

AWARENESS, ACCESS AND ATTITUDE OF POSTGRADUATE STUDENTS TOWARDS USE OF ELECTRONIC DATABASES IN TWO ACADEMIC LIBRARIES IN SOUTH-WEST NIGERIA

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Abstract

Purpose: This study examined the availability, awareness, access and attitude of postgraduate students to the use of electronic databases in Kenneth Dike and Hezekiah Oluwasanmi Libraries of University of Ibadan and Obafemi Awolowo University respectively.

Design/Methodology/Approach: A survey design that employed questionnaire for data collection was used. A total of 260 registered postgraduate students in the two university libraries were sampled, using a proportionate sampling method and 228 completed copies of the questionnaire were useably retrieved.

Findings: Results revealed that graduate students' actual access of the available online databases was low. It revealed the students' poor familiarity with library electronic databases, as only JSTOR recorded the largest percentage 21.67% on familiarity. The study further reveals high positive attitudinal responses of students to using the available resources.

Implication: Although the students had positive attitudinal responses to use of electronic databases, yet, they were not substantially familiar with necessary electronic databases made available by their libraries.

Originality/Value: It is therefore recommended that academic libraries should redesign training and user education and also current awareness services and library electronic resources services provision policies to be more specific on target groups within the universities communities.

Keywords: Electronic Databases, Students, Postgraduate, University, Academic Library

Paper type: Empirical research

Introduction

There has increasingly been a shift in information sourcing from print to digital over the years and the library, especially academic libraries have done well to key into the irreversibly trend. With the profuse supply of information in online format and especially the evolving of dedicated databases, it is expected that quality information provision should suffice in academic libraries today. This has been the success story of libraries in advanced countries, while efforts in this direction are just commendable in developing countries and especially in Sub-Saharan Africa. Lingering issues of awareness, availability and accessibility, personal characteristics, access skills, attitudes, still pose as problems to full utilization. Collins and Berge (1994) have pointed out that a journal (for example) needs to be accessible to readers, knowing that e-journals exist is one thing getting access to them is another. Kumar and Phil (2009) also

explain that users are illiterate as far as library activities are concerned as they need some guidance on how to access and utilize library resources and services, this includes e-resources. Patel (2018) study had however revealed that users were not getting adequate training and required more assistance from library staff to enhance their search skills for relevant resources.

In an observation, Mane and Kuman (2017) assert that the growth of electronic information and its attendant access and the selection of information sources has become complex, while custodians and producers of information alike are now preoccupied with trying to understand user behavior with electronic services. They also observe the fact that there is a noticeable gap in the literature on student perception of electronic information. However, the use of bibliographic databases opens the graduate researcher to easy access of a wider range of rich resources

globally thereby improving the quality of research output as well as increasing the knowledge base of the researcher and scholar. In the face of insufficient facilities, information resources inclusive, one of the most viable resorts tutors and students alike can turn to are online resources that are now available.

Postgraduate education in Nigeria has spanned well over four decades with the earliest ones that began in the early sixties with first generation universities like University of Ibadan and Obafemi Awolowo University. General objectives of postgraduate studies and research in Nigeria include the further development in graduate students of the spirit of enquiry through training in research in an atmosphere of intellectual independence and individual creativity combined with a strong sense of group cooperation. Kenneth Dike Library (KDL) in University of Ibadan and Hezekiah Oluwasanmi Library (HOL) in Obafemi Awolowo University, Ile-Ife are two universities under study. The University of Ibadan became an independent degree awarding university in 1962 after been founded in 1948 as a University college. The University is today made up of 13 faculties, cutting across various disciplines, besides other institutes. The student population of the University stands at more than 20,000, majority of which is made up of postgraduate students. The postgraduate school has a wide range of research programs that are meant to help postgraduate students to pursue original supervised research in order for them to be enabled to contribute to knowledge in various fields. Obafemi Awolowo University came into being in 1962. The University is constituted of 12 faculties and has a student population of over 25,000, with around 2,500 enrollment of postgraduate students and has similar mission to that of University of Ibadan Postgraduate School. (O.A.U Postgraduate College Handbook, 2002).

Objectives of the study

- i. determine the level of awareness of electronic databases among postgraduate students in the university libraries under study;
- ii. investigate the access to electronic databases in the university libraries under study; and

- iii. examine the attitude(s) of the postgraduate students towards electronic databases utilization in the universities

Research questions

- i. What is the level of the postgraduate students' awareness of the electronic databases in the universities libraries?
- ii. What is the level of access to electronic databases in the university libraries under study?
- iii. What is/are the attitude(s) of the postgraduate students to the use of electronic databases?

Literature Review

Haruna et al (2018) in a study investigating availability, challenges and use of print and electronic resources by students revealed that the majority of the students preferred electronic information format to print format. However, a myriad of problems militate against the use of e-resources by most of the students. Patel and Darbar (2017) study on availability and use of e-resources in CKSVIM Library, reveal awareness of e-resources among users and a satisfactory level of availability of e-resources. Madhusudhan (2017) in his own study revealed that the increase in availability of computer systems and speed of internet ensure more effective e-resources use by research scholars in the university under study. Findings by Ibegwam et al (2013) on awareness and use of electronic information resources by academic staff of medical colleges of Universities of Ibadan and Lagos showed that 80% of faculty members of the two medical colleges were aware of the availability of e-resources. Further results from their study on awareness, motivation and use of agricultural information resources in FUTA showed low level awareness of e-resources, especially TEEAL and AGORA which were the two agricultural databases in the library collection. Gunasekara (2010) study results showed students' satisfaction with available resources and researcher recommends better promotion of awareness for use of electronic resources. Gurikat and Gurikar (2015) studied availability of resources in Karnataka University Library. Results showed change from print to e-resources and the eagerness of users to use e-resources. Yebowah's (2017) study shows that

65% of lecturers in the target university were aware of available e-resources in the library but usage was low. Also, despite general medium of awareness creation, results still show low library visit turnout. Yebowah's (2017) study shows that 65% of lecturers in the target university were aware of available e-resources in the library but usage was low. Also, despite general medium of awareness creation, results still show low library visit turnout.

Bashiru and Okilagwe in their study stressed the importance of e-databases in ensuring academic progress of academics. Results from their study, showed an average level of awareness of e-databases among the academic staff of private universities in South-West Nigeria. Biradar and Naik (2017) in their study, focus on literacy skills and competency among the research scholars and postgraduate students in Deemed University Libraries, Bangalore. It further identifies the awareness of e-resources and showed users satisfaction. Ranganathan and Babu (2012) in their study of awareness and use of library resources at Osmania University, Hyderabad, highlighted the need for adequacy of resources and gave reasons for e-resources provision in terms of ensuring user satisfaction. Agyekum and Ossom (2015) study results revealed that there were positive results of e-journals awareness and impact on use. However, there were users that responded on non-awareness. In their study, Duragappa et al (2017) revealed the high level of awareness in online databases use by postgraduate students and faculty in Presidency University Library. Results showed high level of awareness of online databases and subsequently utilization. However, the constant need to subscribe and renew subscription was a problem for the library. Utulu and Bolarinwa (2009) investigated level and awareness of open access initiative and adoption by academics in University of Ibadan and University of Lagos. Results showed the

awareness of open access initiative on open access resources did not tally with actual usage of information resources from the open access. While 50% of faculty was aware, less than 50% actually used the open access outlets. Tammara, M. A. (2015) in a study, records users' positive attitude towards digital library. Also, Kaur's (2018) study on attitude and satisfaction of users on e-resources use in a research institute showed that the researchers were satisfied with available e-resources. Gregory's (2008) study investigated undergraduate use and attitudes to e-books. Findings reveal that students preferred use of print books to using e-books to which they have mixed feelings. Reason reported for this preference was lack of awareness.

Methodology

The research design adopted in this study is a descriptive survey. A proportional sampling technique is used for the proportionate representation of users in the study population. Questionnaire was used for eliciting response. The study population include: 2,657 postgraduate students of the University of Ibadan and Obafemi Awolowo University, Ile-Ife, who are users of the University Libraries of both institutions namely: Kenneth Dike Library (KDL) and Hezekiah Oluwasanmi Library (HOL), respectively. 1,656 students in KDL, and 1,001 students in HOL. A sample of 260 respondents was selected from the population: 160 from KDL and 100 from HOL. Data collected was analyzed using descriptive statistics through the means of simple percentages and frequency and tables.

Results and Discussion

Results from this study reveals that of the 260 sample respondents taken out of the target population of 2,656 postgraduate students in the two libraries, 228 respondents appropriately filled and returned the questionnaires distributed, representing 88% response rate.

Table 1: Distribution of respondents by university

University	Frequency	Percentage (%)
Ibadan	131	60.5
O.A.U, Ile-Ife	090	39.5
Total	228	100.0

Table 2: Distribution of respondents by program of study

Level	Frequency	Percentage (%)
PhD/ M.Phil	033	14.5
M.Sc/M.A/M.Tech/M.Ed/MBAMPA etc	185	81.1
PGD	010	04.4
Total	228	100.0

138 (60.5%) respondents are from University of Ibadan as against the 90 (39.5%) from Obafemi Awolowo University.

Respondents distribution by program of study show those in the masters' degree program

from various disciplines as having the highest 185 (81.1%) response over others. Respondents in doctoral and diploma program were not much.

Table 3: Distribution of respondents by faculty

S/N	Faculty/College	Frequency	Percentage (%)
1	Social Science	18	07.9
2	Education	54	23.7
3	Arts	37	16.2
4	Sciences	30	13.2
5	Basic Medical Sciences	06	02.6
6	Clinical Sciences	-	-
7	Pharmacy	06	02.6
8	Technology	0	03.5
9	Agriculture and Forestry	15	06.6
10	Dentistry	-	-
11	Veterinary Medicine	-	-
12	Public Health	02	00.8
13	Law	07	03.0
14	Administration	33	14.5
15	Environmental Dev. Management	05	02.2
16	Institute of African Studies	02	00.8
17	African Regional Centre for Information Science	05	02.2
	Total	228	100.0

Table 3 shows that respondents from education were the highest respondents 54(23.7%) over others. However, faculties of Arts and Administration came closely behind Education with 37 (16.2%) and 33 (14.5%) respectively. The Faculty of Administration is limited to Obafemi Awolowo University. No responses were received from the faculties of clinical sciences, Dentistry and veterinary medicine. However, the sciences were generally least represented.

The study also sought to find out from the respondents whether they were familiar with some of their library's electronic databases. Based on the percentage of familiarity with

each of the electronic databases available in the two libraries, showed that 78(21.67%) who were familiar with JSTOR where the largest. This was followed at a distance by 25 (6.94%), 23 (6.38%), 21 (5.83%), 20 (5.53%), 19 (5.27%), and 16(4.44%), familiar with OUP online Journals, AGORA and Humanities Abstract, Applied Sci & Tech Abstracts, Social Science Index, DATAD Online and E-Granary Digital Library respectively. Others followed these set at another greater distance.

Research question 1: What is the level of the postgraduate students' awareness of the electronic databases in the university libraries?

Table 4: Respondents familiarity with their library's electronic database

S/N	Item	Frequency	Percentage (%)
1	Ebscohost	10	02.77
2	JSTOR	78	21.67
3	Infortrac Onefile	10	02.77
4	Hinari	09	02.50
5	OUP Online Journals	25	06.94
6	WiderNet Digital library	13	03.61
7	AGORA	23	06.38
8	MIT Press Journals	11	03.05
9	DATAD online	19	05.27
10	PERI	07	01.94
11	The Annals of pharmacotherapy	04	01.11
12	Essential Academic Links (i.e. Hlghwire Press, DOAJ, Biomed Central, Law Journals, SciELO etc)	13	03.61
13	The Federalist	07	01.94
14	ERIC	11	03.05
15	CAB Abstract	07	01.94
16	LIFE Sciences	09	02.50
17	Tropag and Rural	04	01.11
18	Humanities Abstract	23	06.38
19	Applied Sci & Tech Abstract	21	05.83
20	Social Science Index	20	05.55
21	E-Granary Digital Library	16	04.44
22	AJOL	11	03.05
23	Lan TEEAL	09	02.50
	Total	360	100.00

Table 5: Distribution by awareness of electronic databases

Knowle of Elect. Database	Frequency	Percentage (%)
Yes	182	79.8
No	046	20.2
Total	228	100.0

The respondents were asked to indicate whether they knew what electronic databases were. 183 (79.8%) reported that they were knowledgeable as against 46 (20.2%) that had no knowledge of what they were.

Table 6: Distribution by awareness of accessibility from hostel, library or academic area

Awareness of accessibility from Hostel etc	Frequency	Percentage (%)
Yes	133	58.3
No	095	41.7
Total	228	100.0

Table 6 shows responses on whether the respondents were aware that they can access the electronic databases from their hostel, academic arena or library. 133 (58.3%) respondents affirmed their knowledge of awareness of accessibility. On lack of awareness, 95 (41.7%) said they were not aware.

Table 7: Respondents rating of libraries' electronic databases services provision

S/N	Item	Excellent	Good	Fair	Poor	Total No of Respon
1	Awareness	8 (3.75%)	38 (17.84%)	64 (30.05%)	103 (48.3%)	213
2	Availability	02 (1.05%)	43 (22.51%)	67 (35.08%)	79 (41.36%)	191
3	Affordability	08 (4.00%)	60 (30.00%)	76 (38.00%)	56 (28.00%)	200
4	Accessibility	04 (2.00%)	41 (20.50%)	70 (35.00%)	85 (42.50%)	200

Respondents' ratings on awareness of library's electronic databases services provision revealed that of a total 213 responses, 46(21.59%) recorded excellent and good, while 167 (78.41%) rated the provision fairly and poorly. On respondents rating on availability of the resources, 45 (23.56%) recorded excellent and good, while 146 (76.44%) recorded fairly and poorly of a total response of 191. Respondents that lacked knowledge of what electronic databases are, are 20.2%, implying that majority of respondents had knowledge of electronic databases. Also on respondents awareness of accessibility of University Library's' electronic databases from within and around the library area, 41.7% lacked awareness, compared to 58.3% who were aware. This implies that there was no very significant difference in the awareness level. However, on actual access to any of the electronic databases and even the library homepage, only 25.0% and 25.2% had

actually accessed any electronic database and library's homepage respectively. This strongly indicates a further lack of awareness and low level use of the libraries electronic resources.

Also responses on familiarity with the listed libraries electronic databases, further reveal the low level awareness, access to and use of the libraries electronic databases. And when respondents are asked to rate the libraries on the provision of electronic databases services, the greater majority rated the libraries fair and poor as shown in table 7. This again reveals the gross insufficiency in availability and awareness services provision on the part of the libraries which has also extended to inaccessibility, especially where username and passwords are concerned.

Research question 2: What is the level of access to electronic databases in the university libraries under study?

Table 8: Respondents actual access of any of the libraries electronic databases

Access of any Libr Electronic Databases	Frequency	Percentage (%)
Yes	057	25.0
No	171	75.0
Total	228	100.0

The respondents were asked, as shown in table 6, whether they were actually able to access the library's electronic databases 57 (25.0%) were

able to access the resources, while 171 (75.0%) were unable to access.

Table 9: Distribution of the respondents by access of the library's home page

Access of any Lib home page	Frequency	Percentage (%)
Yes	046	20.2
No	182	79.8
Total	228	100.0

On whether they respondents had at least been able to access the library homepage as shown in table 9, a lesser percentage, 46 (20.2%) had been able to do so, while a larger percentage,

182 (79.8%) had not been able to access the home page.

Research question 3: What is /are the attitude(s) of the postgraduate students to the use of electronic databases?

Table 10: Attitudinal responses to electronic databases use

S/NO	Item	Greatly	Moderately	Rarely	Poorly	Total No of Respon
1	Enthusiastic	58 (28.44%)	102 (50.00%)	23 (11.27%)	21 (10.29%)	204
2	Anxious	33 (18.23%)	64 (35.36%)	60 (33.15%)	24 (13.26%)	181
3	Avoidance	13 (7.30%)	39 (21.91%)	81 (45.50%)	45 (25.28%)	178
4	Enjoyment	46 (23.71%)	94 (48.45%)	32 (16.49%)	22 (11.34%)	194
5	Fear	13 (7.22%)	22 (12.22%)	77 (47.78%)	68 (37.78%)	180

Table 10 shows the record of responses to attitudes respondents have to electronic databases use. A total of 204 responses were received to the question of whether respondents were enthusiastic towards the use of electronic databases. 58 (28.44%) were greatly and 102 (50.00%) were moderately enthusiastic towards the use, while 44 (21.56%) were only rarely and poorly enthusiastic. Responses on anxious attitude, showed 181 total response with 33(18.23%) greatly; 64 (35.36%) moderately; while 84(46.41%) were rarely and poorly anxious. 178 responses on avoidance showed 13 (7.30%) greatly avoiding electronic databases; 39 (21.91%) moderately; while 120 (70.78%) rarely and poorly avoided. Responses on enjoyment attitude, showed 194 total response with 46 (23.71%) greatly, 94 (48.45%); and 54 (27.83%) rarely and poorly enjoying the use of electronic databases. Also, 180 respondents recorded their fear of use. 13 (7.22%) responded greatly; 22(12.22%) moderately; and 145 (80.56%) rarely and poorly. The results on attitudinal responses shown in table 10 reveal higher responses towards positive attitudes (enthusiastic and enjoyment) on use of electronic databases. This is evident in the higher percentage on moderate and great degrees. Also, higher responses were shown towards the negative attitudes (anxious, avoidance and fear) where rarely had the highest percentages on avoidance and fear (45.50% and 42.78% respectively) followed by poorly (5.28% on avoidance and 37.78% fear). Respondents' attitudes towards the use of

electronic database were measured by feelings of enthusiasm, anxiety, avoidance, enjoyment and fear, as shown in table 10. A larger proportion of respondents mentioned enthusiastic and enjoyment attitudes to use of electronic databases, while another larger proportion indicated anxious, avoidance and fear attitudes as attitudes they do not exhibit. The researcher concludes that these right attitudes have greatly influenced respondents' perception on the effects that determine adoption and use of electronic databases.

Conclusion

It can be concluded, that even though a large number of postgraduate students reported that they were knowledgeable about electronic databases; and had positive attitudinal responses to use of electronic databases, yet, they were not substantially familiar with relevant electronic databases made available by their libraries. The above results therefore, imply that academic libraries have not sufficiently and effectively satisfied their well esteemed user population with the much needed information needs.

Recommendation

It is recommended therefore:

First, that the two university libraries studied, should redesign their training and user education policies and also current awareness services and library electronic resources services provision policies to be more specific on target groups within the universities communities.

Secondly, libraries should also train to be more 'user-friendly' and endeavor to embark on one-to-one awareness strategies to further attract users' attention to library electronic resources, and in a way, package the resources attractively.

Another need here is that libraries should change their marketing strategies on the availability of electronic information resources generally, and electronic databases specifically, in order to increase user awareness.

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