

ATTITUDE AND GENDER DIFFERENCES IN STUDENT'S UTILIZATION OF ELECTRONIC INFORMATION RESOURCES IN LIBRARIES: A CASE STUDY OF TWO UNIVERSITIES IN ADAMAWA STATE, NIGERIA.

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Abstract

This study examined the attitudes and gender differences in student's utilization of electronic information resource in university libraries in Adamawa state, Nigeria, specifically Ibrahim Babangida Library Modibo Adama Federal University of Technology, Yola and Abdulrahman Gaji Library, Adamawa State University Mubi. Attitude of students towards the use of electronic information resources in university libraries in Adamawa State, difference in the use of electronic information resources on the basis of gender by students in University libraries in Adamawa State. Two hypotheses were formulated for the study. Survey design was employed and the population consisted of all registered library users of Ibrahim Babangida Library, and Abdulrahman Gaji Library, which was 6135 from both Universities, out of which seven hundred and one (701) students were sampled. Yamane method of sampling technique was used for the study. The instrument used for data collection was Questionnaire. Inferential statistics of Chi-Square was used to test the null hypotheses. There was significant difference between attitude of students and the extent of use of electronic information resources in University libraries in Adamawa State, there was also, significant difference in the use of electronic information resources on the basis of gender by students in University libraries in Adamawa State. Some of the strategies for providing the academic use of electronic information resources by students identified were user education on the use of electronic information resources, provision of more quality computers in the University Libraries, provision of free internet connectivity to students within the university and providing constant power supply among others. It was recommended that Libraries should intensify their awareness campaigns concerning the availability of electronic information resources in the libraries and motivate the students to greater or use of electronic information resources for their benefit.

Keywords: Attitudes, Utilization, Students, Gender, Electronic Information Resources, Libraries.

Introduction

These technological development in information and communication technology (ICT) has resulted in the proliferation of electronic information resources (EIRs) in academic libraries,

especially, university libraries. These new formats of information resources are costly and demand for information skills training for both the staff and students to enable them have effective access and use. According to Ojedokun (2007) “the rapid advances in information and communication technology are offering new potentials for producing and distributing knowledge. These technologies have fundamentally altered how we live, and work as well as how we learn, and have transformed the world into a global community” University libraries in their efforts to keep abreast with the new changes and meets the information needs of their users, no longer restrict themselves to the acquisition and provision of print materials only, but have been making deliberate attempts in acquiring electronic information resources to be integrated into their collection.

Aina (2005) states that:

The quality of library service provided by a university library is an important factor in ranking universities. It is therefore not surprising that university libraries aim to collect as many information materials as possible in all kinds of format of recent; many libraries have resorted to acquiring electronic materials since they provide a wider access to users. It is also not uncommon for many university libraries to acquire electronic books, full-text journals, CD-ROM databases.

Today, one of the most important functions of the academic library is to provide up-to-date, balanced, and comprehensive electronic resources for users from all disciplines. Using these resources provide a multitude of benefits in the academic environment. Mizrachi (2010) stated that global access for information is by far the greatest benefit for library users. However, with growth the of electronic resource use in the library, the need to investigate topics related to its use has increased. Therefore, studies such as measuring the usage, understanding the purposes for the use, and knowing the attitude and perception toward EIR have surfaced. The libraries’ goals from these studies are to evaluate their collections, add more services or education, and implement strategies to allow students to benefit from these services.

Single and Sharma (2002) observed that the electronic revolution affects the traditional role of academic libraries as institutions that collect and store information and make it available to its users. Many of the colleges and Universities are using new information technology to provide electronic information as an important part of their learning and teaching strategies. Some of them are seeking to become global virtual institutions, others using the internet as part of mixed economy, combining traditional modes of delivery with online teaching. Emphasizing the role of academic libraries Aguolu and Aguolu (2002) stated that the academic health, intellectual vitality and effectiveness of any university depend largely upon the state of health and excellence of its library, which is its lifeblood.

Electronic information resources (EIRs) was defined by Meitz (2004) as “library materials produced in electronic format including electronic journals, reference works published

online, CD-ROM, bibliographic database and other web-base resources”. In the same vein, Shim (2001) defined electronic information resources as those information resources and services that users access electronically via computing network from inside the library or remote to the library. Hawkins (2000) stated that an electronic book is the content of a book made available in an electronic form. Similarly, Morgan (1999) limited the definition of electronic book as opposed to electronic texts, to being a hardware/software combination used to read electronic data on a specially designed portable device.

Feather and Sturges (2003) traced the origin of electronic information resources back to 1960 with the development of major bibliographic databases such as Chemical Abstract and Index Medicus to present day World Wide Web (WWW) and the internet to make information more accessible easily. Simply, an electronic information resource refers to information that are accessed electronically using information technologies. The electronic resources included electronic journals, electronic books, CD-ROM databases, electronic newspaper, electronic theses and dissertations and internet which served as a vital medium through which electronic information resources can be accessed.

Information providers/librarians are very much concerned about the extent of use of resources they provide for users. This has become very vital to know the extent of use of e-resources by students to justify the huge amount that is spent on such resources. And the need to re-evaluate the services rendered by the libraries. Osagie (2008) surveyed users’ perception and use of ICT resources in Kenneth Dike Library, reported that the use of ICT resources to support learning and research by postgraduate students was low, irregular and ineffective. In their contributions Manda and Mukaagara (2007) on gender analysis of electronic information resources used in university of Dar Es Salaam, Tanzania revealed that the use of electronic databases and e-journals among postgraduate’s students was low although the use of internet resources was found to be high and frequent. In the same vein, Afebende and Denis (2008) surveyed the use of electronic information resources by students of two academic libraries in Cross Rivers, Nigeria and reported that the extent of use of e-resources is significantly below expectations.

The relevance of any information resource acquired by any library depends largely on how much the resources are utilized by the users. This is facilitated by library instructions provided by libraries to their users. However, this goal can be hampered by a number of factors. Tompsett and Alsop (1997) reported barriers to library users use of electronic information resources to include lack of skills on how to use information sources, lack of consistent technical support and provision. Similarly, Ibrahim (2004) identified lack of awareness of electronic resources provided by the library, ineffective communication channels and language barrier as reasons for negative attitudes towards use of electronic information resources.

The use of electronic information resources is influenced by number of factors such as gender. In a study by Amkpa (2007) on gender and age difference in computer use and attitudes among students of University of Maiduguri, it was reported that male and female students differ

significantly in their attitude towards computer applications, which has implications in their job acquisition and educational pursuit. Similarly, Manda and Mukangara (2007) observed that gender is associated with the use of electronic information resources and male postgraduates' students were more likely to use electronic information resources than female students. Previous studies (Huang and Rusell, 2005; Cullen, 2003; Huyer & Sikoska, 2003) have suggested that female students lag behind in the extent to which they are motivated to influenced use of electronic information resources. This is of critical importance to the University of Salaam which has made both the provision of information communication technology facilities and gender equality priority strategic areas.

The concept attitude was defined by different scholars in various ways. According to Keil (1985), attitude is "positive or negative feelings that an individual holds about objects, persons, or ideas. They are generally regarded as enduring through modification by experience and/or persuasions and as learned rather than innate". Delamater (2000) states that attitude as "learned predisposition to respond to a particular object in a generally favorable or unfavorable way". Similarly, John (2002) defined attitude as "an accumulation of information about an object, person, situation or experience, a predisposition to act in a positive or negative way toward some objects".

Several studies have been conducted on students and faculty members' attitude towards electronic information resources. In a study by Isman (2004) on attitude of students towards internet, it was reported that students have positive tendency to apply the consciousness or willingness of the new technology in their education to be relevant in the competitive environment. Similarly, Asan and Koca (2006) reported that majority of students have positive attitude and have concentrated on positive and consciousness about internet. In a survey on assessing student's attitude towards web-based learning resources by Njagi and Isbell (2003), it was reported that there was no significant difference in attitude change among the groups surveyed. However, there is a positive significant relationship between computer literacy and attitude towards computer technology. They also reported that the demographic variable gender and time students spent on the internet for class project were found to predict positive attitude. In his contribution on students' attitude towards interaction in online learning (electronic resources) Hao (2004) reported a significant difference in their attitude towards the four types of interactions: instructional, affective, collaborative and vicarious. However, a study by Ray and Day (1998) on students' attitude towards electronic information resources reported that little is known about students' attitude towards electronic information resources.

Statement of the Problem

The current trends by university libraries are to satisfy one with information information need of students by electronic information resources. A preliminary investigation by the researcher through some library staff and personal observation in the university libraries in Adamawa state revealed the availability of some electronic information resources such as CD-ROM, electronic journals, databases, internet services and online public access catalogue

(OPAC). Ideally, it is expected that the students and staff will make effective use of these electronic resources to enhance their learning, teaching and research. However, the attitude of students towards the use of these resources are not ascertained which is very vital for the library management in rendering effective services to the students.

Preliminary investigation shows the availability of some electronic information resources in university libraries in Adamawa state are not frequently used by the users; can this be attributed to lack of power supply, Internet connectivity and subscribed library databases. The researcher also observed the attitude of library users in patronizing electronic information resources is low. Could this be attributed to lack of skills in accessing electronic information resources, technophobia (fear) and awareness? The researcher also observed that, the rate of female users of electronic resources is lower than that of the male users. Does it mean that the males are greater in number than females or males are registered library users than females? Regardless of the effort made by the librarians and library staff, the huge subscription cost on the University and the adoption of some of the recommendations made by Omoisekejimi, Eghworo and Ogo (2015) in their study on the usage of electronic information resources (EIRs) by undergraduate students of Federal University of Petroleum Resources Effurun, observation and available records of utilization shows that some of the e-resources are grossly underutilized. The disparity in usage of the e-resources shows that there is a problem. In the same vein Ray and Day (1998) reported that little is known about students' attitudes towards the use of electronic information resources and that without a better understanding of how the students feel it is difficult for service providers to know whether they are meeting the needs of students effectively. This study therefore investigated the attitude, gender and use of electronic information resources by students in university libraries in Adamawa state, Nigeria.

Literature Review

The use of e-resources is influenced by gender, in a study on gender analysis of electronic information resources use. Manda and Mukangara (2007) reported that sample of 100 postgraduate students using stratified proportionate random sampling to select the sample. Data were analyzed using cross-tabulation and qualitative descriptions they reported that gender is associated with the use of electronic information resources and male postgraduates' students were more likely to use electronic information resources than female students. The findings further showed that even when there was control of attitude towards the use of electronic information resources or training in the use of e-resources the relationship between gender and electronic information resources use was maintained. Obaje, Sani and Lawal (2008) reported on internet access and usage by staff and students university of Jos revealed that there exists difference in the usage of internet by gender between January- December, 2006, 6520 (88%) were male and only 925(12%) were females.

In the same vein Ahmed (2015) reported on a research on Gender Differences in Students' Utilization of Electronic Information Resources in Ramat Library, University of Maiduguri, Nigeria with a target population of 13,99 and a sample of 170 registered respondents

that was selected using stratified sampling technique. Data were analyzed using descriptive statistics of percentage and frequency counts as well as inferential statistics of chi-square. Chi-square analysis on challenges of utilization of electronic information resources by students in Ramat Library, the result of this analysis shows the gender distribution of the respondents on postgraduate, undergraduate and non-degree students. The Chi-square calculated value for postgraduate, undergraduate and non-degree were 4.693, 5.340 and 4.257 at degree of freedom 4 on the table value 9.46, $P > 0.05$ respectively. This showed that there was no significant difference in challenges facing male and female students of different programs utilizing electronic information resources in Ramat Library University of Maiduguri. Therefore, the null hypothesis regarding gender difference in challenges of the utilization of electronic information resources is upheld. This implies that there is no gender difference in challenges of utilization of electronic information resources on students in Ramat Library University of Maiduguri.

Amkpa (2007) studied gender and age difference in computer use and attitudes among students of university of Maiduguri using 350 part IV students from five faculties. Data generated were analyzed using chi-square and t-test, he reported that male and female students differ significantly in their attitude towards computer applications, which has implications in their job acquisition and educational pursue, this agrees with the studies of Koochang (1989) reported on attitudes towards computer, anxiety, confidence, liking and perceptions in usefulness and Colley. Gale and Harris (1994) reported on effects of gender role identity and experience on computer attitude components, while, in the study by Ozoemelem (2009) revealed the use of electronic information resources by postgraduate students of the Department of Library and Information Science University of Abeokuta reported that there is high frequency of usage of e-resources by both male and female postgraduate students therefore gender gap in e-resources usage is quite negligible.

Every library user has a purpose for using different information resources available in the library. In the same vein electronic information resources are used by students for different purpose. According to Oduwole (2003), students constitute the major category of users of electronic resources in Nigerian University libraries and that the e-resources are mainly used for theses and dissertation writing by postgraduates and final-year students. While Obaje, Sani and Lawal (2008) reported that majority, 6343(85%) used Internet for research while few 1102(15%) used the internet for e-mail.

Methodology

Survey research design was used for this study. The target population of this study comprised of 6,135 registered library users in Ibrahim Babangida library, Modibbo Adama University of Technology Yola and Abdulrahman Ghaji library, Adamawa State University Mubi. Simple random sampling technique was employed with the sample size of 701. A self-designed questionnaire was used as the instrument for the study. Data collected were analyzed using descriptive statistic of frequency counts and percentages.

Results And Discussions

Demographic information of the respondents

N=625

S/N	STATEMENTS	FREQUENCY	PERCENTAGE
1	Indicate your programme of study		
	A. Postgraduate programme	284	45.4%
	B. Undergraduate programme	341	54.6%
2	Please indicate your level of the programme		
	a. 100 Level	34	5.4%
	b. 200 Level	56	9%
	c. 300 Level	94	15%
	d. 400 Level	58	9.3%
	e. 500 Level	99	15.8%
	f. Postgraduate Diploma	84	13.4%
	g. Masters	152	24.3%
	h. Ph.D.	48	7.7%
3	Indicate your gender		
	a. Male	391	62.6%
	b. Female	234	37.4%
4	Indicate your age range		
	(a) Less than 20 years	247	39.5%
	(b) Between 20-30 years	134	21.4%
	(c) Between 30-40 years	164	26.2%
	(d) (d) 40 years and up	80	12.8%
5	Please indicate your faculty or school/departmental affiliation		
	Faculty of education	124	19.8%
	Faculty of science	50	8%

Faculty of art	48	7.7%
Faculty of social science	154	24.6%
Faculty of engineering	98	15.7%
Faculty of agricultures	151	24.2%

Hypotheses Tested:

H₀₁: There is no significant difference between gender uses of electronic information resources by students in university libraries in Adamawa State.

Table: Contingency Table for the Test of Gender Use of Electronic Information Resources in University Libraries in Adamawa State, Nigeria

Table 4.4b: Testing of Gender Use of Electronic Information Resources

Option	Male	Female	Total	Df	X ²	P-value	Decision
Observed	391	234	625	2	4	3.882	P<0.5
Expected	195.5	177	372.5				

Table 4.4b Shows that the calculated χ^2 is =4, while the p-value =3.882 at 0.5 level of significant with df of 2. Since the calculated χ^2 of 4 is greater than the p-value of 3.882, hence the hypothesis is rejected.

Therefore, this implies that there is significant difference in gender use of electronic information resources in university libraries in Adamawa state, Nigeria. That means males used EIR than females based on the finding for their academic purposes.

The null Hypothesis stated that:

H₀₂: There is no significant difference between attitude of students and the extent of use of electronic information resources in university libraries in Adamawa State

Table: Contingency Table for the Test of Attitude of Students and the Extent of Use of Electronic Information Resources in University Libraries in Adamawa State, Nigeria

Option	SA	A	D	SD	Total	Df	X ²	p-value	Decision
Observed	210	214	126	75	625	33	88.2	5.632	P<0.5
Expected	156.3	156.3	156.3	156.3	625				

Table 4.5a shows that, the calculated χ^2 is =88.2, while the p-value =5.632 at 0.5 level of significance with df of 33. Since the calculated χ^2 of 88.2 is greater than the p-value of 5.632, hence the hypothesis is rejected.

Therefore, this implies that there is a significant difference between attitude of students and the extent of use of electronic information resources in university libraries in Adamawa State.

CONCLUSIONS

The determined Attitudes and Gender difference in student's utilization of Electronic Information Resources by Students in University libraries in Adamawa State, Nigeria. There is significance difference between attitudes and extent of use of electronic information resources and there is a significance difference in the use of electronic information resources on the basis of gender in university libraries in Adamawa state, Nigeria. Some of the strategies for providing the academic use of electronic information resources by students include giving them more education on the use of electronic information resources, provision of more quality computers in the University Libraries, provision of free internet connectivity to students within the university and providing constant power supply among other suggestions.

RECOMMENDATIONS

Based on the findings of this study, the researcher recommended the following:

1. Conscious effort by means of routine training should be carried out by the librarians to encourage and assist the students in developing positive attitudes towards the use of these resources in universities libraries under study.
2. The university libraries management under study should encourage and motivate female students for greater use of electronic information resources.

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