

Awareness and Use of Electronic Information Resources in University Libraries and Academic Performance of Postgraduate Students in North Central States of Nigeria.

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Abstract

This research work examined the level of awareness and the extent of utilization of electronic information resources (EIRs) in university libraries on academic performance of postgraduate students in North central states of Nigeria. Two research questions were raised and answered: What is the level of awareness of the available electronic information resources (EIRs) by postgraduate students in the university libraries in the North Central States of Nigeria? How often do postgraduate students utilize EIRs in University libraries in North central states of Nigeria? Survey research design was used with a target population of 15, 338 postgraduate students. A sample size of 556 postgraduate students was determined using a multi stage sampling technique. Four rating scale questionnaire was used as the instrument for data collection, frequency and simple percentage were used to analyse the data. It was discovered that the postgraduate students' level of awareness of EIRs was low and that the utilisation of CD-ROMs was discovered to be "very often". It was recommended among others that the management of university libraries should from time to time organise user awareness programmes that will enlighten the postgraduate students on the types of available electronic information resources as well as educating them on how to use them.

Keywords: Awareness, e-information resources, Utilisation, Postgraduate Students

Introduction

University libraries are primarily established to support the university learning process, serve as the storehouse of knowledge, help in research development and satisfying the information needs of the staff and students of the institution. This is in line with the submission of Okiy (2012) that the university libraries share similar roles with other academic libraries like Polytechnic libraries and College of Education libraries, which are to effectively support their institutions to meet the key functions of teaching, research and community service. These institutions are responsible for the production of middle and higher level manpower for national development. The extent to which they are able to effectively accomplish that task depends largely on how well their libraries are

equipped with the relevant and needed information resources. Therefore, the availability of resources in university libraries is of paramount importance as parts of the accreditation requirement in any institution of higher learning is the institution's library collection in terms of quality and quantity in different formats more especially in this era of information technology. Quadri et al (2014) was of the view that university libraries are established to provide adequate collection in different formats.

The standard of a university library is usually measured by the quality of the collection, staffing, services, equipment and space at its disposal; hence the quality of information resources available is a function of the services offered by any library. Information resources which are both in print and non-print formats can be made available in the library via a number of methods which are not limited to purchase, subscription, gift and exchange, inter library loan and bequeath.

Awareness is usually a function of the utilisation and collection may be available and not being consulted due to non- awareness. Once collections are made available in university libraries, users can be made aware of the existence of these collections through display of new arrivals in the notice boards; through bulletins as well as compilation of table of contents. However, lack of awareness according to Abedoh et al. (2017) and Salman et al (2018) led to non – utilisation of resources and absent of the benefit of library services in university libraries.

Electronic information resources have tremendously helped in improving the academic performance of postgraduate students by providing them with current and relevant literature to carry out their researches. Undergraduate students, Postgraduate students and other researchers have benefited from e- resources in so many ways which include; provision of current literature, carrying out their assignments and most importantly, acting as a guide to write their projects/theses. Electronic information resources are categorised as information resources in various formats such as e-books, e-journals, films, CD-ROM and other fixed media. Many electronic information resources are brand new creations that represent traditional media; they include the millions of web pages and databases produced all over the world by individuals, corporate organizations, institutions and government agencies. These creations represent a variety of different types of information including descriptive materials, corporate reports, datasets, educational offerings, theses and dissertations, and many more. Many universities now require that their students submit their theses and dissertations in electronic format for easy access and utilisation (Tiwari, 2008).

Postgraduate students utilize electronic resources for various purposes ranging from study, research, seeking for current information, to have easy access to relevant and current information, to download articles, to carryout assignments to update knowledge and even for pleasure. More importantly is that postgraduate students utilise EIR to conduct researches, do assignments, prepare for test and examination and for the oral examination of the completed research works. The efforts made in this direction can lead to high academic performance in test and examination leading to score grades of A,B,C,D or E. these are made possible through adequate university library services.

Problem Statement

University libraries are store houses of knowledge that provide different types of resources for students and staff to improve on their research output and academic performance. Recently, electronic information resources have been added to these lists of resources. Electronic information resources also provide students with opportunities to access relevant and current literature while complimenting the printed materials. Physical observation and verbal interactions have shown that there are available electronic information resources for postgraduate students to utilise, but their level of awareness and of usage remains unclear. These two factors or variables can lead to poor academic performance in terms of course work, poor presentation of seminars, poor research output and inability to defend their write-ups. The study therefore seeks to examine the level of awareness and how often EIRs are being utilized by postgraduate students for high academic performance in university libraries in North central states of Nigeria.

Research Questions

The study was guided by the following research questions:

1. What is the level of awareness of the available EIR by postgraduate students in the university libraries in the North central States of Nigeria?
2. How often do postgraduate students utilize EIRs in University libraries in North central states of Nigeria?

Literature Review

Gilbert (2015) conducted a research on the Utilisation of electronic information resources by postgraduate students in Modibo Adamawa University of Technology, Yola. The study was carried out using survey design. Random sampling technique was used to select 190 respondents from the three levels of their Postgraduate (PhD. Masters and Postgraduate Diploma) students. Questionnaire was used as the instrument for data collection and data was analysed using frequency, histogram, pie chart and percentages. The study revealed that there was low level of skillfulness in the use of ICT in MAUTECH. This research shares some similarities with the present study in the areas of utilization of electronic information resources and postgraduate students. The study covered only the Postgraduate students of a particular university while the current study will cover more than one. The current study will also adopt the survey design and as well use the questionnaire as the instrument for data collection. In data analysis, the current study will adopt only the frequency tables and percentages. Veena (2016) conducted a study to determine the awareness and use of open Access electronic information resources by postgraduate students in Mangalore University. The researcher adopted the survey research design and used questionnaire as the instrument for data collection, a sample size of 152 was used. Data was analysed using, frequency counts and simple percentages. The study revealed that majority of the students were aware of open access e- resources. The study concluded that as at now, e- resources were considered as essential source of information for all current and emerging and thoughts imminent in the areas of teaching, learning and research. The study therefore recommended that university libraries should

arrange various user awareness programmes so as to educate the learners on how to make use of the open access e-resources. This research is related to the current study in the areas of title, methodology and audience, but differs in location, as the former studied postgraduate students in Mangalore while the current studied the postgraduate students in Nigeria.

In a related study, Akporjotor (2016) conducted a research on the awareness and usage of electronic information resources (EIR) among postgraduate students of LIS in Southern Nigeria. The study adopted the descriptive survey design. A total of 375 master students were sampled and questionnaire was used to elicit information from the respondents. Data were analysed using frequency counts and simple percentages, mean and standard deviation. The findings showed that the postgraduate students of LIS in southern Nigeria are highly skilled in the use of EIR, but encountered numerous challenges in accessing them. The study concluded that EIR were essential tools for empowering postgraduate students of LIS in southern Nigeria. The study is also similar to the current study in addressing EIR usage among postgraduate students in Nigeria though in different zones. They both adopted the use of questionnaire and analysed with frequency and simple percentage but the current study did not use mean and standard deviation as part of the analytical methods.

In a study on awareness, use and satisfaction of collections and services in Federal University of Petroleum Resources Efurum, Salma, Sambo, Shehu and Saka (2018) reported that majority of the respondents were aware of the availability of college libraries, less than half of the respondents use library occasionally which according to report, may be due to the size of the library and lack of orientation. While this study centred on registered users of branch libraries with FUPR, the present study centred on postgraduate students. Anhwere, Afful-Arthur and Manu (2018) examined the utilisation of library resources by lecturers in University of Cape Coast. The study revealed that quite a number of lecturers patronised library to prepare lecture notes and that majority of library resources, books, journals, research monographs, indexes, e – resources, research reports, abstracts, were utilised to a large extent. The study centred on lecturers on lecturers in Cape Coast while the present study is centred on postgraduate students in the North central states of Nigeria.

Methodology

Survey research design was adopted for the study and the area of the study covers the six states in the North central zone of Nigeria including FCT Abuja. The population of the study is 15,338 postgraduate students in five state and five federal universities running postgraduate programmes in the North central states of Nigeria as at 2015/2016 academic session. A sample size of 566 postgraduate students was determined using a multi stage sampling technique by first selecting seven universities, there and then, selected 556 postgraduate students by programs (PGD Masters and PhD). According to Otaha (2015), multi stage sampling technique involves quite a number of processes/ stages and sampling techniques in order to arrive at an acceptable sample size. Questionnaire was used as the

instrument for data collection. Data was analysed using frequency and simple percentage, Mean and Standard deviation.

Findings and Discussions

Level of awareness on the available of electronic information resources by Postgraduate Studies in North Central Nigeria

Table 1: Level of Awareness of Available EIRs by Postgraduate students

EIRs	Level of Awareness					
	PhD		Masters		PGD	
	F	%	F	%	F	%
E-books	25	20.7	89	15.5	35	20.8
E-Journals	20	16.5	100	17.5	29	17.3
E-Databases	18	14.9	97	16.9	26	15.5
E-zines /News papers	19	15.7	98	17.1	27	16.1
E-Theses/ Dissertations	21	17.3	92	16.1	26	15.5
E-Reports	18	14.9	97	16.9	26	15.5

Key: 40-50 = Very High, 30-39 = High, 20-29 = Low, 0-19 = Very Low.

In Table 1, postgraduate students were requested to state their level of awareness of the available electronic information resources. Ranking was used to determine their level of awareness of the existing electronic information resources in the studied university libraries. Here, 40-50 is scored very high, 30-39 scored high, 20-29 low and below 20% is rated very low. The table showed that the level of awareness of E-books by PhD students is (20.7%), Masters students (15.5%), PGD students (20.8%). E-journals awareness by PhD students (16.5%), Masters students (17.5%), PGD students (17.3%). E-Databases awareness by PhD students (14.9%), Masters students (16.9%), PGD students (15.5%). E-zines/Newspapers awareness by PhD students (15.7%), Masters students (17.1%), PGD students (16.1%). E-theses/Dissertations awareness by PhD students (17.3%), Master Degree students (16.1%), PGD students (15.5%) and E-reports awareness by PhD students is (14.9%), Masters students (16.9%) and PGD students (15.5%). The table therefore indicated that the level of postgraduate students' awareness about electronic information resources was low.

Research question one investigated the level of awareness of the available electronic information resources in university libraries in North central Nigeria. The findings showed that the level of postgraduate students' awareness about electronic

information resources was low because all the frequencies were rated between 20 and 29. This result was therefore very low. This finding is not in conformity with the findings by Akporjotor (2016) and Veena (2016) respectively. Akporjotor (2016) revealed that the postgraduate students of Library and Information Science in southern Nigeria were highly skilled in the use of electronic information resources. (EIR). On the other hand, Veena (2016) discovered that majority of students were aware of open access e- resources. Often postgraduate students use electronic information resources in the University libraries in North Central Nigeria

Table 2: Use of Electronic Information Resources by Postgraduate Students

Items	Response (Frequency and Percentages)				Mean	SD
	Very Often	Often	Rarely	Never		
I consult e-books for my information needs	150 (30%)	256 (51%)	49 (10%)	50 (10%)	3.00	.890
I Utilise e-journals for research purposes	213 (42%)	165 (33%)	43 (9%)	84(17%)	3.00	1.084
Films are used for recreational purposes	218 (43%)	181(36%)	8 (2%)	98 (19%)	3.03	1.107
CD-ROMS mainly for research	340 (67%)	55 (11%)	20 (4%)	90 (18%)	3.28	1.163
e-zines are consulted for current information	82 (16%)	234 (46%)	100 (%)	89 (18%)	2.61	.957
e- newspapers are consulted for current and up to date	217 (43%)	156 (31%)	50 (10%)	82 (16%)	3.01	1.087
e-reports for campus news update	220 (44%)	175 (35%)	62 (12%)	48 (10%)	3.12	.962
To get information on bibliographic databases	203 (40%)	192 (38%)	66 (13%)	44 (9%)	3.10	.935

N= 505

From table 2, it was discovered that 340 (67%) of the respondents use CD-ROMs very often mainly for research hence postgraduate students in universities are expected to embark on quality research that will yield innovations in their field of specialization. Lowest responses were discovered from 8 (2%), the respondents indicated that films are rarely used for recreational purposes.

Research question two investigated how often postgraduate students utilized EIR in the university libraries in North Central states of Nigeria. Majority of the respondents indicated to have used CD-ROMs very often. This finding is contrary to the findings by Gilbert (2015) and Anhwere, Afful-Arthur, and Manu (2018) respectively. Gilbert (2015) revealed that there was low level of skillfulness in the use of ICT in MAUTECH, Yola. On the other hand, Anhwere, Afful-arthur and Manu (2018) revealed that majority of library collections including e- resources, research reports, abstracts, books and journals were utilized to a large extent.

Summary of Findings

1. The level of awareness of postgraduate students as regard to electronic information resources was low.
2. Post graduate students in university libraries in North Central States of Nigeria, utilize CD-ROMs very often.

Conclusion

There was absence or low level of Current Awareness Services (CAS) in university libraries in North Central States of Nigeria; Postgraduate students in university libraries utilized CD-ROMs more often and the implication is that respondents might lack skills in the use of other EIRs.

Recommendations

Based on the findings of the study, the following recommendations were made:

1. Management of university libraries should from time to time come up with user awareness programme that will enlighten the postgraduate students on the types of electronic information resources available in the university libraries and also educate them on how to search and use these resources
2. Management of university libraries should work together with the university management, to ensure that reports of meetings and other publications in the universities should be uploaded and encourage the postgraduate students to use other electronic information resources like e-journals, e-books, e-theses/dissertation etc. as this would give the postgraduate students chances of getting reliable information for good academic performance and quality research works

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