

A total of 154 usable responses were received from the students, 118(79.2%) were undergraduate while 31(20.8%) were postgraduate students and 109(76.8%) were male and 33(23.2%) were female.

Figure1: Age range

. **What is your age range?**

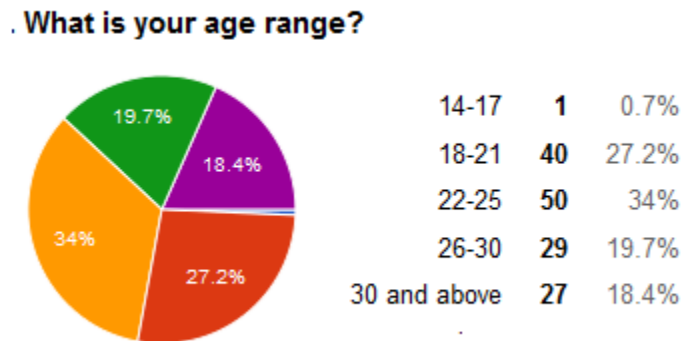|		
14-17	1	0.7%
18-21	40	27.2%
22-25	50	34%
26-30	29	19.7%
30 and above	27	18.4%

Figure 1 above shows the age range of students that used eBooks. The study reveal that students between ages 22-25 representing 34% of the study population responded to the survey more followed by students between ages 26-30 years.

On the level of awareness of eBooks in the library. The study revealed that 76,9% of the students are aware that each of these libraries have access to eBooks while 23.1% are not aware.

Figure 2: Level of Use of eBooks

Do you use eBook?

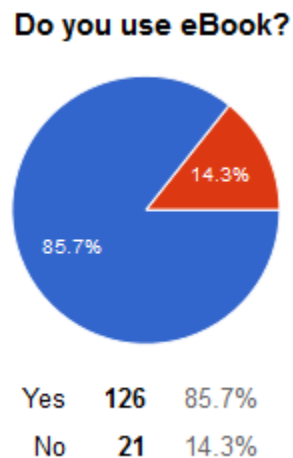|		
Yes	126	85.7%
No	21	14.3%

Figure 2 shows that 85.7% of the students actually use eBooks with over 70% using freely accessible books from the Internet as seen in figure 3 below. The below shows that over 70% of the students' population uses Google Books rather than eBooks from subscribed databases. The implication is that subscribed databases are under-utilized in Nigeria by students.
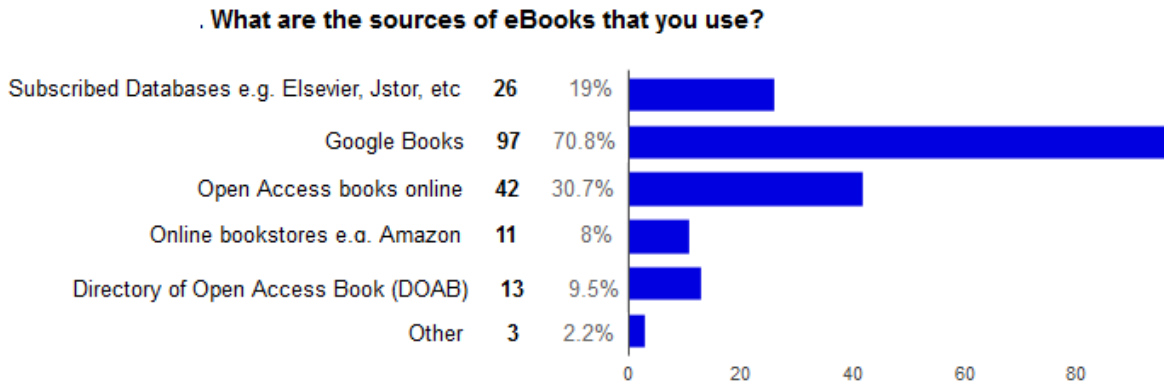
Figure 3: Sources of eBooks use

. What are the sources of eBooks that you use?

Source	Count	Percentage
Subscribed Databases e.g. Elsevier, Jstor, etc	26	19%
Google Books	97	70.8%
Open Access books online	42	30.7%
Online bookstores e.g. Amazon	11	8%
Directory of Open Access Book (DOAB)	13	9.5%
Other	3	2.2%

Figure 4: Types of eBooks used among /students

What types of eBooks have you used?

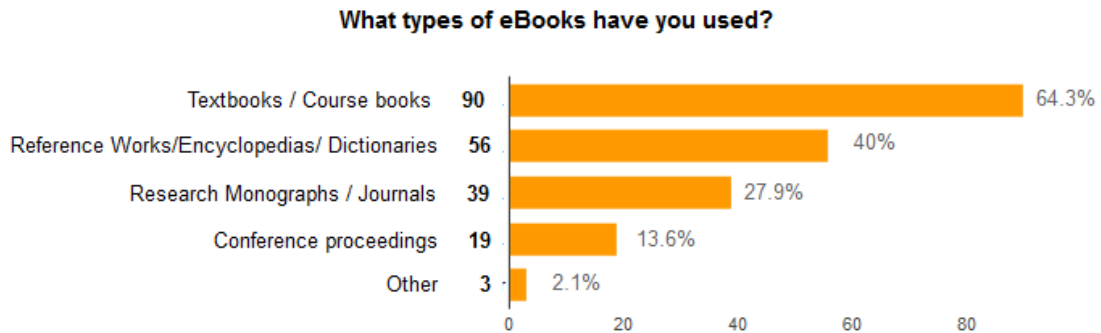| Type	Count	Percentage
Textbooks / Course books	90	64.3%
Reference Works/Encyclopedias/ Dictionaries	56	40%
Research Monographs / Journals	39	27.9%
Conference proceedings	19	13.6%
Other	3	2.1%

Figure 4 above shows that 64.3% of University Students access textbooks, 40% access Reference Works/ Encyclopedias/ Dictionaries, 27.9% access Research Monographs / Journals and 13.6% for conference proceedings. The implication is that libraries should go for more electronic textbooks than electronic Journals and Research monographs. Furthermore 78.9% of the respondent usually use search engines such as Google to access eBooks, 15% use library website and 4.5% use library Online Catalog. The implication is that Librarians need to further sensitize the academic environment of the need to use University subscribed databases.

Figure 5: Frequency of use of eBooks

On the average, how often do you use eBooks?

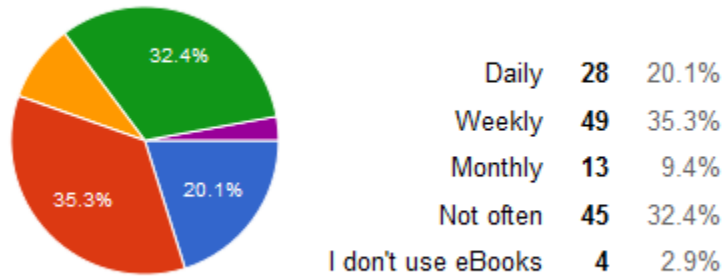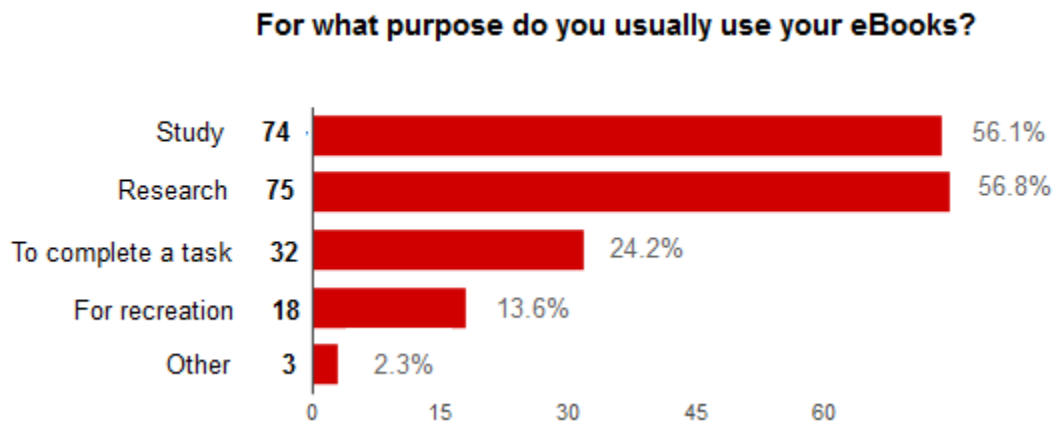|		
Daily	**28**	20.1%
Weekly	**49**	35.3%
Monthly	**13**	9.4%
Not often	**45**	32.4%
I don't use eBooks	**4**	2.9%

Figure 5 above shows that 20.1% of the respondents use eBooks on daily basis and 35.3% on weekly basis and another 9.4% on monthly basis. The implication of this is that just a little above average (55.4%) use eBooks at least on weekly basis. These users access eBooks mainly for research (56.8%) and study (56.1%) purposes as seen in **Figure 6.** Just very few students (13.6%) access eBooks for recreational purposes.

Figure 6: Purpose of Use of eBooks

For what purpose do you usually use your eBooks?

Study	**74**	56.1%
Research	**75**	56.8%
To complete a task	**32**	24.2%
For recreation	**18**	13.6%
Other	**3**	2.3%

4.1. Motivation of eBooks use

Table 1 below show responses that were targeted toward the objective "to assess the impact of E-books on the reading motivation of students". Series of questions as shown in the figures

below were asked on a scale of five as indicated 5 = Strongly Agree; 4 = Agree; 3 = Undecided; 2= Disagree and 1 = Strongly Disagree.

Table 1: What motivated your use of eBooks?

S/N	I was motivated to use eBooks in order :	Strongly Agree	Agree	Undecided	Disagree	Strongly Disagree
1.	To read more books	34.4%	42.2%	18.8%	3.9%	0.8%
2.	To always read books even at the comfort of my room and on the go	35.9%	39.1%	14.8%	9.4%	0.8%
3.	To take advantage of its portability to have as many books as possible in my mobile devices	35.7%	41.1%	17.1%	6.2%	0%
4.	To take advantage of its ability to safely store and withstand time	34.6%	40.8%	17.7%	6.9%	0%
5.	To take advantage of it being able to search for information instead of flipping through pages of textbooks	41.2%	36.6%	16.8%	5.3%	0%

The first Row above shows that 42.2% of the respondents Agreed that they were motivated to use eBooks in other to have an increase in the number of books read while 34.4% Strongly Agreed to the same proposition.

The response to **Row two** shows that students are motivated to use eBooks because it gives them the opportunity to read at the comfort of their room, anywhere and everywhere.

Row three shows that the portable nature of eBooks is a great motivating factor to the use of eBooks by students of higher learning. This is shown above with 35.7% Strongly Agreed and 41.1% Agreed to this proposition.

Responses to **Row four** shows that the safe storage f eBooks and its ability to withstand time is a key factor boasting the motivation of the use of eBooks among students. The implication is that respondents agreed that eBooks does not wear and tear with time and students can have as many books as possible in just one piece of storage device.

Row five shows that the ability to use keyword search in eBooks is a strong motivating factor to it usage by students of higher learning in Nigeria.

4.2. Impact of eBooks on Reading and study habits

Table 2 below are series of questions intended to address the objective "to assess the impact of E-books on the reading and study habits of students". Series of questions as shown in the figures below were asked on a scale of five as indicated 5 = Strongly Agree; 4 = Agree; 3 = Undecided; 2= Disagree and 1 = Strongly Disagree.

Table 2: Using eBooks has made impact in my reading habits and studies in the following areas:

S/N	Items	Strongly Agree	Agree	Undecided	Disagree	Strongly Disagree
1.	The use of eBooks has increased the amount of time I spent reading	36.9%	37.7%	19.2%	5.4%	0.8%
2.	The use of eBooks have made studying much more interesting	37.7%	43.1%	16.9%	2.3%	0%
3.	The use of eBooks have made understanding easier	30.2%	41.9%	20.9%	7%	0%
4.	The use of eBooks has increased the variety of books I read	47.7%	30.8%	17.7%	3.1%	0.8%
5.	Has made me to develop a good reading habit	32%	42.2%	19.5%	6.3%	0%

Responses as seen in **Row one** above show that students (36.9%) have Strongly Agreed that their reading culture has improved in terms of the amount of time spent reading and 37.7% of the students agreed to same proposition. The result also show that eBook have not had any significant impact on time spent reading on 0.8% of students

Row two above also shows that 72.1% of the students at least agreed that reading eBooks have made understanding much easier for them. The implication of this is that access to eBooks have increased the amount of time spent reading by students and have also made understanding easier.

Row four shows that over 78% of the students at least agreed that they have read variety of eBooks and 74.2% have at least agreed that eBooks have helped them develop good reading habits as seen in **Row five**.

4.3. Challenges in the Use of eBooks

In other to address the objective "to examine the challenges encountered in the use of eBooks among students of higher institution in Nigeria", series of questions were asked as seen in **Figures 7- 12 below**.

Figure 7:

Lack/inadequate Internet access

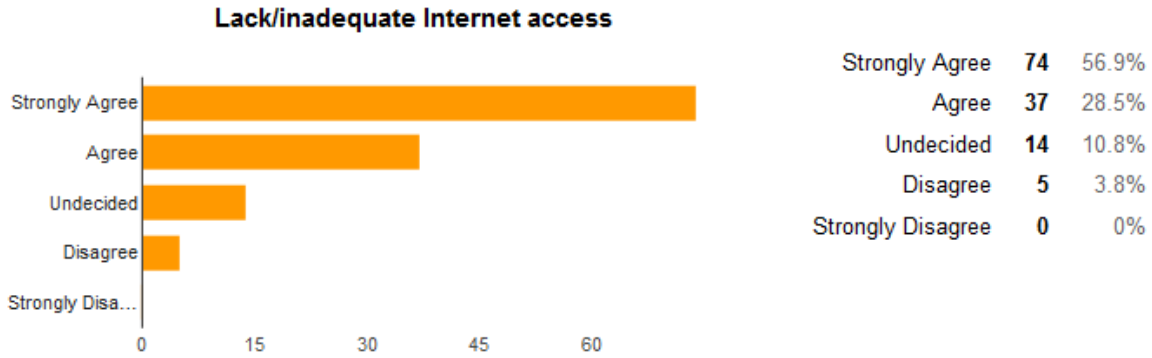|		
Strongly Agree	74	56.9%
Agree	37	28.5%
Undecided	14	10.8%
Disagree	5	3.8%
Strongly Disagree	0	0%

Figure 7 above shows that 85.4% of students of higher learning at least agreed that Internet connectivity is a major challenge to the use of eBooks with no student strongly disagreeing to this proposition.

Figure 8 below also revealed that over 60% of the responses believed that lack of eBook-reader enabled ICT facilities such as phones is a big challenge to the use of eBooks.
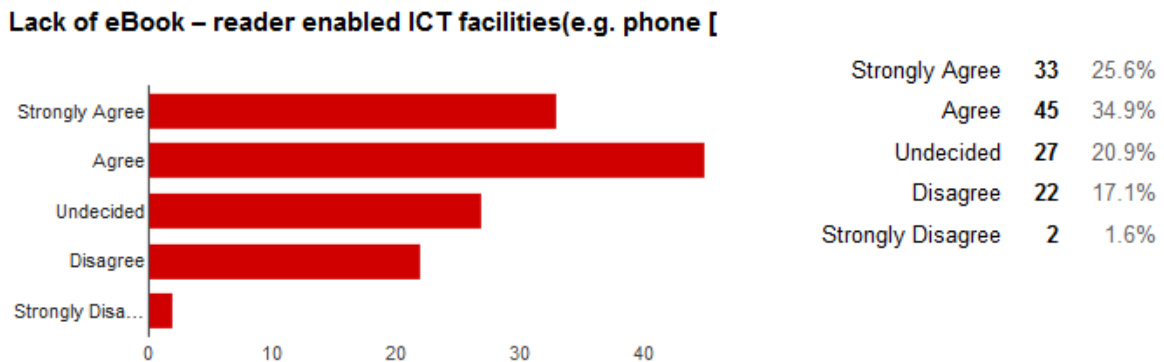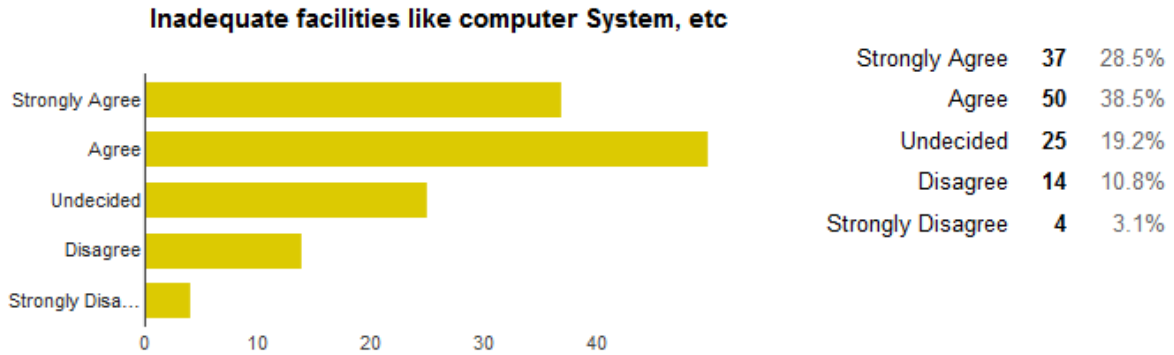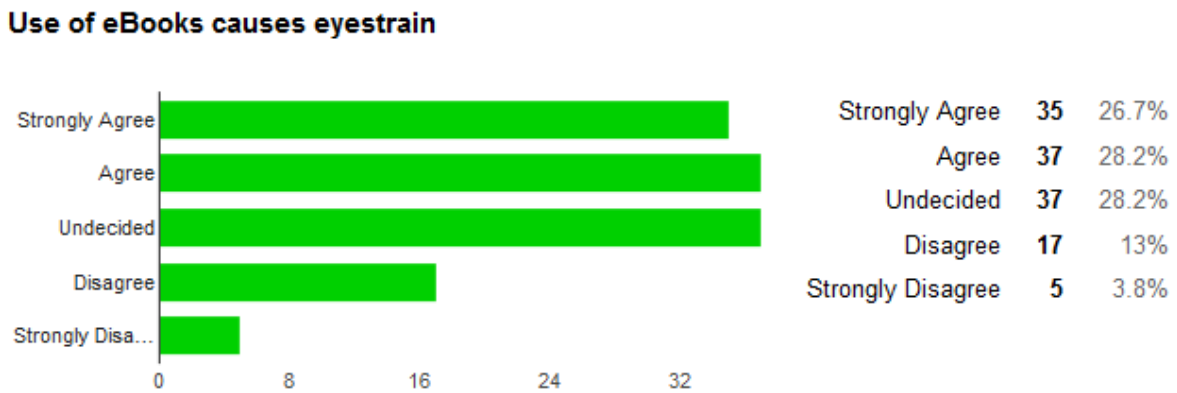
Figure 8:

Lack of eBook – reader enabled ICT facilities(e.g. phone [

Strongly Agree	33	25.6%
Agree	45	34.9%
Undecided	27	20.9%
Disagree	22	17.1%
Strongly Disagree	2	1.6%

Figure 9:

Inadequate facilities like computer System, etc

Strongly Agree	37	28.5%
Agree	50	38.5%
Undecided	25	19.2%
Disagree	14	10.8%
Strongly Disagree	4	3.1%

Inadequate ICT facilities such as computer is also a big challenge to the use of eBooks among students as seen in Figure 20 above.

54.9% of the despondence also attributed the challenge of use of eBooks to eyestrain as shown **in figure 10 below.**

Figure 10:

Use of eBooks causes eyestrain

Strongly Agree	35	26.7%
Agree	37	28.2%
Undecided	37	28.2%
Disagree	17	13%
Strongly Disagree	5	3.8%

5.0.   LIMITATION

The limitation of this survey is that the online and hardcopy questionnaires were distributed during exam period leading to a poor response from the students.

6.0.   CONCLUSION

A fair number of conclusions can be drawn from the survey results impact of eBooks on reading motivation of students of higher learning in Nigerian Universities. More than 76% of the respondents knew that they had access to eBooks through the library services but only 19% of these students actually access these eBooks through subscribed databases, The result also showed that over 74% of the students have at least agreed that the amount of time spent reading has improved and 72.1% of the respondents stated that reading eBooks have made understanding much more easier showing that eBooks have quickly become an essential part of the information mix. The considerable number of users found eBooks useful with quick access ability and use on the go, anywhere and everywhere. Again, the study also revealed that most eBook users on campus use it for the purpose of research (56.1%) and study (56.8%). Many of the students are motivated to use ebooks because of its convenience of reading from the comfort of their home, saves their time and the ebooks are searchable. This has helped the students to develop good reading habit, increase their reading time and makes them to read more books. Therefore its is important that the use of ebooks should be encouraged among students to help them develop good reading habits and also to ensure lifelong learning.

Recommendations

- Providing broadband internet to enable download of these content because many of them are heavy files and for them to download properly they need internet access

- Provide enough facilities to download these resources especially facilities with ebook reader

- Create more awareness and advocacy on the benefits of ebook

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SHORT BIOGRAPHICAL STATEMENT

Akpokodje Vera Nkiruka is the Systems Librarian of University of Jos Library and a lecturer with the Library and Information Science department of the same school where she teaches Introduction to Computers and Introduction to Operating Systems. Her major responsibility in the library is to ensure rapid response of the library to emerging trends in the theory and practice of information Services; Provide interactive online services and Implement the library's Strategic Plan. Vera has been able to put down some of her experiences into writing in order to share with the scholarly community through publications and conference presentations. She has published articles in *European Journal of Computer Science and Information Technology; Asian Journal of Computer and Information System and* Asian Journal of Education and e-Learning among others.

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