Awareness, Institutional Support and Utilization of Library Databases among Academic Staff in Universities in Kwara State, Nigeria.

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Abstract

The study examined the awareness, institutional support, and utilization of library databases among academic staff in selected universities in Kwara State, Nigeria. A survey research design was employed, targeting a population of 2,940 academic staff from the chosen institutions. A sample size of 338 academics was selected using a simple random sampling technique. Questionnaires were distributed among the academic staff, and the collected data was analyzed using frequency counts, simple percentages, and means. The findings revealed that most academic staff are aware of library database provisions such as Emerald Insight, ProQuest, ScienceDirect, Hinari etc. Furthermore, the findings indicate a general agreement on low usage of library databases by the respondents. There was a lack of adequate institutional support provided to academic staff to enhance utilization of library databases. The study recommends that library management should intensify efforts in engaging the academic staff on the awareness of the library database provisions regularly by using social media platforms such as Telegram, WhatsApp, Instant Messenger, and emails to further strengthen their awareness. The university library should intensify efforts in providing institutional support on user training and workshops to teach users how to search, navigate, download, and utilize library databases effectively.

Keywords: Library Databases, Awareness, Institutional Support, Academic Staff.

Introduction

The 21st century has seen an astounding development of library electronic database which has significantly modified how students and scholars get access to information. Library databases have as of late been recognized as the essential sources of information and data sharing (Lefuna, 2017). It has become indispensable to instructive and investigative endeavors inside colleges around the world. The primary influence of globalization and advancements in information and communication technology on teaching and research in academic institutions lies in the researcher's ability to be aware of information resources available and the availability of institutional support to enhance the utilization of the resources on a larger scale.

Nwafor, Uchenna, and Chika (2018) stated that access to information might be provided effectively by making efficient use of electronic resources. Also, Egharevba (2018), stated that the introduction of library databases has revolutionized the processing and management of information in Nigerian academic environments, particularly university libraries. Kwadzo (2015) defines awareness of library databases as the capacity to possess direct knowledge and understanding regarding the utilization of these databases. This awareness is fostered through library orientations and tours, specifically designed for newly enrolled undergraduate and postgraduate students, to acquaint them with the functionalities and usage of library databases and provide institutional support on information literacy.

According to Ahmmad and Panda (2013), institutional support is the role in which the University libraries subscribe to the library databases and provide necessary technological assistance to aid the utilization of the resources. Meanwhile, databases are either subscribed databases which include Emerald Insight, ProQuest, ScienceDirect, Research4Life, etc., Some databases are accessed free of charge and include Jstor, Google Scholar, a social science research network, Ajol, and Academia.edu and others. However, access and use of library databases are essential for academic staff members to undertake research and teaching activities in the contemporary digital era. Although there have been enormous investments made to gain access to library databases, academic staff at universities still struggle to make use of these resources. The use of these resources depends heavily on institutional support as well as public awareness of the resources' existence and possible advantages (Nwalo, Oluwagbemi, & Ibekwe, 2019).

The expectation is that when students and faculty are aware of these library databases and facilities available, they will be motivated to use them (Egberongbe, 2011). According to Opeyemi (2018), Academic staff can access current information resources through library databases.

Library databases are essential to facilitate research and teaching activities in the contemporary digital era. Academic Staff who are knowledgeable about the databases are more likely to use them in their research and teaching activities. Low

usage of library databases might be caused by a lack of awareness of their features and benefits. The availability of training and support services as well as institutional assistance can help to boost database usage and awareness (Edeh, 2016).

However, there is little study analyzing how academic staff in institutions in Nigeria use these resources, despite the significance of library databases for academic productivity and the calibre of research outputs (Okpukpara, 2018). It is therefore against this background that this study was designed to investigate the awareness, institutional support, and utilization of library-database among academic staff in selected universities in Kwara State, Nigeria

Statement of the Problem

Academic staff in some universities in Nigeria continue to struggle to gain access to library database services. Awareness and institutional support provided to users has been poor. This has led to low utilization of these resources where the service is available. This could affect academic output and research product quality. It is considering the above reasons, that the researchers examined the awareness, institutional support, and utilization of library databases among academic staff in selected universities in Kwara State, Nigeria.

Objectives of the Study

The main objective of this study was to investigate the awareness, institutional support, and utilization of library databases among academic staff in selected universities in Kwara State, Nigeria. Specifically, the study sought to:

1. Determine the level of awareness of the library databases among academic staff.
2. Determine the extent of institutional support provided to academic staff in utilizing library databases.
3. Investigate the degree of the utilization of library databases by academic staff.

Research Questions

1. What is the level of awareness of library databases among academic staff?
2. What is the extent of institutional support provided to academic staff in utilizing library databases?
3. What is the frequency of utilization of library databases by academic staff?

Literature Review

Electronic resources have made a great impact on the research productivity of scholars in recent times. Electronic information resources (online/offline) are used to conduct scientific research, teach community development etc. The study by Gurav (2023) found that factors such as easy access to electronic resources; and the user-friendly features of library e-resources offer a comfortable platform for

participants to use e-books, e-journals, e-magazines, e-newspaper, e-thesis, e-dissertation etc. Many academics in universities rely on library databases as their source of information because they provide many advantages over traditional print-based resources. Consequently, several studies have examined the utilization of electronic resources and services in various academic contexts.

Sohail, Maksood and Salauddin (2019) conducted a study on the utilization of e-journals by research scholars and postgraduate students of the University of Delhi and Jamia Millia Islamia. The study revealed that the survival of an academic institution largely depends upon the usefulness of its resources and services to the academic society it serves. From their findings, it can be concluded that e-journals are the major sources of information for the academic and research society at large. It is therefore important to ensure that electronic resources including the e-journals are well harnessed by the academic libraries and fully utilized by academicians and students in various universities.

Yusuf (2017) investigated the awareness, access to and utilization of academic databases by faculty members of Bayero University, Kano. The study reveals that the majority of the university's academic staff was found to be aware of the E-databases available at the library, albeit their level of knowledge varied depending on the databases available according to the survey. In another study, Arthur and Brafi (2013) explored the utilization of electronic resources by students in tertiary institutions in Ghana and revealed that Internet services were extensively used for communication with lecturers. The unrestricted production, access, retrieval, and dissemination of information played a significant role in this regard. The Internet resources commonly utilized by the respondents included e-journals, online databases, e-mail, FTP and Usenet. Ajala, Adegun and Ajala, Adegun, Adetunjiand and Oyewumi, O.O. (2010), conducted a study at Ladoke Akintola University of Technology, examining the impact of library databases and services on teaching and research activities among academic staff. The findings indicated that e-journals, online databases and e-mail were the most frequently employed resources for academics as the highest Internet resources and services used for academic activities. However, awareness of the availability of resources can facilitate the usage of the resources.

Conversely, Ruzegea and Msonde (2021) study on awareness and usage of library databases and services by academic staff of Kuvempu University revealed that there is a significant difference between the subscribed academic libraries and the non-subscribed library database of digital information sources awareness, digital information services awareness, and digital information sources usage. Also, there is a significant difference between postgraduate students of arts, science and education. However, there is no significant difference between previous and final year students' digital information services usage, and digital information sources awareness. There is no significant difference between digital information sources usage, digital information services awareness, and digital information services usage of male and female postgraduate students. They also found that ProQuest, Hinari and Ebscohost were the most popular sources of information for the academic staff.

Eyiolurunshe and Eluwole (2017), in their study, revealed that faculty members of Landmark University, Nigeria were very much aware of the library database in the library and could easily access it yet results showed that the frequency of usage was low compared to the level of awareness. This could be attributed to the fact that where there is awareness, sensitization of the provision of the availability should be promoted to encourage usage. The study of Sejane (2017), the study indicated that awareness of e-resources was mainly through formal engagement, such as library orientation and informal engagement would be encouraged. These acts could influence the extent to which academic staff can access and use electronic resources in their research at the university.

However, more effort needs to be put into raising awareness of the importance of online academic databases among teachers and researchers. There are only a few papers that deal with the use of online academic databases. Basiru, Okwilagwe and Adebayo (2018) stated that awareness raises consciousness and knowledge about a certain technology; it has personal and social benefits. This view supported their study which established awareness as the major determinant of user attitude and behaviour towards technology. Aina (2014) investigated awareness, accessibility, and use of library databases among the academic staff of Babcock University Business School. The survey research design was adopted. The results showed that the level of awareness of library databases among the academic staff of Babcock Business School is varied.

Aderibigbe and Ajiboye (2013) reported that many institutional libraries have started providing institutional support to their users. Among these is the provision of Internet literacy courses to their patrons as remote access to electronic information becomes faster. Chiya, Onyancha and Ezema (2022), conducted research on user education at the Kwame Nkrumah University of Science and Technology (KNUST) Library and backed up this opinion when they claimed that students require computer literacy as a component of information literacy. A study by Shelton (2011), on the use of ICT facilities by academic staff in UK universities has shown that 87% of the respondents are using ICTs and e-resources in their academic and research activities. However, the paper concluded that access and use of ICTs by academic staff in the universities are influenced by divergence in cultures and contexts of research.

Opeyemi (2018), after institutional support on information literacy on Internet searching skills, discovered that respondents were able to access more electronic resources using search engines, departmental websites, and library web pages. Access to knowledge is an important asset for the development of every human being, awareness of library databases is when users of the library have acquired information and knowledge about the existence of library databases in the library (Rafi, Islam, Ahmad & Zheng, 2022). Latif et al. (2018), in their study, investigated that the perceived usefulness of the library database had a major positive relationship with collaborative learning. Kinengyere (2007) investigated that effectiveness and efficiency in the research process in the digital era rely on the level of information

literacy of academic staff and the nature of the information accessible to them. Information literacy provides the academic staff with the required skills to access and utilize the needed information in research. Thus, with the emerging electronic information environment, institutional support is a vital and prerequisite tool that academic staff in African universities need for active participation in international research and publication.

This highlights the crucial role of the library in providing institutional support and facilities in shaping students' perceptions of how their information needs are met and how their experiences with library services influence their utilization.

Methods

The research method adopted for this study is a survey method. It involves gathering the opinions of people on a particular issue or problem. The choice of survey method adopted for this research was dictated by the nature of the research problem being investigated. The population of the study comprises academic staff from the University of Ilorin, Ilorin, Kwara State University, Malate, and Summit University, Offa, Kwara State, Nigeria. The total population of Academic Staff in the institutions selected was 1,500 from the University of Ilorin; 1400 (400) from Kwara State University and 40 from Summit University, Offa respectively. Krejcie and Morgan (1970) sample table was used to determine the sample size and a purposive sampling technique was adopted and used to determine the sample size. 27.8% of the total sample size of 2,940 (1940) of the three institutions selected in the study was used to arrive at 338 (539) Academic Staff respondents selected for the study. The research instrument used for data collection was a questionnaire. The questionnaire was used because it has the capability of eliciting accurate data from the respondents. Multiple and regression analysis tools were used to analyze the data generated from the questionnaire administered to the respondents. This is because of the descriptive nature of the data. Demographic data was analyzed using frequency and percentage.

Results

Respondents were chosen from three institutions: the University of Ilorin, which had 152 respondents making up 77.5% of the sample size; Kwara State University, with 35 respondents constituting 20.4%; and Summit University, with 4 respondents representing 2.1% of the sample. In total, 338 questionnaires were distributed, but only 191 were retrieved and analyzed. This serves as the foundation for the analysis in this study.

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Respondents' Demographics

Table 1

Demographic Profile	Frequency	Percentage
Names of institution		
Summit University	4	2.1%
Kwara State University	35	20.4%
University of Ilorin	152	77.5%
Total	**191**	**100%**
Gender		
Male	96	50.3%
Female	95	49.7%
Total	**191**	**100%**
Rank		
Graduate Assistant	41	21.5%
Assistant Lecturer	33	17.3%
Lecturer II	55	28.8%
Lecturer I	10	5.2%
Senior Lecturer	30	15.7%
Reader/Associate Professor	8	4.2%
Professor	14	7.3%
Total	**191**	**100%**
Years of Experience		
0-5	60	31.4%
6-10	59	30.9%
11-15	39	20.4%
16-20	10	5.2%
21-25	14	7.3%
25 Above	9	4.7%
Total	**191**	**100%**
Highest Qualification		
B.Sc/B.A/B.Ed./B.Eng/BLIS	43	22.5%
M.Sc/MLIS/MBA	54	28.3%s
Ph.D	94	49.2%
Total	**191**	**100%**

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The level of awareness of the library databases among academic staff

Table 2: Level of Awareness of Library Databases by Academic Staff.

Academic Staff Database Awareness Level	Not Sure		Not Aware		Moderately Aware		Highly Aware			
	F	%	F	%	F	%	F	%	M	SD
Emerald Insight	1	0.5	6	3.1	62	32.5	122	63.8	3.6	0.5
ProQuest	10	5.2	85	44.5	89	46.6	7	3.4	3.4	0.6
ScienceDirect	5	2.6	64	33.5	64	33.5	58	30.4	3.6	0.5
Ajol	8	4.2	8	4.2	78	40.8	97	50.8	3.3	0.7
Oare	1	0.5	10	5.2	70	36.6	110	57.6	3.5	0.6
Hinari	5	2.6	16	8.4	93	48.7	77	40.3	3.2	1.0
EBSCOhost	7	3.7	30	15.7	96	50.3	58	30.4	3.0	0.7
Agora	8	4.2	27	14.1	95	49.7	61	31.9	3.0	0.7
Academia	14	7.3	27	14.1	81	42.4	69	36.1	3.0	0.8
Google Scholar	12	6.3	22	11.5	83	43.5	74	38.5	3.1	0.8
									3.27	0.6

The result of the analysis in Table 2 outlines respondents' views of their awareness of library databases. The data shows that respondents are highly aware of the availability of Emerald Insight, Ajol, and Oare at a response rate of 122(63.8%), 97(50.8%), and 110(57.6%) respectively. The analysis result also showed that respondents are moderately aware of Hinari, EBSCOhost, and Agora at response rates of 93(48.7%), 95(49.7%), and 95(49.7%) respectively. However, the respondent's response rate of their awareness level of ProQuest was lesser at a response rate of 5.2(85%) when compared to their awareness level. Generally, the awareness reports in the study show that the academic staff are moderately and highly aware of the provisions of databases by the university library. Therefore, this study recommends that the library should intensify efforts in regularly using social media platforms such as Telegram, WhatsApp, Instant Messenger, and emails to engage their users to further strengthen their awareness. This is because users' awareness education should be a regular exercise to facilitate the utilization of library databases.

The extent of institutional support provided to academic staff in utilizing library databases.

Table 2: Extent of institutional support provided to academic staff in utilizing library databases.

Extent of Institutional Support to Academic Staff	Less Extent		Great Extent		Very Great Extent		M	SD
	F	%	F	%	F	%		
User Training and Workshops to teach users how to search and utilize library databases effectively.	149	3.1	78.0	18.8	6	3.1	3.7	0.5
Online Tutorials and Guides to assist users in navigating databases.	109	57.1	8	4.2	74	38.7	3.3	0.5
Librarian assistance in helping users with specific database queries and research needs.	12	6.3	85	44.5	94	49.2	3.4	0.6
Provision for access to databases through proxy servers or VPNs, allowing users to access resources off-campus	21	11.0	87	45.5	83	43.5	3.3	0.6
Regularly evaluating and subscribing to new databases, and offering trial access to assess their usefulness	13	6.8	81	42.4	97	50.8	3.4	0.6
Provision of technical support for troubleshooting access issues, including login problems and connectivity issues	101	52.9	11	5.8	79	41.4	3.3	0.5
Implementing feedback mechanisms to gather user input on database usability and content, and making improvements based on this feedback	103	53.9	13	6.8	75	39.3	3.3	0.5
							3.3	0.5

The analysis shows that respondents reported overwhelmingly less extent in institutional support to User Training and Workshops to teach users how to search and utilize library databases effectively at a response rate of 149(78.0%). Also, the report shows less extent in institutional support for Online Tutorials and Guides to assist users in navigating databases; a lack of providing technical support for troubleshooting access issues, including login problems and connectivity issues, and a lack of Implementing feedback mechanisms to gather user input on database usability and content, and making improvements based on this feedback at a

response rate of 109(57.1%), 101(52.9%) and 103(53.9%) respectively. However, the analysis shows that lack of adequate institutional support provided to respondents to a very great extent in regularly evaluating and subscribing to new databases and offering trial access to assess their usefulness by the university library at a response rate of 79(41.4%). The study therefore recommends that the university library should intensify efforts in providing institutional support on user training and workshops to teach users how to search, navigate, download, and utilize library databases effectively. The library should also provide supports in login challenges, implementing feedback mechanisms to gather user input on database usability and content, and making improvements based on this feedback to the academic staff to enhance the utilization of library databases.

The frequency of the utilization of library databases by academic staff.

Table 4: Frequency of the utilization of library databases by academic staff.

Frequency of usage of Library databases by Academic Staff	Daily		Weekly		Monthly		Quarterly			
	F	**%**	**F**	**%**	**F**	**%**	**F**	**%**	**M**	**SD**
I use library databases between at least 2–4-hour intervals daily	3	1.6	27	14.1	42	22.0	119	62.3	3.4	0.7
I use library databases at least 1-3 times intervals in a week	14	7.3	12	6.3	86	45.0	79	41.4	3.2	0.8
I use library databases at least 4-5 times a week	7	3.7	20	10.5	84	44.0	80	41.9	3.2	0.7
I use library databases once a week	7	3.7	30	15.7	84	44.0	70	36.6	3.1	0.8
I use library databases 1-3 times a month	2	1.0	32	16.8	103	53.9	54	28.3	3.0	0.6
I use library databases once in once months	17	8.9	22	11.5	104	54.5	48	25.1	2.9	0.8
									3.1	0.7

The result of the analysis in Table 4 shows that respondents reported using the library databases between at least 2–4-hour intervals daily on a quarterly basis indicating low usage at an overwhelming response rate of 119(62.3%). They also reported monthly frequency of usage of library databases of at least 1-3 times intervals in a week; using library databases at least 3-5 times in a week and using library databases once a week at a response rate of 86(45.0%), 84(44.0%) and 84(44.0%) respectively

also indicating low usage. Devastating number of the respondent also reported low extent of usage on monthly basis on the account that they use library databases 1-3 times a monthly and using the library databases once in once months on a response rate of 103(53.9%) and 104(54.5) respectively indicating low usage of the library database by the academic staff. Overall, the findings indicate a general agreement on low usage of library databases by the respondents. This study therefore recommends that the university library should make access to library databases easier as this can be achieved by binding the various universities IP Address to the web address of the databases so that users do not have to login in while within the campus; providing single sign-on to all the library databases through staff credentials and providing remote access to academic staff.

Discussion

The findings show that most respondents are aware of the availability of the library database and had complete access to the resources through the institutional subscribed database. This finding aligns with the result of the study by Ruzegea and Msonde (2021), which was on awareness and usage of library databases and services by academic staff of Kuvempu University which revealed that there is a significant difference between the subscribed academic database and the non-subscribed library database in terms of the robustness of the resources in meeting the information needs of users. The findings also suggest that most respondents lack adequate institutional support from the university library in utilizing the library databases extensively. This finding conforms to the result of a study by Oriogu, Chukwuemeka and Oriogu-Ogbuiyi (2018) which was on the frequency of the use of academic libraries and found that utilization of library database where there is a consistent structure in regularly proving institutional support to users to enhance utilization. Finally, the findings indicate a general agreement that the extent of using the library databases was extensively low. It implies low utilization of the library databases. The study is supported by the findings of Epp and Segal (2019) when they examined the extent of use of library databases in academic libraries as impeded by awareness of the availability and lack of institutional support in user awareness for effective utilization of resources, only 29% report ever having used them, and only 18 % said they used the databases.

Recommendations

The following recommendations were made based on the findings of this study:

1. The library management should intensify efforts in engaging the academic staff of the awareness of the library database provisions on a regular basis by using social media platforms such Telegram, WhatsApp, Instant Messenger and emails to engage their users to further strengthened their awareness consciousness. This is because users' awareness education should be a regular exercise to facilitate utilization of library databases.

2. The university library should intensify efforts in providing institutional support on user training and workshops to teach users how to search, navigate, download and utilize library databases effectively. The library should also provide supports in login challenges, implementing feedback mechanisms to gather user input on database usability and content, and making improvements based on this feedback to the academic staff to enhance the utilization of library databases.

3. The university library should make access to library databases easier as this can be achieved by binding the various universities IP Address to the web address of the databases so that users do not have to login in while within the campus, providing single sign-on to all the library databases through staff credentials and providing remote access to academic staff.

Conclusion

The study on awareness, institutional support, and utilization of library databases among academic staff in universities in Kwara State, Nigeria, highlights several key findings. Firstly, awareness of library databases is crucial for their effective utilization. The study revealed that the academic staff of the sampled universities were aware of library databases. Majority of the respondents also reported that that the university libraries provide poor institutional support in the utilization of library databases. On the issue of the frequency of utilization of the resource, most of the respondents agreed to low usage of the library databases. The university library should intensify efforts in providing institutional support on user training and workshops to teach users how to search, navigate, download, and utilize library databases effectively.

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