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Awareness and Usage of Electronic Resources by Postgraduate Students in Nigerian Universities

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This study investigated the awareness and usage of electronic resources by postgraduate students in Nigerian universities. In so doing, five (5) research questions guided the conduct of this study. This study used a descriptive survey as its research strategy. The population of this study included 1,767 postgraduate students enrolled in three universities in Nigeria's Kogi State for the academic year 2021–2022, including federal, state-owned, and private institutions. Using the multi-stage sampling, 313 postgraduate students were from Federal, State and Private owned institutions in Kogi State. Data was analysed quantitatively using mean and standard deviation. This survey made it abundantly evident that postgraduate students seldom ever use online resources which showed a detrimental effect on research, teaching, and learning. Also, the study found that, knowledge of e-resources does not equate to usage of those resources.

This study is the original idea from the authors and does not reflect on any copyrighted materials. This study recommended, among others, that the library needs to make an effort to educate users and teach students so that all students are aware of how to access e-resources off-campus and faculty librarians must consider a variety of channel to increase awareness of e-resources. The limitations of this study is that, it focused on three (3) selected universities, therefore generalization

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of result should be done with caution. Also, the study considered only academic libraries.

Keywords: *Electronic resources, awareness, usage, postgraduate, academic library, university, Nigeria.*

1 INTRODUCTION

Early in the 1980s, libraries began to rely more and more on online systems, electronic databases, and vendor links, which had a significant impact on collection growth strategies. Electronic resources (e-resources) have grown significantly in the twenty-first century as they altered how students and researchers look for information and how they think. E-resources are currently considered to be the most significant resources for information transmission in higher education institutions, especially for postgraduates and professors (Edem&Egbe, 2016). Regardless of the geographical location of students, faculties, and programmes, it is critical for library services and resources to have adequate access to research and other material to obtain high-quality academic abilities in higher education. In order to promote the best and highest-quality teaching and learning, institutions of higher learning around the world have embraced information and communication technologies (ICTs).

Academic libraries are evolving to incorporate ICTs and move towards e-resources to make it simple for distance learners to obtain information. E-resources have so caused a paradigm shift in how libraries are used. ICTs have had a profound impact on users and their way of thinking. The communication paradigm used in locally conducted research has been significantly impacted by the deployment of e-resources. Making the most use of the services offered is necessary for the functionality of electronic resources. However, it is unclear whether users are educated of the resources' accessibility or how much they utilise accessible e-resources, as well as the challenges they face when using and accessing e-resources in the library (Oladokun, et al., 2022).

A number of African countries have come to a stop as a result of the COVID-19 pandemic. For the academic year to continue after lockdown, improved tactics had to be put into action. An immediate plan of action was put into place, and a team of off-campus LIS specialists helped students and staff access the required internet resources. In order to accommodate the changing information-seeking requirements and behaviours of students and researchers, the library transitioned to e-based information resources, but the cost of these services rose substantially, making it difficult to pay and sustain. The way information is accessed, gathered, and distributed has recently undergone significant change due to technological advancement. To satisfy libraries' information needs, electronic resources were now required.

Students enrolled in postgraduate programmes are individuals who have already earned a first degree and are working for further degrees. These are research students who worked on an investigation over a number of years, largely on their own but with the guidance of a faculty member. Postgraduate students exhibit dedication, perseverance, commitment, goal-clarity, and a readiness to uphold the program's principles. In light of the aforementioned, the purpose of this study was to determine whether postgraduate students are aware of electronic resources for their academic pursuits.

2 STATEMENT OF THE PROBLEM

Academic libraries, especially those at universities, have planned and committed significant sums of money throughout the years to purchase electronic resources and other online databases that would support and provide access to those e-resources. Academic libraries purchase and subscribe to a variety of online resources that are accessible from anywhere at any time. Given that a few university libraries in Nigeria spend a significant portion of their budgets on acquiring appropriate and pertinent electronic resources for their students, it is crucial to look into how these resources are currently being used. It's critical to ascertain whether or not e-resources are utilised in order to gauge how widely they are available and used. It will be important to know so that suggestions can be made to improve the use of the electronic resources or to terminate the subscription to those that are not being used.

To ensure that users use the resources, university libraries invest significantly in subscription fees, storage, information management systems, and awareness and promotion programmes. In order for the library to reap the rewards of its investment in these resources, it is crucial that users make the most of the electronic library resources to satisfy their information demands. Although while many colleges in Africa have made significant investments in e-resources with the intention of reaping significant benefits from using e-resources, e-resource usage is typically low, especially in resource-constrained countries like Africa (Bentil, 2020). The university library under investigation has made a flimsy effort to establish post-student awareness of and utilisation of internet resources. Based on this, the researcher hopes to ascertain how much postgraduate students are aware of and use e-resources. Based on the aforementioned, this study looked into how postgraduate students in Nigerian universities use and are aware of technological resources.

3 RESEARCH QUESTIONS

1. To what extent are PG students aware of the different types of e-resources in the library?
2. Which e-resources do PG students use?

3. How frequently do the PG students use the library e-resources?
4. Why do PG students use e-resources?
5. What challenges are encountered by PGCE students when using e-resources?

4 LITERATURE REVIEW

Making postgraduate students aware of e-resources requires making them aware of their existence. Babbie (2016) claims that a range of sources, including friends, library orientation programmes, and academic staff, helped postgraduates learn about the availability of electronic resources. Also, it was discovered that nearly all of the students regarded search engines as very useful resources. Dolo-Ndlwana (2013) demonstrated that students' lack of time contributed to their lack of knowledge of e-resources. The majority of respondents, according to Somers (2015), were aware of e-resources; nonetheless, it was noted that postgraduates needed more training to advance their abilities when using e-resources. According to Akpojotor (2017), whether postgraduate students use e-resources depends on their awareness of how simple it is to obtain them. In other words, students who view e-resources as being simple to obtain will use them, but those who view them as being challenging would avoid them.

Sharma (2009) went on to say that the majority of postgraduate students opted to use electronic resources rather than printed materials because 39 (75%) of them believed that e-resources saved time and were easy to use, and 34 (65.38%) respondents added that e-resources were valuable and contained current information, which breaks down to 27 (51.92%) and 25 (48.08%), respectively. According to Akpojotor (2017), twelve (12) forty percent (40.00%) researchers and six (11.54%) postgraduate students use electronic resources since they are affordable and easy to obtain. According to Ankrah and Atuase (2018), the use of ICT in library and information services helps provide relevant information at universities to support and enhance research activity and output.

The utilisation of electronic resources in Nigerian institutions presents a number of difficulties for postgraduate students. Edem and Egbe (2016) also discovered that postgraduate students still experience difficulties using e-resources, including lack of computer skills (31.54%), bad network (29.05%), occasionally unstable internet (17.28%), electrical outages (11.20%), and irrelevant information (10.37%). Dolo-Ndlwana (2013) verified that students lacked the computer literacy necessary to use the online materials. The effective utilisation of e-resources is hampered by restricted access to ICT infrastructure. Hamutumwa (2014) lists a number of additional common issues with e-resources, including slow connectivity speed, "lack of awareness about statutory provision for accessing e-resources by the institutions," technological difficulties, insufficient e-resources, institutions' uncertainty about the

sustainability of access, expensive e-resources, and a lack of legal terms.

In order to determine the extent of awareness and use of electronic journals or e-journals among research academics at Banasthali Vidyapith (BV) in India, Mishra et al. (2014) performed a study. According to the results, 35.42 percent of academics were aware of the e-journals available at the library. Salihu et al. (2020) looked at how undergraduates at two Nigerian colleges of their choice used electronic resources in a different research. The study's goal is to determine how extensively undergraduate students at Nigerian universities use technological resources. The study found that undergraduate students use electronic resources such CD-ROMS, Agora, Ebscohost, the NUC virtual library, and Hinari e-journals. The majority of respondents, or 48.8%, agreed that electronic resources were just somewhat accessible. Moreover, Nyika (2018) conducted research on the obstacles undergraduate students at the University of Nigeria have when using the UNN digital library. The research revealed that there is a lack of understanding of what multimedia is, and that libraries are more often used as internet cafés than for their true purpose of providing access to other libraries and electronic books, among other essential services. Similar research was undertaken by Omeluzor et al. (2016) in South East Nigerian Federal Universities on postgraduate library users' motivation, obstacles, and tactics for using electronic information resources. The study uncovered issues that provide barriers to using EIRs as well as tactics that will promote their fullest potential. In their study on the effects of e-resources, Oyedapo and Ojo (2013) noted that Obafemi Awolowo University in Ile-Ife, Nigeria, used its e-resources relatively slowly.

5 METHODOLOGY

This study used a descriptive survey as its research strategy. The study's goal was to systematically gather and describe data about respondents' opinions and behaviours about postgraduate students' awareness of and use of internet resources at Nigerian universities, hence the study's design was appropriate. The population of this study included 1,767 postgraduate students enrolled in three universities in Nigeria's Kogi State for the academic year 2021–2022, including federal, state-owned, and private institutions. This was justified by the fact that the universities chosen for the study provide postgraduate programmes and have subscriptions to several electronic resource databases. Burns and Grove (2017) intended to sample 313 postgraduate students out of a population of 1,767 using Krejcie and Morgan's (1970) sample size table. 313 postgraduate students from the universities make up the study's sample size. 313 respondents from the universities were selected using a multi-stage sampling technique. Only two (2) departments from each university were chosen in the first step using a rigorous probabilistic approach. Only 52 postgraduate (PG) students from each of two departments from each of the

three (3) universities were deliberately chosen in Stage 2, bringing the total number of students that were randomly chosen to 308. Lastly, in Stage 3, before administering questionnaires to the appropriate students, 313 postgraduate students in each chosen department across the three (3) universities were identified by their department's student ID card. Descriptive statistics were used to analyse the data that had been gathered from the respondents. For the purpose of responding to the research questions, arithmetic mean based on a 4 point rating scale was used. The 2.50 was calculated using the maximum and minimum number (4, 3, 2, 1). Any item with a mean of 2.50 or higher was considered agreed, while anything with a mean of 2.50 or lower was considered disagreed.

6 ANALYSIS AND INTERPRETATION OF DATA

A total of 313 questionnaires were distributed to postgraduate students of Federal, State and Private universities in Kogi State, and 301 copies (96.2%) were successfully returned and completed.

Table 1: Extent post-graduate students are aware of different types of e-resources

S/N	Awareness of e-resources	N	X	SD	Decision
1.	EBSCohost	301	3.42	.528	Very High Extent
2.	SAepublications	301	2.10	.789	Low Extent
3.	Emerald insight	301	3.34	.696	Very High Extent
4.	OECD Library	301	2.12	.945	Low Extent
5.	ProQuest Central	301	3.52	.643	Very High Extent
6.	Taylor and Francis	301	2.79	.841	High Extent
7.	Jstor	301	2.29	.910	Low Extent
8.	Jgate	301	1.19	.510	Very Low Extent
9.	Cengage	301	3.29	.866	Very High Extent
10.	Ebook central	301	3.18	.907	Very High Extent

Key: N= Total; X=Mean, SD = Standard Deviation

Data in Table 1 indicates the extent postgraduate students are aware of the different types of electronic resources in the university library under study. Data in the table above shows that, respondents were aware of proquest central, Ebscohost, emerald insight, cengage and e-book central to a very high extent and Taylor and Francis to a high extent. On the other hand, data shows that,

some of the respondents were not aware of Saepublications, OECD library and jstor.

Table 2: Electronic resources that are used by PGCE students

S/N	e-resources used by students	SA	A	D	SD
1.	EBSCohost	301	3.32	.628	Accepted
2.	SAepublications	301	2.10	.789	Rejected
3.	Emerald insight	301	3.34	.696	Accepted
4.	OECD Library	301	2.12	.945	Rejected
5.	ProQuest Central	301	3.52	.643	Accepted
6.	Taylor and Francis	301	2.79	.841	Accepted
7.	Jstor	301	2.29	.910	Rejected
8.	Jgate	301	1.19	.510	Rejected
9.	Cengage	301	3.29	.866	Accepted
10.	Ebook central	301	3.18	.907	Accepted

Key: N= Total; X=Mean, SD = Standard Deviation

Data in Table 2 indicates the electronic resources that are used by postgraduate students in the university library under study. Data in the table above shows that, proquest central, Ebscohost, emerald insight, cengage and e-book central as well as Taylor and Francis were used by postgraduate students. While Saepublications, OECD library and jstor were under-used.

Table 3: Frequency of use of e-resources by post graduate students

S/ N	Frequency	N	X	SD	Decision
1.	EBSCohost	301	2.69	.794	At Least as Week
2.	SAepublications	301	2.10	.789	Never
3.	Emerald insight	301	2.78	.870	At Least as Week
4.	OECD Library	301	2.12	.945	Never
5.	ProQuest Central	301	2.76	.901	At Least as Week
6.	Taylor and Francis	301	2.79	.841	At Least as Week
7.	Jstor	301	2.29	.910	Never
8.	Jgate	301	1.19	.510	Never
9.	Cengage	301	2.67	.850	At Least as Week
10.	Ebook central	301	2.81	.843	At Least as Week

Key: N= Total; X=Mean, SD = Standard Deviation

Data in Table 3 indicates the frequency of use of electronic resources by postgraduate students in the university library under study. Data in the table above shows that, proquest central, Ebscohost, emerald insight, cengage and

e-book central as well as Taylor and Francis were used by postgraduate students at least as week. While Saepublications, OECD library and jstor were never used. This implied that, a number of electronic resources were frequently use by postgraduates.

Table 4: Purpose PGCE students use e-resources

S/N	Purpose	N	X	SD	Decision
1.	To undertake a research project or assignment	301	2.75	.935	Accepted
2.	To perform a new task	301	2.69	.794	Accepted
3.	To write a thesis or dissertation	301	2.76	.901	Accepted
4.	To publish in a scholarly journal	301	2.79	.841	Accepted
5.	Provide me access to current and useful information	301	2.67	.850	Accepted
6.	They give access to wider range of information	301	2.78	.870	Accepted
7.	Prepare for examination	301	2.81	.843	Accepted

Key: N= Total; X=Mean, SD = Standard Deviation

Table 4 shows the purpose for which postgraduate students use electronic resources in the university library under study. From the data in the table above, all the items were accepted as they were more than criterion mean (2.50). The purposes for which PG students use e-resources include: for examination, to publish in a scholarly journal, provide access to wider range of information, write a thesis or dissertation, undertake a research project or assignment, provide access to current and useful information and help to perform new task.

Table 5: Challenges of postgraduate students regarding the use of e-resources.

S/N	Items	N	X	SD	Decision
1.	Slow internet connection	301	3.10	.821	Accepted
2.	Limited off-campus connection	301	3.23	.713	Accepted
3.	Password requirements	301	3.23	.763	Accepted
4.	Not sure which database to choose from	301	3.29	.866	Accepted
5.	High cost of data subscription by users	301	3.18	.907	Accepted
6.	Irregular power supply	301	3.27	.665	Accepted

Key: N= Total; X=Mean, SD = Standard Deviation

Table 5 shows the challenges of postgraduate students regarding the use of e-resources. The data indicates that the challenges were all accepted by respondents and ranged from numerous databases, irregular power supply, limited off-campus connection, password requirements, high cost of data subscription by users and slow internet connection.

7 FINDINGS

Results for Research Question 1 revealed how much postgraduate students are aware of the various kinds of electronic resources available at the university library under investigation. The findings showed that respondents had a very high level of familiarity with Proquest Central, Ebscohost, Emerald Insight, Cengage, and E-Book Central, as well as a high level of familiarity with Taylor & Francis. Nonetheless, data reveals that some respondents were unaware of Saepublications, the OECD library, and JSTOR. This is consistent with a research by Oladokun et al. (2021) that found that the library is the source of 95% of users' awareness of e-resources. According to Mishra et al. (2014), departments should additionally create awareness about e-journals to meet students' information demands. This should go beyond the library's purview.

Additionally, the data in relation to Research Question 2 revealed the electronic resources that graduate students use at the university library under investigation. Results reveal that postgraduate students used Taylor and Francis as well as Proquest Central, Ebscohost, Emerald Insight, Cengage, and e-Book Central. OECD library, Saepublications, and JSTOR were not frequently used. These findings supported a study by Bwalya and Ssebbale (2018) that indicated that, despite the availability of resources in academic libraries, patron usage is quite low. When asked how often they use e-resources like SAePublications, Emerald, OECD iLibrary, ProQuest Central, ScienceDirect, and Taylor & Francis, the majority of postgraduate students in the current survey answered "never." The only database that saw more students utilise it (62 or 69%) than never use it (28 or 31%) was EBSCOhost (Bashorun et al., 2011). Similar findings in the study by Ankrah and Atuase (2018) indicated that students thought university-subscribed databases like ScienceDirect or Emerald were less accessible than online academic search engines like Google and CiteSeerx.

Results pertaining to Research Question 3 demonstrated how frequently postgraduate students used electronic resources in the university library under investigation. The study found that postgraduate students used Taylor & Francis, Proquest Central, Ebscohost, Emerald Insight, Cengage, and e-Book Central at least once every week. Whereas Jstor, the OECD Library, and Saepublications were never used. Findings suggested that postgraduate students commonly used a variety of electronic resources. These findings conflict with Sharma's (2009) study, which found that most postgraduate students preferred to use electronic resources over printed books.

In terms of the purposes for which postgraduate students use electronic resources in the university library, research has shown that these include exams, publishing in scholarly journals, providing access to a wider range of information, writing theses or dissertations, conducting research for projects or assignments, and assisting with new tasks. The results of this study concur with Maitato

(2020), who discovered that most students employed electronic resources for their research projects and assignments. Similarly, Barfi et al. (2018) discovered that both users and experts benefit from electronic resources. It offers current details about the library's holdings, online services, and links to the main e-journal databases.

Postgraduate students faced a variety of obstacles when using electronic resources, including a large number of databases, erratic power supplies, a limited number of off-campus connections, password requirements, a high cost for data subscriptions for users, and a poor internet connection. The majority of postgraduate students battled with poor internet connections, according to studies by Adeleke and Nwalo (2017), Yemi-Peters, et al. (2022), Bashorun et al. (2011), Edem and Egbe (2016), and Hamutumwa (2014). Also, this is consistent with a study by Somers (2015) that found that students experienced difficulties accessing online resources when they were off campus.

8 CONCLUSION AND RECOMMENDATIONS

It is possible to draw the conclusion that e-resources are crucial for information retrieval. This survey made it abundantly evident that postgraduate students seldom ever use online resources. It showed a detrimental effect on research, teaching, and learning. As the findings of this study and other studies examined in the literature review showed, knowledge of e-resources does not equate to usage of those resources. This study should help librarians recognise the value of resources in a university setting. Postgraduate students' attitudes and use of e-resources may change as a result of training and marketing efforts. It is significant to highlight that the university libraries, that is, the subject of the investigation have spent money on purchasing electronic resources and computer systems that support and give students access to electronic resources. Despite this, these digital resources are still not being fully utilised. The following suggestions were made based on the outcomes of the research:

1. The library needs to make an effort to educate users and teach students so that all students are aware of how to access e-resources off-campus. Also, folks without access to computers can be taught how to use their mobile devices to access online resources. These courses ought to be created to teach students how to locate information quickly.
2. To raise awareness of e-resources, faculty librarians must consider a variety of channels. The library ought to think about using several platforms to distribute this kind of information.
3. To inform postgraduates of new e-resources that are available in the library, the faculty librarians must establish an alerting service.
4. To determine whether library services are effective in achieving the university's objectives, the library ought to perform customer satisfaction and needs surveys.

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