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Awareness and Utilization of Electronic Databases Collections by Post-graduate Students at Kenneth Dike Library, University of Ibadan: A Case Study

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ABSTRACT

This study utilizes user's study as a method for evaluating electronics databases collections at an institution with growing graduate research demands. The study focus group is the graduate students of the University of Ibadan with regards to their awareness, usability, and their feels about various issues surrounding the university electronic databases collections. The study employed descriptive survey research design using questionnaire to gather information from postgraduate students. Data was randomly collected from selected 200 post graduate students who visited the reference units of the main library and faculty libraries. Out of the 200 copies of questionnaire administered, 164 copies were returned representing 82% return rate. Findings indicate that the study group is aware of electronics databases in the library. It confirmed that 55.5 percent of PG students make use of the electronic databases daily for their research. AGORA and HINARI were the two mostly consulted by the respondents and lack of information literacy skills is an obstacle to the effective use of electronic database among post graduate students. Based on the findings of the study, it is recommended that creation of awareness among users about different electronics resources should be a priority for the university library management. Information retrieval skills training should be organized, at intervals, for users.

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INTRODUCTION

World-wide, University libraries have utilized a number of approaches during the past decade to assess the effectiveness of service programs and library support of faculty, student research, teaching, and learning. Among the most valuable methods employed have been large-scale surveys of faculty and students opinion on services rendered. Academic library resources were considered a good measure of an institution's excellence and quality (Lindauer, 1998, Pritchard, 1996; Wolff, 1994, 1995).

The role of the academic library has changed with the emergence of ICT such as the availability of new technologies like online catalogue, online databases, other electronic resources, numerous indexes and abstracts which has lead to dramatic increase in range of services that academic libraries can provide. Research studies like how people use electronic resources or and how students feel about various issues surrounding electronic resources in the library is now being focused upon. Users can access the libraries' resources without stepping into the library building. Students are increasingly expected to use electronic resources especially graduate students for their research purposes. They are fortunate to have access, at very little cost to themselves, to varieties of electronic information resources. Universities use considerable proportions of their budgets to provide this technology for their students to assist the learning process. But how do students themselves feel about the availability of these electronic resources, which may require the acquisition of new skills to utilise effectively? Without a better understanding, it is difficult for service providers to know if they are meeting the needs of students effectively (Ray & Day, 1998).

Electronic resources are seen as the sources that provide information in an electronic and /or digital format (Andreou, 2001). They are provided either on CD-ROM or Online. Academic Libraries in Nigeria are adopting technological changes in order to transform the libraries despite challenges of poor infrastructures that have been undermining the full potential of ICT development. (i.e. poor broadband-with, password restriction, poor funding and functional literacy amongst others). For academic libraries to adequately address the changing information needs of its students there is a great deal of interest in measuring the extent to which students are utilizing such resources and services.

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The mission of academic libraries is to create a learning environment in which faculty and students are provided with a variety of library resources and ultimately, become competent users. One of the ways to achieve this mission is by giving library instruction, which tends to target undergraduates, generally perceived to be the group most in need of assistance in navigating the complexities of the academic library. One of the services offered by KDL to its users at the beginning of each academic year is the orientation program. While the turnout for undergraduates is commendable, PG students' attendance at the orientation programme has not been encouraging. It is therefore pertinent from the managerial viewpoint to know whether Post graduate students are aware and do make use of the resources of the library and whether the use of these resources genuinely help students with their assignments and research. Usefulness is one of the crucial measures of how appropriate the information resources or services are for a defined user group. NULIB (Nigerian University Libraries Consortium) in partnership with EIFL.NET (Electronic Information for Libraries Network) provide electronic resources (electronic portals and databases) towards qualitative teaching and research in Nigerian Universities, such as EBSCOhost, Access to Global Online Research in Agriculture (AGORA), Health Internetwork Access to Research Initiatives (HINARI), Online Access to Research in the Environment (OARE) and many other databases.

This research information could be used by Library Administrators to take the optimum measures that could enhance a broader and more effective use of library resources, especially Electronics Databases and thereby justify their acquisitions. Below are some of the types of electronic resources/services which are available in Kenneth Dike Library. The databases can be accessed on computer systems in the library, on the library website and CD-ROM Databases like (ERIC, CAB Abstract, Humanities Abstract, Social Sciences and E-Databases (Full text). E-resources available in KDL include: HINARI, AGORA, JSTOR, EBSCOHOST, and E-GRANARY Digital Library.

This paper aims to contribute to the information on post graduate students' views of electronic information resources as they pursue their scholarly activities by assessing the ways at which post graduate students of University of Ibadan utilize the Electronic Databases Collection of Kenneth Dike Library. What impact of having these resources and providing this amount of services does have on postgraduates' use of the library and educational outcomes? Libraries need to be able to demonstrate that their resources and services are making a significant contribution

to the education and research needs of their clientele. This study aims to provide data from PG students' perspective in identifying the most frequently used electronic databases in the 2012 academic year at KDL and the level of awareness of the existence electronic collections.

Objectives of the study are to:

1. determine the level of awareness of electronic databases among postgraduate students
2. determine the frequency of usage of electronic databases by the postgraduate students of university of Ibadan.
3. determine students' satisfaction with the electronic databases service delivery
4. identify the different electronic databases that are being utilised by postgraduate students in the library
5. identify the problems that affect the use of electronic resources in the library.

Literature Survey

Electronic Resources (ER) are products of information and communication technologies and they have been found relevant to the learning and research process in Universities because they offer today's students different opportunities. That is why it is necessary to study the effective usage and awareness of e-resources by researchers.

Numerous studies are devoted to patrons' use of academic libraries, but only a small body of research examines the specific needs and characteristics of graduate students as a niche user group. Barry (1997) pointed out that faculty take for granted that librarians are helping graduate students learn to use the library, whereas librarians often assume faculty are addressing this issue. To presuppose that graduate students are proficient library users, conscious of the full spectrum of library services, can be a mistake. Fidzani's (1998) study explored graduate students' information- seeking behaviour and their awareness of library resources at the University of Botswana. Based on survey results, he reported that many graduate students lack basic skills in effectively using the library and its resources. Delgadillo & Lynch (1999) questioned whether newer technological applications were being used by graduate students more frequently than has been reported in studies of established scholars. Foster (2004); Kerins, et al (2004); Forzani (1998); and Steinerova & Susol (2005) examined the information behaviour of students and professionals focusing on how students, primarily undergraduate and/or professionals in specific fields or disciplines seek information and the related issues. Studies

such as Asokiki & Asiru (2011); Komolafe-Opadeji (2010) and Ozoemelem (2009) reported the attitudes of graduate's students in respect of E- resources in Nigeria.

Many studies have elucidated advantages of E-resources on both students and faculty research works. E-resources have been contributing greatly to research activities and many researchers have commended the advantages of e-resources over other formats of information. Sharma (2009) submitted that the importance of e-resources have convinced many libraries to move towards digital e-resources, which are found to be less expensive and more useful for easy access. Friedlander (2002) reported two recent National Studies which corroborate that the Internet and libraries' online resources play a heavy role in participants' information seeking. Oduwole et al., (2003) and Adomi et al., (2003) studies confirms the usefulness of ER among Nigerian Students. Still emphasizing the importance of electronic resources to researchers and students, Bancroft et al. (1998) reported examining the library services, including electronics journals at the Washington State University, where Faculty members and graduate students were requested to rank electronics resources which are essential to their work. OPAC was ranked over full text journals. The results of a user survey at the University of Hong Kong Libraries (Woo, 2005) showed that 68.8 per cent of the respondents prefer to use journals online compared to 31.2 per cent who prefer to use printed journal, confirming other studies opinion.

Frequency of use of electronic sources is a commonly used measure and perhaps, it is a way to distinguish active users of resources from those that are potential users or non-users according to Abels et al., (1996) and Applebee et al., (1997). Demographic profile of users has shown that age and sex are not barrier to use of electronic resources. Demographic profile of library patrons was used in the University of Patras in Greece to determine the frequency of use of E-journal where all ages make use of E-journal service (Monopoli et al., 2002). Age is one variable that correlates with comfort with computers and use of electronic resources. A study of faculty's use of electronic resources found that it was "influenced by such factors as computing skills of academics, their age and gender," (Majid, 1999). A survey undertaken by Utah State University which queries respondents awareness of the library's electronics databases shows that more than two-thirds of the respondents were aware of some of the E-resources (Weingart 2000). Atilgan & Bayram (2006) reported on the frequency use and awareness of e resources by faculty members. Academic status is considered as a major factor in the use of ER especially by faculty members as reported by (Kidd, 2002; Hiller, 2002; and Rowley, 2001). The acceptance of e- resources

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amongst users has been shown by Bar-Llan et al (2003) that e journal and databases were widely accepted across the academy; where three-quarters of faculty used these resources regularly with high level of satisfaction. Tenopir, (2003) reported that faculty members benefit maximally from e-resources available to them. Many of them were of the opinion that e-resources have made it considerably easier to locate the material they need for their work, serve as an essential research tool, time saver conveniences, increase work quality and many more are the benefits enjoyed by using e-resources. Doctoral students are heavy users of electronic journals; assistant professors are the most frequent users, followed by full and associate professors, who use them equally frequently (Tenopir, 2003). This view is different at the United Arab Emirates University, where faculty members' recorded low frequency of use of e resources and lack of awareness to e resources provided by the Library (Ibrahim, 2004). Studies have also reported user-centred barriers to e-resources use. Ray & Day (1998) found that limited time and lack of effective information retrieval skills are the main barriers to using e-sources. Likewise Bar-Ilan et al. (2003) found that lack of access, lack of coverage and low readability limit the effective use of e-resources.

Both Borgman (1996) and Komolafe-Opadeji (2010) concludes that basic knowledge of computing and searching skills are required to use online e- resources. In spite of these limitations, e-resources are favoured by users around the globe. Sukula (2008) asserts that the amount and variety of information content in electronic form is growing and at the rate it is expanding. This is affirmed by Ajayi & Akinniyi (2009) who submit that the advantage posed by the internet service ensured that explosion of information is not a waste because the technology has created easy access to vast information all over the world.

Brennan et al., (2002) posited that access to electronic journals is changing research habits because of its convenience for researchers.

It can thus be concluded that e-resources are an inevitable tool for both libraries and potential library users and it is imperative for all stakeholders, libraries, information centres to provide relevant and accurate electronic resources for their patrons and potential library users. Electronic information resources are becoming indispensable by all and sundry. If the electronic information resources are available in the tertiary institutions it will tremendously improve work quality and facilitate research more than using print media.

It is in the light of this that this study is investigating the level of awareness and usage of electronic databases at Kenneth Dike Library.

METHODOLOGY

The study adopted survey research design. Questionnaire was used to collect basic information about the level of use of electronic databases as well as other factors contributing to and associated with their use. Postgraduate students of University of Ibadan with the estimated population of 2000 made up the study group. 200 post graduate students which were randomly selected constituted the sample size. Of the 200 copies of questionnaire distributed amongst postgraduate students using the research section of the library and faculty libraries, 164 were completed and returned giving a response rate of 82%.

Data Analysis and Interpretation

The collected data were analyzed based on the purpose of the study and research questions formulated for the study. The findings of the study were presented and analyzed .The results of the answers to the five research questions formulated for the study were presented in descriptive form using tables of frequency and percentage

Findings

The results will be discussed under 5 headings: background information, user awareness, frequency of use of electronics resources, service delivery, types of electronics resources and problems encountered by the postgraduate students of University of Ibadan.

Background information data shows that most respondents are male, 100 (61percent) and 64(39 percent) female. Fig 2 shows the breakdown of responses by age groups, the 26-30 bracket records 54(32.9percent), followed closely is the 22-25 age group 50(30.5), while the lowest group is between 18 -21(2.4percent). Fig 3, present the level of study of respondents, Masters Students had a total of 119(72.6 percent). This is followed by Ph, D 21(12.8percent), M.phil students have the least percentage of 2.4%.
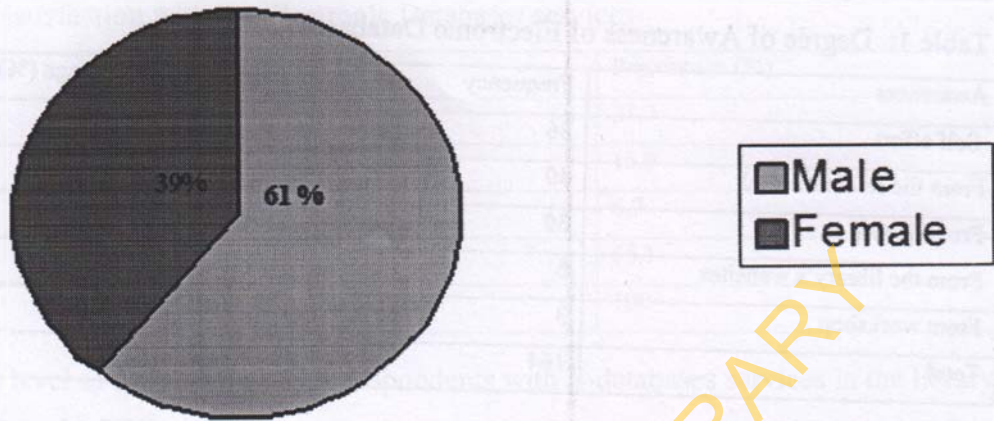
Gender

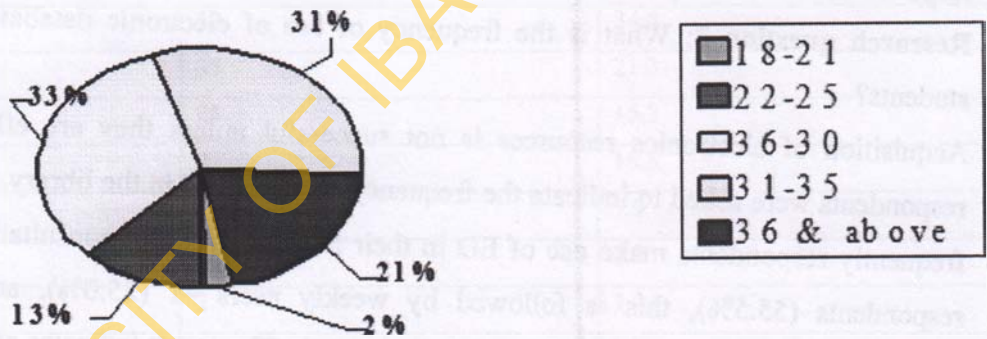Fig. 1: Distribution of Respondents by Gender

Age Range

Fig. 2: Distribution of Respondents by Age Range

Educational Qualification
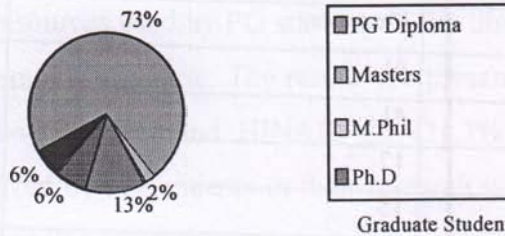
Fig. 3: Distribution of Respondents by Educational Qualification

Research Question 1: How did you learn about the Library's Electronics Databases?

Table 1: Degree of Awareness of Electronic Databases

Awareness	Frequency	Percentage (%)
Self effort	86	52.4
From the reference desk	40	24.4
From friends	30	18.3
From the library's websites	5	3.0
From workshop	3	1.8
Total	164	100

Table: 1 shows how respondents learnt about the ED available in KDL. According to Table 1, 86 (52.4%) respondents learnt by self seeking, 40(24.4%) at the reference desk, 30(18.3%) from friends, 3 respondents (1.8%) learnt about the ED through Library's orientation programme. The results suggest that students rely primarily on their own experiences and on those of their fellow students in order to obtain knowledge about library electronics resources. Nearly all the respondents acknowledge the awareness of ED in the library.

Research question 2: What is the frequency of use of electronic databases by postgraduate students?

Acquisition of electronics resources is not successful unless they are effectively used. The respondents were asked to indicate the frequency of use of ED in the library. Table 2 shows how frequently respondents make use of ED in their research. A daily consultation of the ED is 91 respondents (55.5%), this is followed by weekly users 41 (25.0%), and fewer users, 15 respondents (9.1%) use the ED for less than a month. The result indicates an average use of ED by post graduate students in the University.

Table 2: Frequency of use of ED

Frequency of use of ED	Frequency	Percentage (%)
Daily	91	55.5
Once a week	41	25.0
Once a month	17	10.4
Less than a month	15	9.1
Total	164	100

Research question 3: How satisfied are you with the electronic databases services in the Library?

Table 3: Level of satisfaction with the Electronic Databases services

Level of satisfaction	Frequency	Percentage (%)
Highly dissatisfied	35	21.3
Dissatisfied	26	15.9
Satisfied	11	6.7
Highly satisfied	92	56.1
Total	164	100

Table 3 shows the level of satisfaction of the respondents with E-databases services in the library According to the result of the analysis, 92 (56.1%) of the respondents are highly satisfied, 11(6.7%) respondents satisfied, while 35(21.3%) are highly dissatisfied and 26(15.9%) dissatisfied.

Research Question 4: What Electronic Databases is Post-Graduate Students Utilising?

Table 4: The utilization level of electronic resources

Electronic Resources	Frequency	Percentage
AGORA	57	34.8
HINARI	35	21.3
LANTEEAL	25	15.2
INASP PERL	27	16.5
AJOL	13	7.9
BOMED	2	1.2
OARE	2	1.2
EBSCO	1	0.6
JSTOR	1	0.6
E-GRANARY	1	0.6
Total	164	100

To ascertain the types of e-resources used by PG students in the library, respondents were asked to indicate the types of e-resources they use. The results are presented in Table 4, AGORA top the list with 57 respondents (34.8 %) and HINARI 35 (21.3%). These two databases are frequently accessed and utilized by respondents in their research works. Ebsco Host, Jstor and E-Granary show low patronage (0.6 %) each.

Research Question 5: What are the problems affecting the use of ED in the Library?

Table 5: Problems affecting the use of electronic databases in the library

Problems Affecting use of ED	Frequency	Percentage (%)
Non availability of relevant electronic information resources	63	38.4
Erratic power supply	42	25.6
Slow internet access	30	18.3
Inadequate Information skill	29	17.7
Total	164	100

Table 5 above shows that non availability of relevant electronic information resources to information needs of users is 63 (38.4%), inadequate information literacy skill is 29 (17.7%), while slow internet access 30 (18.3%), and erratic power supply 42 (25.6%).

Discussion

This study was able to establish that Post graduate students of University of Ibadan are aware and do make use of electronic databases available at Kenneth Dike Library minimally. The awareness of these electronic resources was discovered through self efforts of the students and guidance from other students, this can be one reason for low patronage amongst PG students. There is a need therefore for Library Management to intensify the resources awareness through effective marketing of its orientation program. Encouragement via academic staff can also serve to promote the usefulness of electronic resources among students. More than half of the respondents use electronic databases daily (55.5%). These databases are put to use mainly for research work, followed by studying course work, thereby supporting the learning process of students.

The level of satisfaction among the respondents regarding the information provided by the databases indicates that half of users (56%) are satisfied with the databases, though, this result is not encouraging, it thus confirm Biddiscombe, (1996), he discovered from his international survey of academic library networked services, that 69% of respondents were generally satisfied with results obtained from database searching. The findings show that a large number of students can benefit from the available databases through creation of awareness among users about different on-line resources.

AGORA and HINARI databases were utilized more by respondents in comparison with what the library offered. This finding is a clear indication that no proper library orientation has been extended to Post-graduate students as a method of imparting skills. The low patronage of three (3) databases, Ebsco host, Jstor, and E-granary tallied with Komolafe-Opadeji (2010) findings in

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respect of their use in a private university by postgraduate students. This writer can then conclude that students are not familiar or aware of these databases

The Challenges faced by respondents in using electronic databases are not quite different from what Nikam & Pramodiun (2007) and Okiki (2012) reported in their studies. Problems of inadequate information literacy skills, slow bandwidth, lack of infrastructure facilities, frequent power failure and non availability of relevant electronic information resources to information needs makes the use of electronic databases difficult for post-graduate students of University of Ibadan. These problems remain a challenge for better library service delivery.

Conclusion

The results of the study offer significant information on the level of awareness and use of electronic databases, the characteristics of the users and their evaluation of the databases collection. This study reveals that half of the users are aware of the availability of these databases through trial and error and they are able to make maximum use of them for research purposes. The analysis of the databases shows that AGORA (55.0%) is the most popular among the users. The goal of this report is to provide information that will guide Library management, particularly at the Kenneth Dike Library to take important decisions about its collections especially electronic resources and services, which are important sources of information. To maximise electronic resources usage, students need constant guidance and training while Librarians have an important role to play in assisting the library users to make the best use of the electronic resources. Effective use of these electronic resources for retrieving needed information will have a profound impact, especially on the quality of research output of postgraduate students of University of Ibadan. The importance of marketing e-resources cannot be over emphasized, because it represents a substantial investment of library funds and it is important that the library develop a strategy to insure that the database and its potential users are brought together.

Recommendations

It is important for university library to provide relevant electronic databases that meet the needs and support research and teaching to the academic community. It is necessary to encourage students to make effective use of the electronic sources that are available. Towards this end, awareness and orientation programs should be a continuous strategy that the University Library should adopt. There is the need to develop in users, the required information skills necessary for effective utilization of information resources in our academic libraries.

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