

# Challenges about Integration of Open Access to Libraries Collection Development Workflows in Nigeria

**Anthonia U. Echedom<sup>1</sup>; Isaac Echezonam Anyira<sup>2</sup>**

Department Of Library And Information Science, Nnamdi Azikiwe University,

P.M.B. 5025, Awka, Nigeria.<sup>1</sup>; Department Of Library And Information Science,

Delta State Polytechnic, P.M.B. 1030, Ogwashi-Uku, Nigeria<sup>2</sup>

[tonianwabueze@yahoo.com](mailto:tonianwabueze@yahoo.com)<sup>1</sup>; [anyira.isaac@mydspg.edu.ng](mailto:anyira.isaac@mydspg.edu.ng)<sup>2</sup>

## ABSTRACT

*This study was generally designed to investigate the challenges to the integration of OAR into libraries collections development workflow in Nigeria. Specifically, the study investigated the challenges to defining OA, and the challenges about making open access material a part of the collection development workflow. The survey method was used for the study. Collections development librarians in selected academic libraries in Nigeria were the target of this study. The questionnaire was used for data collection. The instrument was administered on respondents via e-mail and social media platforms. This was necessitated by the lockdown imposed by the government as a measure to curtail the spread of the dreaded Covid 19 pandemic. The questionnaire was designed to understand the challenges about defining OA and the challenges about making open access materials a part of the collection development workflow in academic libraries in Nigeria. One hundred and ninety four questionnaires were administered on collection development staff of the following institutions as follows: Federal university Libraries (22), State university libraries (28), private university libraries (47), federal polytechnic libraries (26), state polytechnic libraries (32), and college libraries (38). One hundred and seventy eight (178) questionnaires were however, completed and returned. This implies 92% return rate. All the respondents surveyed are members of the Nigerian Library Association (NLA), and are certified by the Librarians Registration Council of Nigeria (LRCN). Data were analyzed using graphical charts. The findings indicate that 60% and 20% of the respondents strongly agree and agree respectively that defining OA is a challenge to collection development; challenges about making OA part of collections development workflow include difficulty in discovering titles for OA selection 86%, OA materials have novel features 90%, OA preservation is complex 60%, licensing/ legal issues 86%, challenges about access and delivery of OA 76%, absence of OA in library school curriculum 80%, absence of OA in librarians' duty schedule 74%, lack of skills to handle OA integration 68%, slow internet speed and low bandwidth 88%, lack of ICT deployment 58%, erratic power supply 82%, lack of OA handling skills 74%, Others 12%.*

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*The study recommends that IFLA should adopt a holistic definition of OA including the major colours and provide a guide on how to integrate OA into collection development workflow. Also, library and information science curriculum should be reviewed to include OA and emerging technologies. Moreover, libraries should include OA handling skills as part of the job requirement for collections development librarians, while collections development staff should be equipped with relevant OA handling skills through training and retraining. Lastly, libraries should deploy state-of-the-art ICT facilities and high speed internet access, as well as provide uninterrupted power supply preferably solar technology.*

**Keywords:** Academic libraries, Challenges, Collection development, Integration, Open Access.

### **INTRODUCTION**

The quality of a library to a large extent is a measure of the quality of its collections. This is the reason why many definitions of the term “library” begin with the term “collection”. For instance, Merriam-Webster’s Dictionary, Cambridge Dictionary, and Your Dictionary, all began their definitions of the term “Library” with the phrase “a collection of”. The major business of collection development is to acquire relevant information that meets users’ needs in a continuous basis for a given library or a network of libraries. The term “collection development” was defined by Khayal (2013) as the systematic planning and rational building of library materials. It includes all activities involved in assessing library users’ needs, evaluating the present collection, determining the selection policy, coordinating the selection of relevant information resources, re-evaluating and storing parts of the collection and planning for resource sharing (Khayal, 2013). Collection development workflow is one of the most important, yet challenging, components in the library.

The traditional role of collection development librarians were primarily material selection and acquisition. But the introduction of ICTs in libraries has extended their roles to include the creation and maintenance of web sites fund raising and other tasks. Collection development is hybrid work incorporating both technical and public services. Positions that blur the lines among these organizational units are difficult to define and evaluate (Jakubs, 1999).

Collection development activities are channeled towards maintenance and expansion of libraries’ collection in all formats. These activities are guided by the collections development policy. It is this policy that enables the library to allocate acquisition funds wisely, shape a strong collection and inform the user community about the nature of the collection. According to Khayal (2013), collection development process involves three main aspects namely collection planning, collection implementation, and collection evaluation. However, it was noted that the concept of what constitutes collection development has changed and perhaps we should look for a new definition of the role of a librarian (Kavitha, 2009). We have moved from a time of huge resources to a time of largely static budgets with many more demands on these funds. This has shifted the focus of collection development from local collection building to more co-operative ventures and towards a heavier reliance on resource sharing (Jakubs, 1999).

According to Anyira and Idubor (2018) African libraries (especially Nigerian libraries) are faced with gross inadequacy of relevant library collections. This has made providing various services such as book loans, selective dissemination of information (SDI), book circulation, inter-library cooperation etc., ineffective. Open Access (OA) has become a bailout option for libraries OA has tremendously transformed the face of Nigerian libraries which is obvious during accreditation exercises (Anyira and Idubor, 2018). Since the early 2000’s when OA was introduced

in Nigeria, the availability, relevance, currency and adequacy of information resources have been greatly enhanced in Nigerian libraries (Anyira and Idubor, 2019).

As electronic publications become more prevalent in libraries, the nature of how librarians acquire and provide access to its collections becomes increasingly complex. Thus, as collection development librarians continue to add different types and formats of electronic resources (e-resources), such as e-books, e-journals, commercial database, to library collections, their duties and responsibilities continue to evolve. Furthermore, integrating open access resources into already complex workflow of collection development, introduces novel challenges. The challenge with OA integration into collection development workflow in Nigeria is multifaceted. Some of these challenges are about establishing a clear-cut delineation of what constitutes open access including understanding the main “colours” – green, gold and platinum, and the challenge of making open access resources a part of the collection development workflow. This study seeks to provide a solution that will be implemented to ameliorate the challenges.

## **STATEMENT OF PROBLEM**

Collection development in academic libraries has undergone series of transformation since documentation started. Along with the increasing publication of electronic resources, came the need for libraries to identify, evaluate and integrate them into their collections. While librarians are aware of open access materials and their increasing use by researchers all over the world, there is the need to understand what OA really means, the various “colors” of open access, and the challenges about making them part of collection development workflows. This call to duty is key because the library must retain its relevance as more and more publishers embrace the open access initiative. Librarians must continue to build meaningful and useful library collections in an ever more complex situation, keeping in mind that many library users are overwhelmed by the deluge of information choices available to them. The library must strive to reposition itself as the “heart” where relevant and reliable scholarly materials are discovered, accessed, and used. In other words, the workflow of the collection development librarian is undergoing tremendous transformation. Books and subscription-based electronic resources are no longer enough to meet the ever-increasing information need of researchers. Thus, today’s libraries must comprise both purchased/licensed material and a variety of quality open access content. Librarians will continue to build the collection of the future, exposing all relevant scholarly content, building discovery tools around that content, and working on organizing all materials in meaningful ways for library patrons and the reference librarians that serve as a bridge between the user and the material. In adjusting to the requirements and demands of these changes, the libraries are exposed to challenges that are distinct from what they are used to. This study therefore seeks to investigate the challenges about making open access material a part of the collection development workflow.

## **Objectives of the study**

1. To investigate the challenges to defining OA, including main “colours” – green, gold and platinum.
2. To inquire into the challenges about making open access material a part of the collection development workflow.

## **Research Questions**

1. What are the challenges to defining OA, including main “colours” – green, gold and platinum?
2. What are the challenges about making open access material a part of the collection development workflow?

## **LITERATURE REVIEW**

Library collection has witnessed the ages of clay tablets to papyrus sheets, paper documents, and silicon chips, optical and magnetic disc and so on (Kavitha, 2009). Libraries and information centers have been facing unprecedented changes, largely driven by technological developments accompanied by changes in research outputs and scholarly communications. Libraries and their parent institutions have continuously struggled with lack of funds on one hand, and on the other hand the research output, impact factor, web presence and visibility, are becoming more and more crucial in global ranking of academic performance (Anyira and Imade, 2019; Anyira and Njoeteni, 2019). Until recently, libraries could not afford to subscribe to journals where researchers from their parent institutions have published their works (Sanjeeva and Powdwal, 2017). This was because the researchers themselves, many a times do not have access to their own work and the library could not afford to subscribe the same. This was one of the drawbacks of the traditional scholarly publishing model. One of the major arguments against the subscription based model of publishing has been that authors have given their work for free to publishers, worked on editorial boards and peer review committees without any financial gain, but still have to pay to get access to the same journals (Sanjeeva and Powdwal, 2017). Such type of business model is unique in itself and unsustainable. Taking opportunity from benefits that technology offered, the scholars, scientists and researchers have responded to this by working out alternative ways of sharing their research and the Open Access Movement came into existence. According to (Sanjeeva and Powdwal (2017) the concept of open access evolved during 1991 due to the realization of the need to facilitate scholarly communication. 'Open Access' to scholarly communication is viewed as a mechanism to address escalating journal prices, and as a means of circumventing growing limited access to the increasing volume of research literature. Other reasons for a move to 'Open Access' is the conviction that publicly funded research by rights should be more accessible to the taxpaying public; digital divide between developing and developed world should diminish, that access to research by and in the developing world should be greatly improved; and that researchers at poorly funded institutional libraries will have increased access to the research literature (Sanjeeva and Powdwal, 2017). Open Access refers to online publication that is freely available and accessible to information seekers as long as they have internet access. When a research publication is freely available to anyone for reading or any other purpose, such is known as open access material. Open Access seeks to spread knowledge and allow that knowledge to be built upon ( Suber, 2003). The high cost of library materials and similar barriers should not prevent library users from getting access to research they need.

Open access is also viewed as any material that is freely available on the public internet, permitting any user to read, download, copy, distribute, print, search, or link to the full texts of these articles, crawl them for indexing, pass them as data to software, or use them for any other lawful purpose, without financial, legal, or technical barriers other than those inseparable from gaining access to the internet itself (UNESCO, n/d). In December 2001, the Open Society Institute convened a meeting of prominent scholarly communication change agents in Budapest that strongly influenced the nascent open access movement. The result of this meeting was the "Budapest Open Access Initiative" (BOAI). It defined open access as a literature that should be freely accessible online which scholars give to the world without expectation of payment. Primarily, this category encompasses their peer-reviewed journal articles, but it also includes any un-reviewed preprints that they might wish to put online for comment or to alert colleagues to important research findings. By "open access" to literature, BOAI mean that it is freely available on the public internet, permitting any user to read, download, copy, distribute, print, search, or link to the full texts of these articles, crawl them for indexing, pass them as data to software, or use them for any other lawful purpose, without financial, legal, or technical barriers other than those inseparable from gaining access to the internet itself. The only

constraint on reproduction and distribution, and the only role for copyright in this domain, should be to give authors control over the integrity of their work and the right to be properly acknowledged and cited (Budapest Open Access Initiative, 2002).

UNESCO identified what constitutes OA as follows:

- Materials which content is universally and freely accessible, at no cost to the reader, via the Internet or otherwise;
- The author or copyright owner of such material irrevocably grants to all users, for an unlimited period, the right to use, copy, or distribute the article, on condition that proper attribution is given;
- The material is deposited, immediately, in full and in a suitable electronic form, in at least one widely and internationally recognized open access repository committed to open access.

The American Library Association noted about OA as follows:

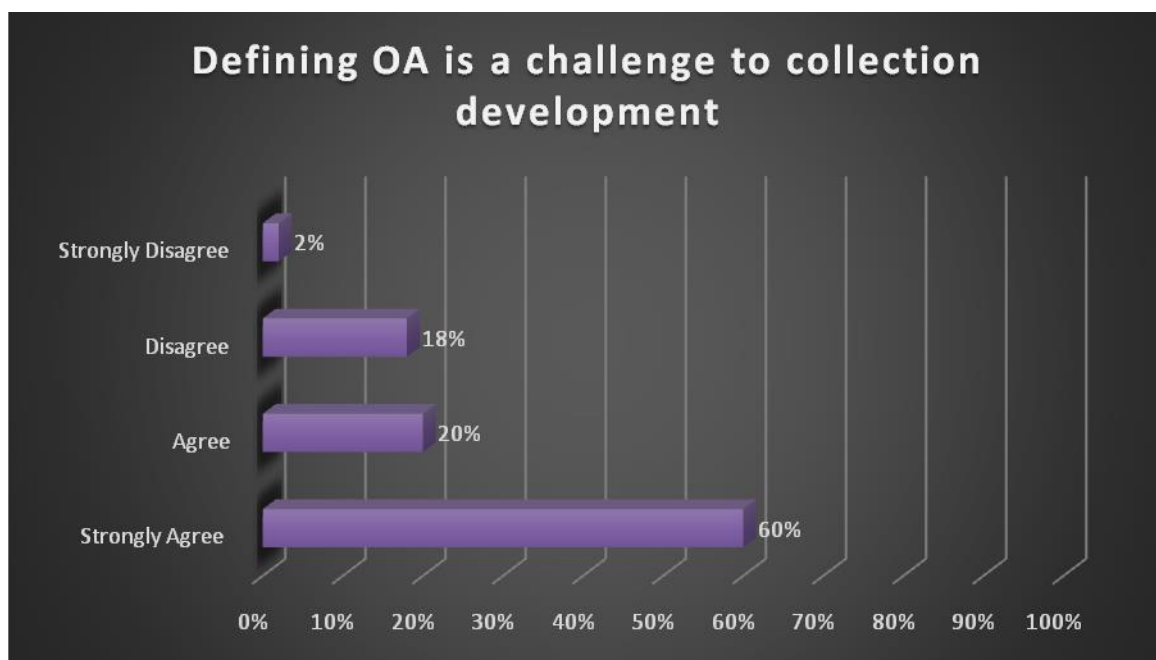
- OA refers to both digital repositories and scholarly journals.
- Repositories are not limited to institutional repositories. They can be organized by topic, by discipline, and by collaboration as well.
- Although scholarly publication most often refers to text publication in the form of journal articles, open access is not necessarily limited to text media.
- Like traditional journal publications, open-access journals can and should be peer-reviewed.
- Traditionally published materials may still be deposited in an open-access digital repository if the author's copyright has been sufficiently preserved rather than signed over to the publisher.
- The open-access movement is a quickly advancing area of interest for librarians, and being informed means staying informed. Keeping up-to-date is important.
- Academics are not the only people who benefit from open-access scholarly communication. Everyone benefits, including libraries and the public.

## **MATERIALS AND METHODS**

The survey method was used for the study. Collections development librarians in selected academic libraries in Nigeria were the target of this study. The questionnaire was used for data collection. The instrument was administered on respondents via e-mail and social media platforms. This was necessitated by the lockdown imposed by the government as a measure to curtail the spread of the dreaded Covid 19 pandemic. The questionnaire was designed to understand the challenges about defining OA and the challenges about making open access materials a part of the collection development workflow in academic libraries in Nigeria. One hundred and ninety four questionnaires were administered on collection development staff of the following institutions as follows: Federal university Libraries (22), State university libraries (28), private university libraries (47), federal polytechnic libraries (26), state polytechnic libraries (32), and college libraries (38). One hundred and seventy eight (178) questionnaires were however, completed and returned. This implies 92% return rate. All the respondents surveyed are members of the Nigerian Library Association (NLA), and are certified by the Librarians Registration Council of Nigeria (LRCN). Data were analyzed using graphical charts.

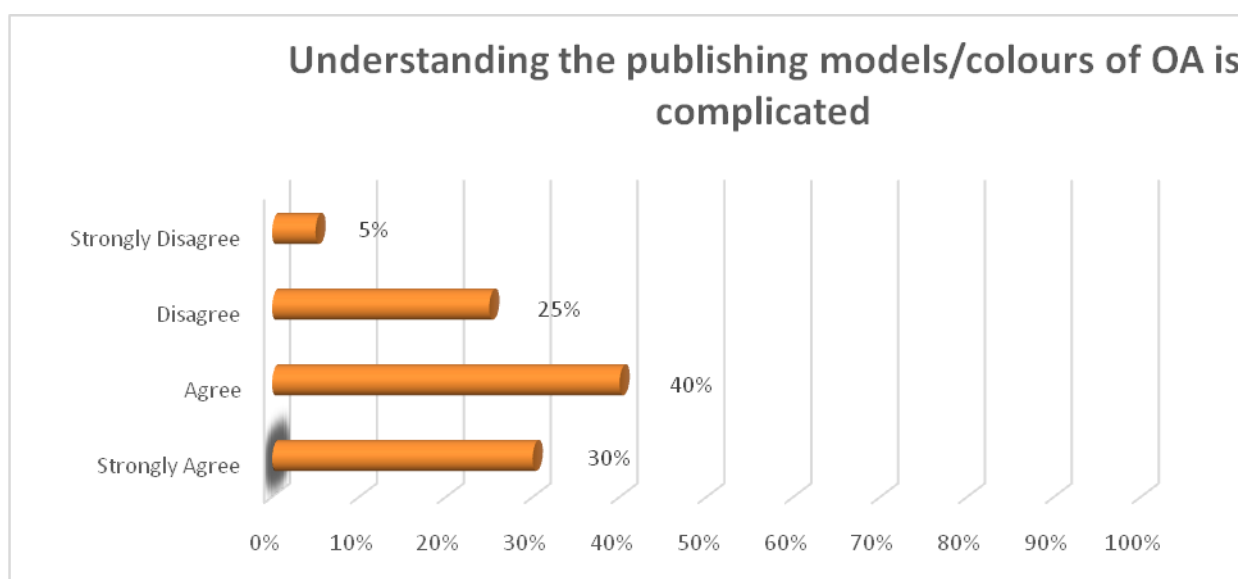
**DATA ANALYSIS AND RESULTS**

Chart 1: Defining OA is a challenge to collection development



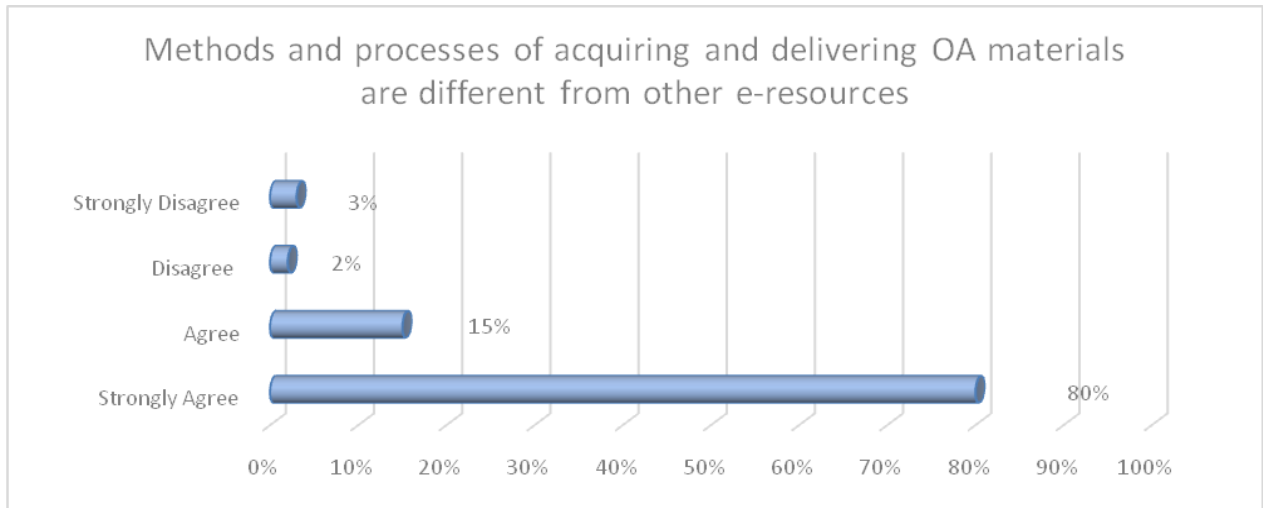
The response gotten from the respondents when asked whether defining OA is a challenge to collection development, indicate that 60% strongly agree, 20% agree, 18% disagree, and 2% strongly disagree.

Chart 2: Understanding the publishing models/colours of OA is complicated



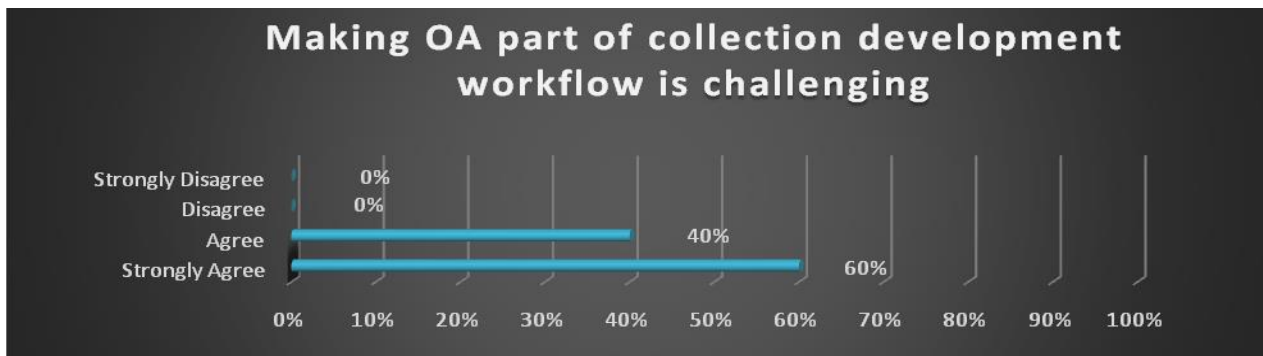
The response gotten from the respondents when asked whether Understanding the publishing models/colours of OA is complicated, indicate that 30% strongly agree, 40% agree, 25% disagree, and 5% strongly disagree.

**Chart 3: Methods and processes of acquiring and delivering OA materials are different from other e-resources**



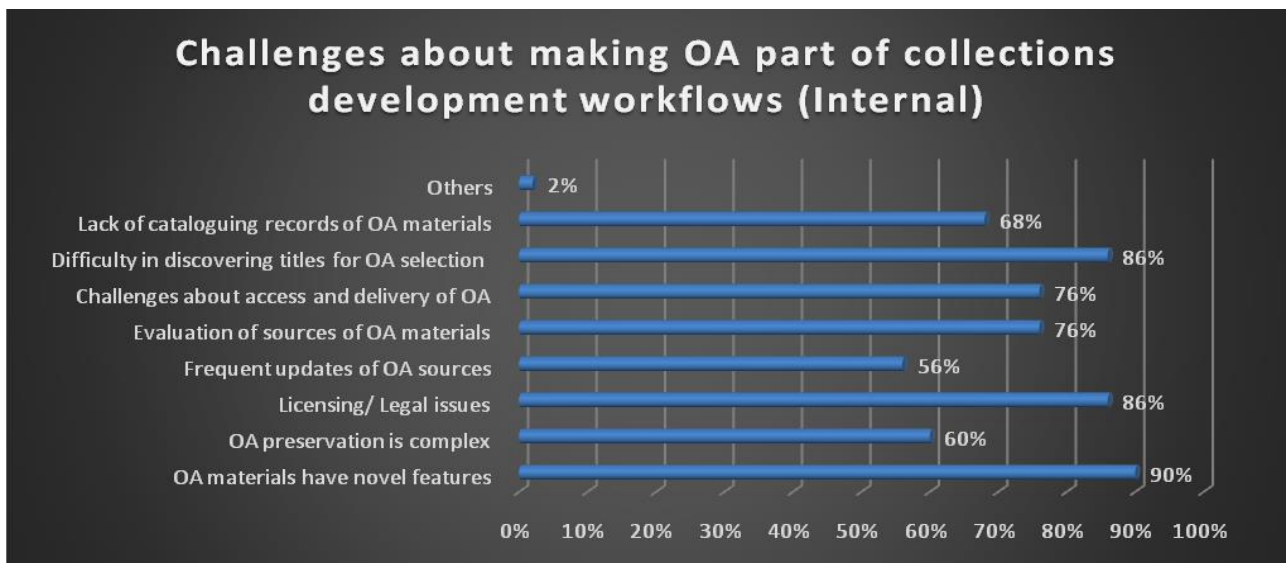
The response gotten from the respondents when asked if the methods and processes of acquiring and delivering OA materials are different from other e-resources, indicate that 80% strongly agree, 15% agree, 2% disagree, and 3% strongly disagree.

**Chart 4: Making OA part of collection development workflow is challenging**



The response gotten from the respondents when asked if making OA part of collection development workflow is challenging, indicate that 60% strongly agree, 40% agree.

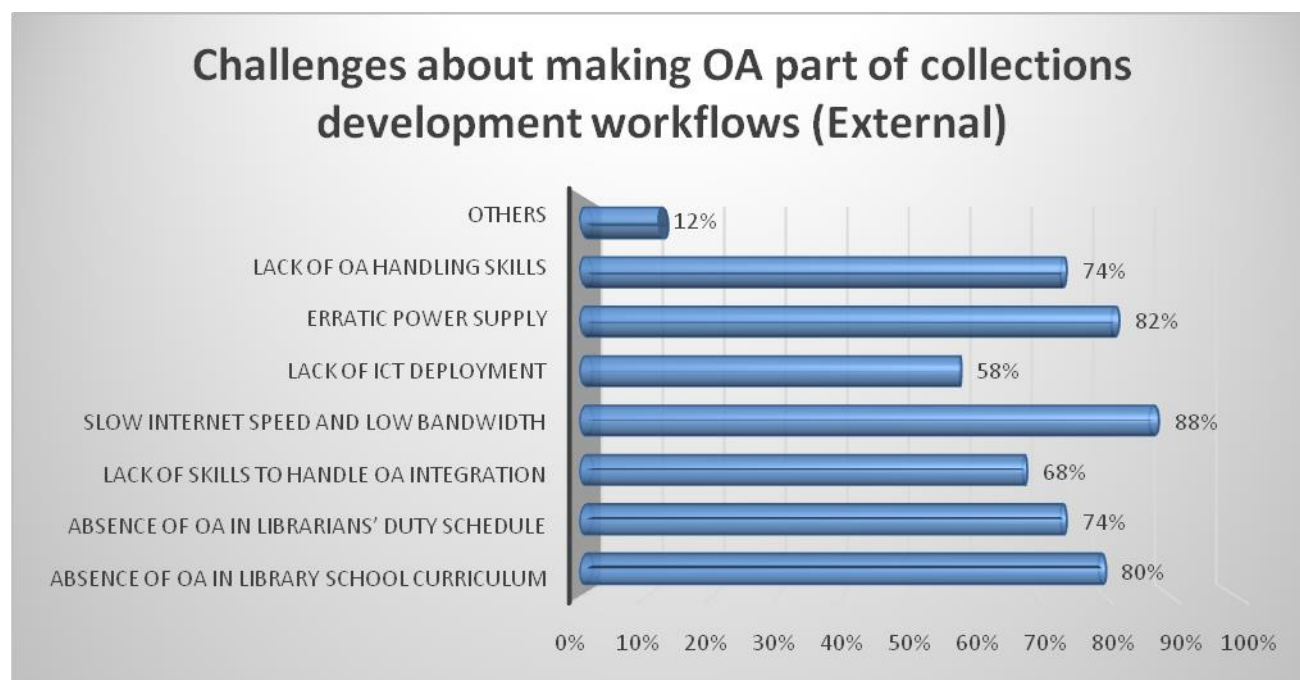
**Chart 5: Challenges about making OA part of collections development workflows (Internal)**



## **Challenges about Integration of Open Access to Libraries Collection Development Workflows in Nigeria**

The respondents when asked about the challenges about making OA part of collections development workflows (internal), identified: difficulty in discovering titles for OA selection 86%, OA materials have novel features 90%, OA preservation is complex 60%, Licensing/ Legal issues 86%, Frequent updates of OA sources 56%, Evaluation of sources of OA materials 76%, Challenges about access and delivery of OA 76%, Lack of cataloguing records of OA materials 68%, and Others 2%.

Chart 6: Challenges about making OA part of collections development workflows (External)



The respondents when asked about the challenges about making OA part of collections development workflows (external), identified: Absence of OA in library school curriculum 80%, Absence of OA in librarians' duty schedule 74%, Lack of skills to handle OA integration 68%, Slow internet speed and low bandwidth 88%, Lack of ICT deployment 58%, Erratic power supply 82%, Lack of OA handling skills 74%, Others 12%.

### **CONCLUSION**

The primary role of collections development librarians were selection and procurement of library materials irrespective of their formats. The workflows that were initially simple have been made however complex and highly technical with the introduction of subscription-based electronic collections. The emergence of OA has further complicated the collections development practices all over the world, Nigeria inclusive. Open Access (OA) has impacted significantly on the standard of Nigerian libraries especially in the areas of availability, relevance, currency and adequacy of information resources. However, as more and more resources are available open access (OA), libraries face new challenges. Some of these challenges are about defining open access and challenges about making open access material a part of the collection development workflow.



## **RECOMMENDATIONS**

For effective integration of OAR into library collections development, the following strategies are recommended:

1. The International Federation of Library Associations and Institutions (IFLA) should confer and adopt a holistic definition of OA including the major colours. A guide on how to integrate OA into the workflow should also be put up by the Association.
2. The National Universities Commission (NUC) and the National Board for Technical Education (NBTE) should review the library and information science curriculum to include OA and emerging technologies in LIS field.
3. Libraries should include OA handling skills as part of the job requirement for collections development librarians.
4. Collections development staff should be equipped with relevant OA skills through training and retraining.
5. Libraries should deploy state-of-the-art ICT facilities and high speed internet access.
6. Libraries should be provided with uninterrupted power supply preferably solar power.

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