

Postgraduate Students' Attitude as correlates of Electronic Information Resources Usage for Research in Universities in North-west, Nigeria

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Abstract

This research was focused on the Postgraduate Students' Attitude as correlates of Electronic Information Resources Usage for Research in Universities in North-west, Nigeria. The study was guided by two research objectives with corresponding research questions and one research hypothesis. The study adopted a descriptive correlational research design. A sample size of 530 was drawn out of a population of 26,531. Copies of questionnaire were distributed to the respondents out of which 499 were returned and used for the study. Descriptive and inferential statistics were used to analyse the data collected. The study found that the extent of EIRs usage for research among postgraduate students was low with (Mean =2.42). The attitude of the postgraduate students toward electronic information resources usage for research was negative with (Mean =2.48). Also, the study established that there is significant positive relationship between postgraduate students' attitude and the electronic information resources usage for research in universities in North-west, Nigeria with ($r = 0.197$, $Df = 497$, $P < 0.05$). it is among others recommended that University Librarians should persistently sensitize postgraduate students and change their negative attitude toward the electronic information resources usage for research through public enlightments and sensitization programmes.

Keyword: Attitude, Electronic information resources, usage, Research

Introduction

Universities whether public or private are centres of higher learning have core mandate for teaching, learning and research. The most appropriate institutions charged with the responsibility of carrying out research for national development are universities. As such the basic functions of universities are to conserve the existing knowledge, to transmit knowledge through teaching, and to create new knowledge through research. Universities around the world have been agents of development of their immediate communities and the world at large through research that leads to advancement in knowledge in different areas of human existence. Universities all over the world are attached with libraries which have been regarded as the "heart of the Universities". Libraries are the brain and the centre point of intellectual activities. Yusuf and Iwu, (2010) refer to them as the nerve centre for scholarship. The purpose of establishing academic libraries are to support the tripartite objectives of teaching, learning and research which are fundamental to academia.

Apart from these functions, Libraries provide information through their resources and services. Hence Libraries, particularly university libraries are playing vital role in shaping a future generation of students by providing them Information that is crucial for nation's development. The development of any nation is not possible until and unless the information is made available at the door steps of those who need it, preferably free of cost. Printed information sources have been in use in libraries for centuries unlike electronic resources, which are of recent history. Accordingly, over the centuries, print materials have been the major sources of information used for research in universities. But, with the advent of information and communication technology (ICT), and electronic publishing, information that was available only in print materials (books, journals, theses/dissertations) are now available in electronic format. These advances in information and communication Technology (ICT) revolutionised the manner in which information is produced, processed, retrieved and used to electronic format. This resulted into proliferation of electronic information resources.

Electronic information resources or simply electronic resources (e-resources) are information stored in electronic format in computer or computer related facilities (CD-ROMs, flash drives, digital libraries or the Internet). In similar view, Daramola (2016) define Electronic information resources as "information resources provided in electronic formats such as e-journals, e-books, online databases, e-theses/e-dissertations, electronic conference proceedings, electronic technical reports,

electronic reference documents, CD-ROM databases, Online Public Access Catalogues, and another computer –based electronic networks”.

Electronic resources are ideal for reading at home, work, or while travelling. E-resources can be read on desktop computers, laptops, smart phones, media troupe, and many other mobile devices. Some e-resources can be downloaded while others can only be read online. They are great option for education, entertainment and leisure. E-resource is an important source of information. It is available to all kinds of people, lecturers, students, and researchers and so on. Electronic resources are invaluable research tools which complement print-based resources in any traditional library. E-resources have brought about the transformation in information usage because it saves time since one can use publications from one's convenience (Doosuur & Mwuese, 2013).

The provision of electronic information resources in libraries or information centers was aim to enhance quick, better, and efficient delivery of resources to users particularly postgraduate students for their research. These will easies the retrieval, dissemination and use of information resources by users. These will in turn help the postgraduate students carry out their research projects and submit them as a prerequisite for completing their degrees (Abubakar *at al.*, 2017). Postgraduate students constantly engage in research in order to find new discoveries that will enhance growth and development of society and to achieve this, there is a need for postgraduate students constantly search resources more particularly electronic information resources because they are assessed based on the outputs of their research.

In this study, research is regarded as postgraduate students' theses and dissertations writing which serve as a basic requirement for the award of postgraduate degrees in any discipline. This implies that postgraduate students are those that focus inwards into the society and discover areas with problems, collect data on subject areas, interpret and subsequently make recommendations on how to solve the problems. Research is the most important component of postgraduate studies (Adeniran and Onuoha, 2018). The presentation of a standard research work (theses or dissertations) by postgraduate students to their departments is the major component that will lead to the award of their final degrees. In order to present standard research work, postgraduate students would use information resources more particularly electronic information resources. Electronic information resources usage for research in the study refers to the utilisation and exploitation of

electronic information resources with full extent for getting required information for writing projects, theses and dissertations.

Statement of the Problem

The 21st century marks the revolutions in Information and Communication Technologies which came about as a result of technological innovations and has given rise to the development of electronic form of information which brought about change in the way people look for information and effective utilisation process. These rapid technological developments have transformed many institutions of learning like universities and their libraries.

Evidences from previous empirical researches have shown that many university libraries in Nigeria are now providing resources in electronic formats. Many of the university libraries have made significant investment in providing electronic resources and other computer-based technologies so that postgraduate students can gain access to information that will enhance their scholarly research works. Preliminary investigation and available literature have indicated low use of electronic information resources by patrons' especially postgraduate students in most university libraries in Nigeria (Doosur & Mwuese, 2013; Omeluzor *et al.* 2016; Lawal & Yahaya, 2020). This has reduced the possibilities and payback, considering the enormous investment on e-resources. One begins to wonder what factors are responsible for this situation. Could this be as a result of poor attitude of the users of the libraries including postgraduate students? Therefore, this uncertainty prompted the researcher to the investigation of the postgraduate students' attitude as correlates of electronic information resources usage for research in universities in North-west, Nigeria.

Aim and Objectives of the Study

The aim of the study is to investigate the postgraduate students' attitude as correlates of electronic information resources usage for research in universities in North-west, Nigeria. The specific objectives of the study are to:

1. find out the extent of electronic information resources usage for research among postgraduate students in universities in North-west, Nigeria;
2. find out the attitude of postgraduate students towards electronic information resources usage for research in universities in North-west, Nigeria;

Research Hypothesis

The below null hypothesis was tested at 0.05 level of significance;

H₀₁. There is no significant relationship between postgraduate students' attitude and the electronic information resources usage for research in universities in North-west, Nigeria.

Research Methodology

The study adopted descriptive as well as correlational research design. The descriptive design was used to answer research question one and two, while the correlational research design was adopted to established relationship between postgraduate students' attitude and the electronic information resources usage for research in universities in North-west, Nigeria. The population comprised of 26,531 postgraduate students. Multistage sampling was used for the study. Using proportionate sampling technique 530 was taken as sample size of the study. The study used structured questionnaire as the instrument for data collection. The data collection instrument for the study was subjected to face and content acceptance and validated by 3 experts for scrutiny. The data collection instrument was subjected to reliability text and was pilot tested. The data collected from the pilot-testing using split- half method were analysed using cronbach Alpha coefficient formula to ascertain the reliability of the questionnaire. The overall reliability coefficient after the analysis of the pilot tested questionnaire was found to be 0.88. The researcher personally administered the copies of the questionnaire to the respondents in all the eleven (11) selected universities with the help of research assistants. The data collected from the research instrument was analysed using version 20.0 of the Statistical Package for Social Sciences (SPSS).

Results and Discussion

Research question one: What is the extent of electronic information resources usage for research among postgraduate students in universities in North-west, Nigeria?

Table 1: Extent of Electronic Information Resources Usage for Research Among postgraduate Students in Universities in North-west, Nigeria

Statements	VHE 4	HE 3	LE 2	VLE 1	N	\bar{X}	SD	Decision
	Freq. (%)	Freq. (%)	Freq. (%)	Freq. (%)				
I use e-journals to find current articles that will assist me in my project, thesis, and dissertation writing or research work.	9 (1.8)	40 (8.0)	200 (40.1)	250 (50.1)	499	1.62	.711	Low extent
I consult e-books to get relevant information for writing the background to the study of my research.	24 (4.8)	66 (13.2)	211 (42.3)	198 (39.7)	499	1.80	.769	Low extent
I use electronic databases for getting information needed and desired that match my writing of thesis and dissertation	62 (12.5)	152 (30.5)	136 (27.3)	149 (29.9)	499	1.83	.833	Low extent
I use electronic magazines for getting information that is very current and up-to-date for my research.	36 (7.2)	116 (23.2)	175 (35.1)	172 (34.5)	499	2.25	1.018	Low extent
I use e-theses and dissertations to identify gap, new research areas and determine method for my on-going research.	36 (7.2)	108 (21.6)	192 (38.5)	163 (32.7)	499	2.03	.930	Low extent
I browse online public access catalogue to search and retrieve bibliographic records of electronic information resources used for my research	34 (6.8)	89 (17.8)	192 (39.3)	180 (36.1)	499	1.95	.900	Low extent
I use electronic reference resources to find information about	26 (5.2)	92 (18.4)	179 (35.9)	202 (40.5)	499	1.88	.886	Low extent

my topics of research and locate facts.

I explore e-newspapers to obtain very current information needed for my research. 87 (17.4) 151 (30.3) 144 (28.9) 117 (23.4) 499 2.42 1.030 Low extent

I use any other electronic information resources at my disposal in the university library for my research purposes. 71 (14.2) 102 (20.4.8) 146 (29.3) 180 (36.1) 499 2.13 1.058 Low extent

Weighted Mean

1.99 0.903 Low extent

Source: Field survey (2022)

Key: VHE = very High extent, HE = High Extent, LE = Low Extent, VLE = Very Low Extent, N= Number of Questionnaire Retrieved, **X = mean**, Standard Deviation and Decision. (Weighted mean = 2.50)

Table 1. Revealed that the extent of electronic information resources usage for research among postgraduate students in universities in North-west, Nigeria is low with highest mean score 2.42 and S.D. 1.030 on the use of e-newspapers, followed by use of e-magazine with mean score 2.25 and S.D. 1.018, use of other electronic information resources with the mean score 2.13 and S.D. 1.050, the use of e-theses and dissertations with the mean score 2.03 and S.D. 0.930, use of online public access catalogue with mean score of 1.95 and S.D. 0.900, use of e-reference resources with the mean score of 1.88 and S.D. 0.886, the use of e-databases with the mean score 1.83 and 0.833, use of e-books with the mean score of 1.80 and S.D. 0.769.

The least mean score was observed on the use e-journals to find current articles that will assist in project, thesis, and dissertation writing or research work with a mean of 1.62 and S.D. 0.711. In overall, the Weighted mean score of postgraduate students' extent of electronic information resources usage for research was 1.99 and S.D. of 0.903 this shows that based on the lay down decision rule the weighted mean is below the benchmark of 2.50. This implies that the electronic information resources usage for research among postgraduate students in universities in North-west, Nigeria was at a low extent. This could be due to lack of adequate computers, lack of awareness about availability of e-resources in the university libraries, inability to print from the library, low bandwidth and slow Internet connectivity. The findings are in line with the findings of Onuoha, *et al.* (2020) who investigated the availability and utilization of e-resources in university libraries for effective

research output by undergraduates of Social Studies in south-east, Nigeria. The results showed among others that students use e-library resources but not to the maximum because they lack ICT skills and do encounter problems while using them. It is in consonance with the findings of Adeleke and Nwalo (2017) who studied availability, use and constraints to use of electronic information resources by postgraduates students at the University of Ibadan. The results indicated that Internet was ranked most available in the university and found low level of usage of electronic resources. On the other hand, the findings are contrast with the findings of Ternenge and Kashimana (2019) who reported that e-books, e-journals, CD-Rom databases, e-newspapers, and e-research reports were utilized for research by students in Francis Sulemanu Idachaba Library to a great extent. In the same vein, Siwach and Malik (2019) studied the use of electronic resources by science faculty and research scholars in five universities of North India. The results obtained from 668 respondents indicated that the usage was highest for e-journals in comparison to other e-resources. Preference was given to search engines in finding information for research. Bamigboye, *et al.* (2019) carried out a related study and survey method was employed in conducting the research. The study found that academic staff frequently use e-resources for their research interest and also agreed that e-resources contributed to their research output.

Research question two: What is the attitude of the postgraduate students towards electronic information resources usage for research in universities in North-west, Nigeria?

Table 2: Postgraduate Students' Attitude Toward Electronic Information Resources Usage for Research

Statements	SA	A	D	SD	N	X̄	SD	Decision
	4	3	2	1				
	Freq. (%)	Freq. (%)	Freq. (%)	Freq. (%)				
1 As my trait I find it difficult to use electronic information resources for my research.	54 (10.8)	52 (10.4)	218 (43.7)	175 (35.1)	499	3.03	0.942	Agreed
2 I have a generally favourable attitude toward electronic information resources usage for research.	22 (4.4)	58 (11.6)	258 (51.7)	161 (32.3)	499	1.88	0.776	Disagreed
3 I thought to use electronic information resources for my ongoing research.	26 (5.2)	46 (9.2)	254 (50.7)	174 (34.9)	499	1.84	0.792	Disagreed
4 I thought I can do my research well even without making use of electronic information resources	61 (12.2)	104 (20.8)	199 (39.9)	135 (27.1)	499	2.81	0.967	Agreed
5 I routine to use electronic information resources for my research than any other type.	40 (8.0)	90 (18.0)	202 (40.5)	167 (33.5)	499	2.01	0.915	Disagreed
6 I accustom to use electronic information resources for my research.	22 (4.4)	51 (10.2)	187 (37.5)	239 (47.9)	499	1.71	0.821	Disagreed
7 I feel unsteady when using e-resources for my research.	52 (10.4)	91 (18.2)	180 (36.1)	176 (35.3)	499	2.96	0.975	Agreed
8 I am not excited to use electronic information resources for my research.	37 (7.4)	79 (15.8)	222 (44.5)	161 (32.3)	499	3.04	0.882	Agreed
9 I feel avoidance to use electronic information resources for my research.	42 (8.4)	78 (15.6)	223 (44.7)	156 (31.3)	499	2.98	0.898	Agreed
10 I emotionally like to use electronic information resources for my research work.	36 (7.2)	84 (16.8)	225 (45.1)	154 (30.9)	499	2.02	0.875	Disagreed
11 I am emotionally uncomfortable when using electronic information resources for research.	62 (12.4)	100 (20.0)	175 (34.9)	162 (32.5)	499	2.87	1.004	Agreed
12 I always enjoy use of electronic information resources for my research.	35 (7.0)	59 (11.8)	174 (34.9)	231 (46.3)	499	1.79	0.906	Disagreed

13	I have experience to use electronic information resources for my research but I will not do so.	72 (18.8)	99 (19.8)	173 (34.7)	155 (31.1)	499	2.82	1.028	Agreed
14	Most times when I get on to use electronic information resources for my research, I end up spending more time than I had planned	83 (16.6)	162 (32.5)	160 (32.1)	94 (18.8)	499	2.46	0.979	Disagreed
15	My experience of lacking good network in our library discourages my use of electronic information resources for research.	67 (13.4)	143 (28.7)	182 (36.5)	107 (21.4)	499	3.05	0.965	agreed
16	Consequences of prolonged reading electronic information resources are past event that prevent me to use them for research.	58 (17.6)	137 (27.5)	192 (38.5)	82 (16.4)	499	2.53	0.995	Agreed
17	I have been trained in our library long a go for using electronic information resources for research.	124 (24.8)	192 (38.5)	109 (21.8)	74 (14.8)	499	2.26	0.998	Disagreed
18	Bad past event that took place in our university library had negatively affected my electronic information resources usage for research.	73 (14.6)	108 (21.6)	205 (41.1)	113 (22.6)	499	2.71	0.974	Agreed
	Weighted Mean						2.48	0.927	Disagreed

Key: SA = Strongly Agree, A = Agree, D = Disagree, SD = Strongly Disagree, N = Number of Questionnaire retrieved, x = Mean, Standard Deviation and Decision (Weighted Mean 2.50)

Table 2. Showed respondents view on the attitude of the postgraduate students towards electronic information resources usage for research in universities in North-west, Nigeria? The results shows that majority of the respondents have negative attitude towards electronic information resources usage for research in universities in North-west, Nigeria. Specifically, as majority of the respondents have agreed with the negative statement "my experience of lacking good network in our library discourages my use of electronic information resources for research" with the highest mean value of 3.05 and S.D. 0.965. Followed by the lamented negative statement "as my attribute I find it difficult to use electronic information resources for my research" with a mean value of 3.03 and S.D. of 0.942.

In addition, the statement "I believe it is a good idea to use electronic information resources for my research" ranks last with a mean value of 1.71 and S.D. 0.821. This indicates that the postgraduate students have negative attitude towards electronic information resources usage for research in universities in North-west, Nigeria as all positive statements that shows positive attitude were disagreed with by the respondent whereas, all negative statements that portrays negative attitude were agreed by the respondents. Further, the weighted mean of all the items is 2.48 and S.D. of 0.927. This equally shows that the weighted mean is below the benchmark hence it portrays negative attitude of the respondents. This infers that the general attitude of the postgraduate students toward the electronic information resources usage for research in universities in North-west, Nigeria is negative. This could be due to their believe that there is lack of good network; prolong reading of electronic information resources affect eyes, difficulty attached to the retrieval of some electronic information resources and the host of others. The findings are in line with the findings of Ukachi, *et al.* (2014) who investigated undergraduate students' attitudes as a determining factor to electronic information resources use in university libraries in South-western, Nigeria. The study revealed that EIRs are not adequately utilised as the UG students have negative attitude towards its use. On the other hand, the findings are in contrast with the findings of Okunoye (2020) who examined the attitude of postgraduate students to the use of electronic databases in Kenneth Dike and Hezekiah Oluwasanmi Libraries of University of Ibadan and Obafemi Awolowo University respectively. The study further reveals high positive attitudinal responses of students to using the available resources. In the same vein, Alkahtani, (2016) studied the attitudes of Princess Nora University undergraduate students towards using electronic information resources of the library.

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