

Research Article

Awareness and Purpose of Electronic Information Resources among Postgraduate Students of Library and Information Science in Borno State

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Abstract: This study investigated the awareness and purpose of electronic information resources among postgraduate students of library and information science in Borno State. The descriptive survey research design was adopted for this study. Two objectives and two research questions were formulated to guide the study. The population of this study comprised 3073 postgraduate students in university of Maiduguri for 2019/2020 session. The purposive sampling technique was used to select all the 259 postgraduate students offering library and information science in University of Maiduguri. Data for this study was collected using of structured questionnaire developed by the researcher. The study used mean and standard deviation as statistical measures for data analysis. The finding revealed that PG students are aware of electronic information resources such as e-journals, e-books, e-mails, e-databases, e-magazines, e-serials, e-dissertation and theses, WWW, e-mails, CD-ROMs, online public access dialogue, reference databases, e-images and e-audio visual resources. The result also revealed that the purpose to which they use electronic information resources in federal universities in North East, Nigeria. The purposes included using library's electronic information resources to source materials for research/writing project; using library's electronic information resources to do class assignments; using electronic information resources to augment class works; using the electronic catalogue (OPAC) for sourcing information in the library; using the internet in the library to generally source information in the library. Based on the findings of this study, it was recommended among others that academic staff should be included in the selection process of e-databases so that they would confirm the relevancy of the databases and may appreciate the databases and therefore would recommend students to use the e-databases.

Keywords: Awareness, Information Resource, Electronic Information Resources, Postgraduate Students, Library and Information Science.

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INTRODUCTION

Libraries have transformed into digital and virtual libraries where books, journals and magazines have changed into e-books, e-journals, and e-magazines. This has increased the global dissemination of information (Abinew & Vuda, 2013). Electronic resources such as e-journals, e-books, e-databases, web resources, e-serials amongst others are easily accessible in remote areas. Jone (2008) opined that electronic resources solve storage problems and control the flood of information, that is, print sources is being digitized. The rapid growth of new technologies has changed the communication process and reduced the cost of communication for individuals.

Electronic information resources can be defined as the electronic representation of information which can be accessed via electronic system and computer network (Johnson, Evensen, Gelfand, Lammers, Sipe & Zilper,

2012). They further buttress that electronic information sources can be seen as the most recent development in information technology and that they are available in various forms like e-books, digital libraries, online journal magazine, e-learning tutors and online test. Because of the effective presentation with multimedia tools, these e-resources have become the source of information.

Electronic resources deliver the collection of information as full text (aggregated) databases, e-journals, image collections, multimedia in the form of CD, tape, internet, web technology, etc. E-resources include e-journals, e-discussions, e-news, data archives, e-mail online chatting, just to mention but a few. Electronic information source are a wide range of products going from electronic periodicals to CD-ROMs, from mailing list to databases, all of them

having a common feature of being used and sometime modified by a computer (Thanuskodi, 2012). Electronic information sources are becoming more and more important for the academic community (Egberongbe, 2011). Therefore, awareness of these information resources is of paramount importance to library development in the 21st century.

Awareness is knowledge about something that exists or understanding of a situation or subject at the present time based on information or experience (Ani & Ahiauzu, 2008). It can also be seen as knowledge or perception of a situation, fact, consciousness, recognition, realization, grasp and acknowledgement concern about and well-informed interest or familiarity in a particular situation or development. The study of Madu, Vandi and Chagwa (2018) conducted in Maiduguri on utilization of ICT for information retrieval revealed that despite the provision of computers, OPAC, power point projectors, internet services, CD-ROMs and e-mail, there was low level of computer utilization for information retrieval in the library in terms of CD-ROM and internet. This complemented the study of Ajuwon (2013) study on ICTs by health science students at the University College Hospital (UCH) Ibadan, revealed that students studied could not use a computer, and that the use of the database was poor, due to lack of awareness, lack of access to computers, insufficient training and high cost of provision of electronic information resources subscription. Awareness and use of electronic information resources is very important so as to keep postgraduate students alert of the available media through which they can access needed information. It is apparent that the use of these electronic information resources require special skills in information and communication technologies (ICTs) that will help students navigate the maze of resources at their disposal via telecommunications channels (Balogun, 2008).

Awareness of the changes in technology in recent years has dramatically altered how information is accessed, stored and disseminated (Tsakomas & Papatheodorou, 2006). Whereas information provision and usage in academic libraries was previously based upon the collection of physical library materials, it is now increasingly the case that academic libraries are moving into the virtual arena. Postgraduate students in their reaction to such stimuli ought to be aware of the availability of such resources to aid them in their academic pursuit. With advances in technology and e-publishing, online text full text databases, Emerald, Science Direct, Academic Search Premier, Ebscohost, TEEEL, Oare Sciences, Hinari, Virtual Library (NUC), online public access catalogue (OPAC), CD-ROMs (Compact Disc-Read Only Memory), e-books collections, e-journals covering a variety of subjects, and major bibliographic databases like AGORA and MEDLARS etc., access to information on a local,

regional, national and international basis has overcome the traditional barriers of time, easy of accessibility and space (Prangya & Rabindra, 2013; Sharma, 2009). It is also imperative to understand that easy accessibility of to electronic information is helps postgraduate to understand the purpose of using electronic information resources of library and information science.

Electronic information resources have many functions and benefits that are capable of positively influencing the academic performance of both students and researchers in the university as well as other higher education institutions. Tella, Tella, Ayeni and Omoba (2007) stated that the benefits of electronic information resources include; (1) increased the visibility of libraries globally; (2) improved services to an expanding number of users; (3) enhanced access to current and vast amount of information from remote sites as users can easily access library resources from different parts of the world no matter the distance; (4) flexibility in information search and retrieval; and (5) ensured better preservation of library resources by reducing handling of the original analogue surrogate materials.

Electronic information resources is necessary for postgraduate students mainly because they provide better, faster and easier access to information than information accessed through print media. In addition, electronic information resources help end users (postgraduate students) to; expand accessibility, increase usability and effectiveness; establish new ways for students to use information to be more productive in their academic activities; keep abreast with current developments in their respective subject fields (Khalil, 2014).

Well, it's pertinent to note that when postgraduate students are aware of e- resources they make adequate use of them for academic and research purposes. It is also important that for the students to make use of the resources, they ought to be skilled in information and communication technologies (ICTs) applications in other to gain independent use of various electronic information resources around the globe. Be that as it may, it has been observed that postgraduate students in Nigerian universities are confronted with various challenges relating to inadequate telecommunications' infrastructure, high cost of subscription, poor user skills, amongst others in the use of e-resources.

Observations as shown that postgraduate students of library and information science seem not to be utilizing these e-resources available to them, could it be that they are not aware of these EIRs and if they are aware why is it that usage is hindered. Based on this premise, Ekenna and Ukpebor (2012) stressed that EIRs have received high patronage with functional

acceptance in other countries globally as against the situation in Nigeria. In the same Vien, Igbeka and Okpala (2004) opined that since 1995, introduction of CD ROM literature search into the university library system, the number of users of CD ROM facility is still very small as against the number of registered library users. This they revealed might be due to lack of or inadequate awareness of e-resources. Also, studies have indicated that factors such as awareness and identifying the purpose of electronic information resources are the determining factors that may influence users’ decision to use EIRs (Obuh, 2009; Omotayo, 2010; Prangya & Rabindra, 2013). Consequent upon these, this study seeks to explore the awareness and purpose of electronic information resources among postgraduate students of library and information science in Borno State.

Research Questions

The following research questions guided the study:

1. What is the level of awareness of postgraduate students of library and information science towards electronic information resources in Borno State?
2. For what purpose do postgraduate students use electronic information resources in Borno State?

METHOD

This study adopted a descriptive survey research design. The study was carried out in Borno State. The population of this study comprised 3073 postgraduate students in university of Maiduguri for 2019/2020 session. The purposive sampling technique was used to select all the 259 postgraduate students offering library and information science in University of Maiduguri. This is because library and information postgraduate students are knowledgeable enough as regards electronic information resource provided by the university libraries. A structured questionnaire was developed by the researcher titled “Questionnaire on Awareness and Purpose of Electronic Information” (QAPEI). The instrument was subjected to face validation by two experts. To establish the internal consistency of the instrument, Cronbach Alpha method was used, and it yielded an overall co-efficient of 0.78. Mean and standard deviation was used to answer the research questions posed for the study.

RESULTS

Research Question 1: What is the level of awareness of postgraduate students of library and information science towards electronic information resources in Borno State?

Table 1: Postgraduate students’ awareness of electronic information resources

S/N	EIRs awareness	Mean	Standard Deviation	Remarks
1	e-journals	4.71	0.63	Aware
2	e-books	4.62	0.66	Aware
3	e-databases	4.28	1.08	Aware
4	e-magazines	4.33	0.97	Aware
5	e-serials	4.16	1.20	Aware
6	e-dissertation and theses	4.09	1.09	Aware
7	WWW	3.81	0.98	Aware
8	Emails	3.83	0.91	Aware
9	CD-ROMs	3.97	0.95	Aware
10	Online public access dialogue	3.89	0.77	Aware
11	Reference Databases	3.51	0.98	Aware
12	e-images	3.43	0.91	Aware
13	e-audio visual resources	4.14	0.68	Aware

Data in Table 1 revealed the item by item analysis of PG students’ awareness of electronic information resources. The result revealed that PG students are aware of electronic information resources such as e-journals, e-books, e-mails, e-databases, e-magazines, e-serials, e-dissertation and theses, WWW, e-mails, CD-ROMs, online public access dialogue, reference databases, e-images and e-audio visual resources with mean scores 4.71, 4.62, 4.28, 4.33, 4.16,

4.09, 3.81, 3.83, 3.97, 3.89, 3.51, 3.43 and 4.14 respectively. The standard deviation scores ranging from 0.63 – 1.20 means that PG students’ responses were homogenous in nature.

Research Question 2: For what purpose do postgraduate students use electronic information resources in Borno State?

Table 3: Respondents mean and standard deviation ratings on what purpose PG students use electronic information resources

S/N	Items on purpose for which e-information resources are used	X	SD	Remarks
14	Using library’s electronic information resources to source materials for research/writing project	3.23	1.63	Agreed
15	Using library’s electronic information resources to do class assignments	2.71	0.94	Agreed
16	Using electronic information resources to augments class works	3.13	1.59	Agreed
17	Using the electronic catalogue (OPAC) for sourcing information in the library	2.81	0.89	Agreed
18	Using the internet in the library to generally source information in the library	3.00	1.15	Agreed
19	Using library’s internet access to participate in professional discussion group/listserve	2.69	0.91	Agreed
20	Using library’s electronic resources to retrieve current literatures for my studies	3.84	0.85	Strongly Agreed
21	Using library’s internet access to follow blog discussions on my subject area of interest	2.42	0.86	Disagreed
22	Using the electronic books provided by the library to complement my class notes	2.46	0.99	Disagreed
23	Using electronic books provided by the library for my project writing	2.40	1.02	Disagreed

Data analysis in Table 3 reveals the item by item analysis of what purpose postgraduate students use electronic information resources in federal universities in North-East, Nigeria. The result analysis in item 20 with mean score 3.84 was strongly agreed on; item 14, 15, 16, 17, 18 and 19 with mean scores 3.23, 2.71, 3.13, 2.81, 3.00 and 2.69 respectively were agreed on; while item 21, 22 and 23 with mean scores of 2.42, 2.46 and 2.40 respectively were disagreed on. This means that majority of the PG students agreed that they use electronic information resources for the purpose listed in the study. The standard deviation scores that ranging from 0.85 – 1.63 means that PG students responses were homogenous in nature.

DISCUSSION OF FINDINGS

Research question one revealed that PG students are aware of electronic information resources such as e-journals, e-books, e-mails, e-databases, e-magazines, e-serials, e-dissertation and theses, WWW, e-mails, CD-ROMs, online public access dialogue, reference databases, e-images and e-audio visual resources. This implies that PG students are aware of electronic information resources. This finding corroborate with the finding of Egberongbe (2011) whose study showed that 80 (71.4%) postgraduate students and 55(78.6%) research scholars were aware of e-resources. Ahmad and Panda (2013) survey on awareness and use of electronic information resources by the faculty members of Indian Institutes in Dubai international academic city to find out whether the faculty members of universities were aware of and fully utilize the library databases and other e-resources within and outside the libraries.

Research question two revealed that PG students agreed to all the items on the purpose to which they use electronic information resources in federal universities in North East, Nigeria. The purposes

included using library’s electronic information resources to source materials for research/writing project; using library’s electronic information resources to do class assignments; using electronic information resources to augment class works; using the electronic catalogue (OPAC) for sourcing information in the library; using the internet in the library to generally source information in the library; using library’s internet access to participate in professional discussion group/listserve; using library’s electronic resources to retrieve current literatures for my studies; using library’s internet access to follow blog discussions on my subject area of interest; using the electronic books provided by the library to complement my class notes; using electronic books provided by the library for my project writing. This finding was in line with Raza and Upadyay (2012) that with the usage of electronic information resources the quality of their research work improves with enrichment of appurtenant contents and materials leading to high-quality manuscript. Similarly, the finding also agreed with that of Bassey and Odu (2015) that some of the purposes of electronic library resources and services ranged from academic to social networking; using internet access to participate in discussions, seminars and class assignments.

CONCLUSIONS

The study concluded that majority of the PG students were aware of electronic information resources. The findings also revealed that majority of the PG students agreed to the purpose they use electronic information resources in universities in Bauchi State.

Recommendations

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

1. Academic staff should be included in the selection process of e-databases so that they would confirm

the relevancy of the databases and may appreciate the databases and therefore would recommend students to use the e-databases.

2. Lecturers are also advised to increase the frequency of visit to the Library to be able to discover more potentials and purpose of the Library to facilitate the use of the resources.

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