

Awareness and Use of Massive Open Online Courses among Academic Librarians in Ogun state, Nigeria

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Abstract

The dynamism of the current digital era requires academic librarians to be lifelong learners who can take advantage of available opportunities to improve their professional competence continuously. Massive Open Online Courses (MOOCs) are online learning platforms that provide training to learners at little or no costs. While it is documented that a lot of Africans participate in MOOCs, it is not certain whether academic librarians in Nigeria are aware of and take full advantage of MOOCs. The study surveyed awareness and use of MOOCs among academic librarians in Nigeria. A questionnaire was used for data collection. This was administered to 83 librarians from five randomly selected university libraries in Ogun state, Nigeria. Data were subjected to descriptive analysis. The findings revealed that more than half (61.4%) of the respondents were aware of MOOCs whereas, only (42.9%) enrolled for MOOCs. MIT Open Courseware (40%) was the most popular MOOC website among the librarians. Many (53.3%) of those that enrolled expressed inactive participation. Lack of time (50%) was a major barrier to MOOC participation among librarians. The paper recommended that university as well as library management need to formulate strategies and programs that will promote active participation in MOOC among librarians.

Keywords: **MOOCs, Academic Librarian, Awareness, Use**

Introduction

The library and information service profession has changed significantly over the last few decades due to increased application of internet technology in library operations. This has resulted in information explosion, knowledge expansion, and increased work complexity especially with innovative information services such as online cataloguing, e-referencing, and collaborative tagging. The dynamic environment engendered by rapid technological advancement demands that librarians continuously acquire new skills and knowledge in order to keep up with changing user demands. Such knowledge might be beyond the scope of the regular library and information science curriculum and must be sought outside the traditional formal educational system. Consequently, librarians must be self-motivated, lifelong learners who are willing to take advantage of available opportunities for self-development. This is

especially necessary for academic librarians who serve as gatekeepers of knowledge in higher education institutions. Lifelong learning is a continuous learning activity aimed at improving the skills, knowledge and competencies of a professional.

One of the many tools available for continuous learning is the initiative known as Massive Open Online Course (MOOC). MOOCs are virtual classrooms where instructors and participants interact to impart knowledge for lifelong skills. The learning materials, usually recorded video lectures and discussions produced by partnering institutions are made available to participants at little or no costs to the participants. Among the platforms or websites that offer MOOCs are Coursera, EdX, MIT Open CourseWare, Udacity, and Futurelearn. The potential benefits of MOOCs have contributed to their growing public attention and participation. In 2013, Escher, Noukakis, & Aebischer (2014) noted that, over 13,000 Africans participated in MOOCs. Obviously, MOOCs present opportunities that librarians can harness for personal and professional development. Unfortunately, some librarians may be oblivious to the benefits of MOOCs and may not be taking advantage of this opportunity, hence, the need to investigate this phenomena among librarians

Objective of the study

This study investigated academic librarians' awareness and use of MOOCs in Ogun State, Nigeria. Specifically, the study set out to:

- i. Describe librarians' level of awareness of MOOCs
- ii. Find out librarians' use of MOOCs
- iii. describe librarians' level of satisfaction with MOOCs

Literature Review

MOOCs are relatively new e-learning tools that offer courses with no formal entry requirements within a virtual classroom environment usually free, flexible, qualitative and highly interactive in nature (Muzafarova & Kaya, 2014). Students can follow the course content at their own pace, lectures can be replayed for a better understanding of concepts, participants can interact with many others from around the world, and student's learning outcome is assessed through well-designed online quizzes and assessment tools (Aboshady et al., 2015; Ecclestone, 2013). Advocates of MOOCs consider them a means of providing quality education through the virtual classroom. Studies have reported that MOOCs expose participants to free higher education course content, empower learners, enable networks among participants, and allow multicultural educational experiences (Clark, Vealé, & Watts, 2017; Nkuyubwatsi, 2013). However, like every other innovation, MOOCs have their peculiar challenges related to the length of time required to participate in course sessions,

technological failure, a massive number of students with fewer teachers to handle the courses, pedagogical constraints such as lack of face-to-face interaction, and quality of student assessment, completion rate, language and internet access(Gul, Mahajan, Shafiq, Shafi, & Shah, 2018; Hew & Cheung, 2014).

A survey of awareness of MOOCs among students in a university in Georgia revealed a low level of awareness of MOOCs, and many of the students who were aware enrolled for only one or two MOOCs and spent about three hours on lecture(Muzafarova & Kaya, 2014). A similar study among medical undergraduates in Egypt revealed that only 21.7 percent of medical students were aware of MOOCs or websites providing these courses. About 30 percent of those who were aware enrolled for courses, but only 18.4 percent completed the courses and earned certificates. The high attrition rate of 81.6 percent suggests a need to promote MOOC courses among students. Students undertaking practical courses had a higher awareness of MOOCs than those taking theory-based courses. The high turnover rate was attributed to lack of incentive, failure to understand the content material, slow internet speed, and lack of support(Aboshady et al., 2015; Garrido, Koepke, Andersen, & Garrido, 2016; Hew & Cheung, 2014).

Although MOOCs were initially aimed at higher education students, faculty and professionals are also benefiting in terms of skill acquisition and exposure to new knowledge. Among library and information professionals in India, Kaushik (2015) reported that, although the participants were aware of MOOCs, none had participated in MOOCs because they were unfamiliar with the online environment. A study by Ecclestone (2013) explored how reference and instruction librarians can develop professional expertise using MOOCs. The findings of the study revealed that librarians acquired the ability to conduct information literacy sessions, database manipulation, and management skills by participating in MOOCs. More so, there is no known study on awareness and use of MOOCs by academic librarians in Nigeria. It is this gap, which this study attempts to address.

Methodology

The study adopted a survey design to ascertain the level of awareness and use of MOOCs for lifelong learning among librarians in selected academic libraries in Ogun state, Nigeria. The population comprised 83 librarians from five randomly selected university libraries in Ogun state. Specifically, 13 from Babcock University, 8 from Bells University, 20 from Covenant University, 24 from Federal University of Agriculture Abeokuta and 18 from Tai Solarin University of Education. Data were gathered using a self-designed questionnaire tagged "Awareness and Use of MOOCs". The researchers administered the instrument to

participants with the help of contact persons (staff) in each library. Thereafter, 50 copies of the questionnaire were retrieved, but only 44 were properly filled and analysed for this study. Descriptive statistics including frequency counts and simple percentage was used to analyse the data.

Findings and Discussion

The result of this study is presented under two main headings: awareness and use of MOOC among librarians.

Awareness of MOOCs among Librarians

On librarians' awareness of MOOCs, the study sought answers to questions on their awareness, sources of awareness and types of MOOC websites or platform they are aware of.

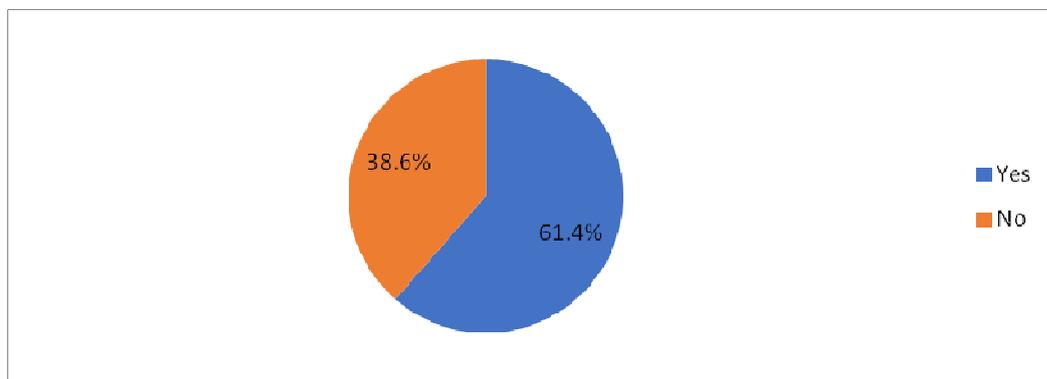


Figure 1: librarians' awareness of MOOCs

Figure 1 revealed that more than half 35(61.4%) of the respondents indicated they were aware of MOOCs which implies that majority of the studied librarians are aware of MOOCs.

Table 1: Sources of MOOCs awareness among librarians

Items on sources of MOOCs awareness among librarians	Yes: Frequency (%)	No: Frequency (%)
Friends/ Colleague	12(34%)	23 (66%)
Workshop/seminar	13(37%)	22(63%)
Online	19(54%)	16(46%)
Professional platform	6(17%)	29(83%)

Among those that are aware of MOOCs, table 1 revealed that slightly more than half of the study participants got to know about MOOCs through Online sources 19 (54.3%), while very few 6 (17.1%) mentioned Professional platform as the source from which they got to know about MOOCs. This may suggest that individuals get to know about MOOC when personally

searching online for means for engaging in professional development and lifelong learning rather than professional bodies promoting or creating awareness about MOOCs.

Table 2: types of MOOCs Librarians were Aware of (Note, n=35)

MOOC providers or websites (n=35)	Yes: Frequency (%)	No: Frequency (%)
Coursera	13(37%)	22 (63%)
edX	6(17%)	29(82%)
MIT open courseware	19(54%)	16(46%)
Udacity	2(6%)	33(94%)
Futurelearn	7(20%)	28(80%)
Udemy	4 (11%)	31(89%)

Table 2 depicts that librarians were most aware of MIT open courseware 19(54.3%), and Coursera 13(37.1%) while they were least aware of Udemy 4(11.4%) and Udacity 2(5.7%). This may suggest that MIT open courseware and Coursera are the most popular MOOC providers among librarians.

Librarians Use of MOOC

To determine the use of MOOCs among librarians, this study sought answers to questions regarding their enrolment, reasons for non-enrolment and enrolment, type of participation, and what certification was received at the end of the course. It is important to mention that the total number of respondents to each section varies. This is because the questions on MOOC use were branching questions in nature. Therefore, this section present result under two sections namely: enrolment in MOOC and Participation in MOOC.

Enrolment in MOOC

This section presented result based on the number of participants (n=35) that indicated that they are aware of MOOC.

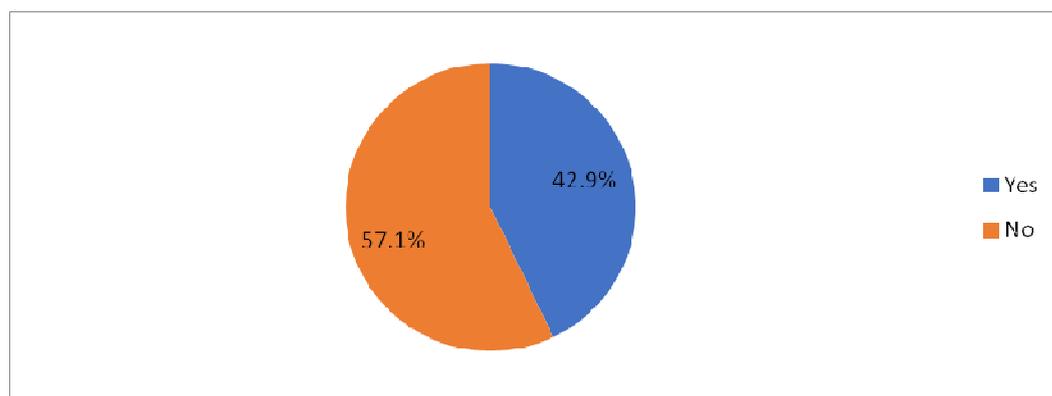


Figure 2: Librarians enrollment in MOOCs (Note, n=35)

Figure 2 shows that among librarians that were aware of MOOCs (n=35), only 15(42.9%) have enrolled for at least a course on any of the MOOC websites. This suggests that even though many librarians are aware of MOOC yet majority did not enrol for any course on the MOOC websites. This further implies that awareness does not translate to use.

Table 3: Barriers to MOOC enrolment

Items on barriers to MOOC enrolment (n=20)	Yes Frequency (%)	No Frequency (%)
Lack of Internet access	1(5%)	19 (95%)
MOOC is not beneficial	1(5%)	19(95%)
Slow internet connectivity	6(30%)	14(70%)
Lack of time to participate	11(55%)	9(45%)
Non- acceptance of MOOC as professional training platform	3(15%)	17(85%)

Among those that did not enrol (n=20), table 3 revealed that many indicated lack of time to participate 11(55%) and slow internet connection as main barriers while lack of internet access and MOOC not beneficial were least barriers to MOOC enrollment.

Table 4: Websites Librarian enrolled for MOOCs

MOOC providers or websites (n=15)	Yes Frequency (%)	No Frequency (%)
Coursera	5(33%)	10 (67%)
edX	5(33%)	10(67%)
MIT open courseware	6(40%)	9(60%)
Udacity	3(20%)	12(80%)
Futurelearn	5(33%)	10(67%)
Udemy	0(0%)	15(100%)

Among those that enrolled(n=15), table 4, revealed that majority 6 (40%) enrolled for at least a course on MIT open courseware. However, only 3(20%) enrolled on Udacity and no one enrolled on Udemy. This depicts that librarians mostly enrolled for MOOCs on MIT open courseware and rarely enrolled on Udacity. Notably, no librarian had taken at least a course on Udemy.

Table 5: reasons for enrolling in MOOC

Items on reasons for MOOC enrollment (n=15)	Yes Frequency (%)	No Frequency (%)
Skill acquisition	9(60%)	6(40%)
Knowledge update	12(80%)	3(20%)
Certificate to increase employment opportunities	3(20%)	12(80%)
Explore new areas of librarianship	7(47%)	8(53%)

Among those that enrolled in MOOC, table 5 revealed majority 12(80%) enrolled for updating their knowledge and 9 (60%) took part because of Skill acquisition. On the other hand, few librarians 3(20%) indicated they participated in MOOC for obtaining a certificate to increase employment opportunities.

Participation in MOOC

Since enrolment for a course on MOOC platform precedes participation, the analysis of result in this section was based on the number of participants (n=15) that indicated they had enrolled for at least a course of any of the MOOC websites.

On MOOC participation, many librarians 11 (73.3%) enrolled for gaining credit or knowledge or skill. On the other hand, few 4(26.7%) took part in MOOCs just for fun. Further, the study found that 5 (33.3%) of the respondents were charged a fee for MOOCs, while 10(66.7%) were not charged a fee before they participated in MOOCs.

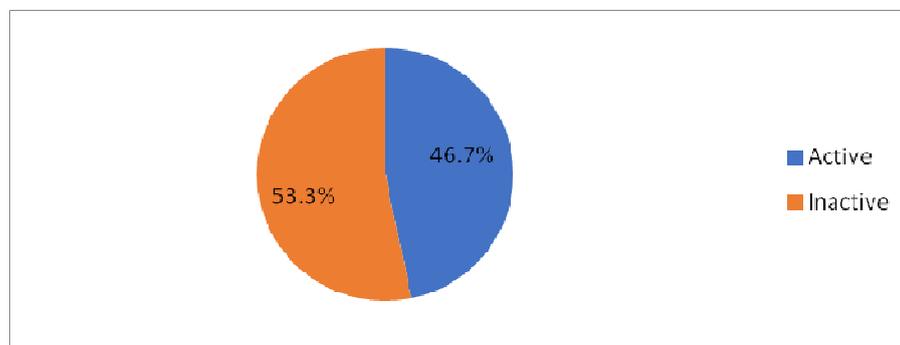


Figure 3: Librarians Participation in MOOCs

Figure 3 revealed that about half 7 (46.7%) of the librarians that enrolled for MOOCs actively participated in the courses they enrolled for. This implies that although librarians enrolled for MOOCs slightly more than half of them were inactive

Table 6: librarians’ reasons for inactive participation

Items on barriers to MOOC enrolment (n=8)	Yes Frequency (%)	No Frequency (%)
Lack of time to participate	4 (50%)	4(50%)
Slow internet connectivity	3(38%)	5(62%)
Technology mishap	2(25%)	6(75%)
Length of course	1(13%)	7(87%)

Table 6 revealed that lack of time 4 (50%) and slow internet connection (38%) were major reasons while the length of course 1(13%) was the least reason for inactive participation in

MOOC among librarians. This may imply that availability of time and fast internet connection contributes to librarians' active participation in MOOC.

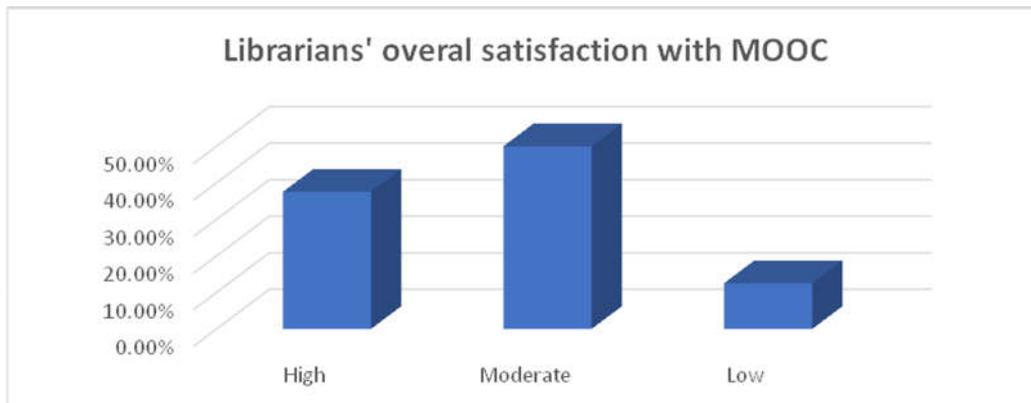


Figure 4: Librarians' overall satisfaction with MOOC

Figure 4 revealed that many librarians 4(50%) expressed a moderate level of satisfaction with MOOC. This revealed that MOOC participants have quite a high level of satisfaction with courses offered on MOOC websites.

Discussion

The study found that more than half 35(61.4%) of the participants are aware of websites providing MOOCs. This deviates from the finding of Dhanani et al. (2016) who found a low level of awareness 18.52% (20 of 108) aware among faculty members in India. Also, more than half of the librarians got to know about MOOC through online sources 19 (54.3%). This agrees with the finding of Kaushik (2015) who found out that library and information science professional that participated in the study got to know about MOOC through e-resources and search engines. Further, many librarians that knew about MOOC were most aware of MIT Open courseware 19 (54%). This corroborates that of Dhanani et al. (2016) that MIT Open Courseware was the most popular among medical faculty in India. However, deviates from the findings of Muzafarova & Kaya (2014) whose findings indicated that Coursera and edX were popular MOOC platforms among students in Georgia. The study found that more than half 35(61.4%) of the participants are aware of websites providing MOOCs. This deviates from the finding of Muzafarova & Kaya (2014) who found a low level of awareness 18.52% (20 of 108) aware among faculty members in India. Also, more than half of the librarians got to know about MOOC through online sources 19 (54%). This agrees with the finding of Kaushik (2015) who found out that library and information science professional that participated in the study got to know about MOOC through e-resources and search engines. .

Regarding librarians' enrollment in MOOC, this study found that of academic librarians that were aware of MOOCs (n=35), less than half 15(42.9%) have enrolled for at least a course on any of the MOOC websites. This suggests that even though many librarians are aware of MOOC yet majority did not enrol for any course on the MOOC websites. This may imply that awareness does not translate to use. This agrees with the findings of Dhanani et al. (2016) and Garrido et al. (2016) where only 20.5% of those who were aware of MOOCs enrolled for at least one course in MOOCs and only 38% of the study's participant had enrolled for at least a course on any of the MOOC websites respectively.

The study also identified the reasons why librarians did not enrol in MOOCs. Typically, lack of time to participate 11(55%), slow internet connectivity 6 (30%) were identified as the major constraining factors. This agrees with the findings of Ecclestone (2013) who noted length of time, technological mishap and a large number of students as major constraints to MOOC use. Also, Garrido et al. (2016) noted that lack of time was a major barrier to MOOC participation. With regards to fees being charged for participation in MOOC, many librarians 10(67%) participated in MOOC at no cost. The finding is corroborated by the findings of Dhanani et al.(2016) who noted that MOOCs are mostly free of cost to the participants as only 3(33.3%) of the nine who indicated that they have enrolled for MOOCs paid to participate.

On the reasons for participating in MOOCs, the respondents indicated that they participated in MOOCs to update their knowledge (67%), to acquire needed skills (44%) and to explore new areas in librarianship. This agrees to the submission of Ecclestone (2013) that subject librarians can participate in MOOC to learn new skills. Notably, earning a certificate to increase employment opportunities was the least reason for participating in MOOCs among the librarians. This agrees with the findings of Garrido et al. (2016) who noted that participants from developing countries receive a certificate as evidence of completing the course.

Also, findings showed that among those who enrolled for at least a course on MOOC, near average 7 (46.7%) actively participated in the courses. This finding is consistent with the submission of Escher et al. (2014) who noted that very few of the 13,000 Africans who participated in MOOCs in 2013 were active participants; the majority only visited the sites or watched videos. Finally, this study revealed that many librarians 4(50%) expressed a moderate level of satisfaction with MOOC. This revealed that MOOC participants expressed good level of satisfaction with courses offered on MOOC websites. This agrees with the findings of a study conducted among medical students in Egypt where participants expressed

a less moderate level of satisfaction but less satisfaction with student-instructor and student-student interaction (Aboshady et al., 2015).

Conclusion and Recommendations

There is no doubt that MOOCs contribute to lifelong learning among professionals and they have great potential for academic librarians as well. Librarians can update their knowledge and skills and keep abreast of trends and developments in their field by participating in MOOCs. This study showed that although some academic librarians in Ogun state, Nigeria are aware of this tool and its benefits, very few enrol for the courses. Factors such as lack of time and slow internet connectivity, non-recognition of MOOC certificates by professional bodies, and non-realization of the benefits of MOOCs were responsible for low level of enrollment and active participation in MOOCs. Therefore, this study recommends that:

1. Library associations need to intensify efforts at creating awareness of the benefits of MOOCs among their members.
2. University and library management should formulate policies that will promote flexible time for librarians as this will promote active MOOC participation.
3. University administration, as well as library management, should ensure speedy and consistent access to the internet to support active participation in MOOCs by academic librarians.
4. University and library management should encourage active participation by granting a level of recognition to certificates obtained through participating in MOOCs.
5. Since librarians use MOOC for knowledge update and skill acquisition, University and library management need to develop strategies and program that will promote MOOC participation.

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