Awareness and Utilization of Online Databases among Postgraduate Students of Federal University Kashere, Gombe State, Nigeria

Yusuf Muhammad Maibeni[1]; Dr. Ranjita Niladri Dash[2]

Master of Library and Information Science, Dept. of Library and Information Science The Maharaja Sayajirao University of Baroda[1]; Temporary Assistant Professor. Dept. of Library and Information Science, The Maharaja Sayajirao University of Baroda, Vadodara, Gujarat, India[2];

maibeniyusuf@gmail.com, ranjita.n.dash-libsc@msubaroda.ac.in

ABSTRACT

This research focuses on the Awareness and utilization of online database among postgraduate students of Federal University Kashere, Gombe. The aim was to determine the level of awareness and channels of awareness of online databases among postgraduate students, to identify the purpose postgraduate students use online database, to determine the extent which postgraduate students use online database, to identify the challenges postgraduate student's faces on the use of online databases. In addition, survey research method was employed to conduct the study, the instrument for data collection was questionnaire 107 people were used as sample for the study, the findings of the study include the types of online databases available in the university Library in the FUK are; SCIENCE DIRECT, AGORA, HINARI, EBSCO HOST, DOAJ, AJOL, JSTOR are the predominantly accessed databases among the available ones. TEEAL, AGRICOLA, BOOKBOON, and PUBMED are the least accessed database among the available one. However, despite the availability of these databases only little among the postgraduate students have accessed them, conclusion were made from the findings of this study, it can be concluded majority of the postgraduate students of Kashere University are aware of the online databases, the major channel of online databases awareness was surfing the internet while orientation and university bulletin ranked lowest among the awareness channel, it was Recommended that the school management through it Library and ICT centers should carry out needs assessment of all the databases subscribed to and survey information needs of postgraduate student in order to identify the gap between availability and underutilization of these databases. Also, an abstract of each of the databases and the subject they cover should be put on the library website to make them attractive to users. This would help to improve the use of online databases.

KEYWORDS: Awareness, Utilization, Online, Database and Library.

INTRODUCTION

Researchers have reiterated that awareness is the key to utilization of information resources. Universities remain a centre of excellence, a citadel of learning, and more importantly the epitome of research. University provides numerous programs to infuse manpower into the larger society, one of this important programs offered by universities to sustain expertise and specialization is Postgraduate studies.

Postgraduate study is connected with further studies that someone does at a university after receiving their first degree with the aim of further exploring a subject in order to attain a high level of proficiency (Olibie, Agu and Uzoechina, 2015). Therefore, the university library is mandated to facilitate the goal of postgraduate studies with the provision of print and non-print resources especially access to online databases. According to Sinh and Nhung (2012), online databases have become an essential source of information that has contributed to the quality of postgraduate research work. Hence, Academic libraries have long advocated the use of scholarly databases because of their richness in academic material (Mbabu, Bertram and Varnum, 2012) and provide access to online databases to support postgraduate research.

Online databases provide a platform for postgraduate students to search for scholarly information which consists of several journals in particular disciplines and can be accessed online. Online databases are usually subscribed to by universities in order to support the research works among postgraduate students (Sinh and Nhung, 2012). Due to the importance of online databases, Anunobi & Okoye (2008) revealed that consortium of Nigerian University Libraries (NULIB) has subscribed to EBSCO host, Internet portals include Access to Global Online Research in Agriculture (AGORA), Health Internetwork Access to Research initiatives (HINARI), Online Access to Research in the Environment (OARE), Database of African Theses and Dissertation (DATAD), and many offline databases including MEDLINE. These are global information resources which can be accessed electronically through academic library gateways. Khan and Haridasan (2015) define online databases as records of related digital information concerned with either general information or any specific subject field, which is arranged in a uniform format to retrieve information easily through internet or online networks. Online databases can also be defined as "electronic collections of information accessible via the internet, often containing journal articles, or references to such articles" (Guruprasad, Marimuthu and Khaiser, 2012). This research focus on awareness and channels of awareness of online databases among postgraduate students.

REVIEW OF RELATED LITERATURE

Concept of Online Databases

Online database has been an important subject of interest among academicians and information professionals. Scholars have viewed online database from different perspectives. According to Khan and Haridasan (2015) online databases are records of related digital information concerned with either general information or any specific subject field, which is arranged in a uniform format to retrieve information easily through internet or online networks. Similarly, online databases are "electronic collections of information accessible via the internet, often containing journal articles, or references to such articles" (Guruprasad, Marimuthu and Khaiser, 2012). In the same vein, Mercy and Ronald (2019), view of online databases are collection of electronic information resources uniquely or generally organized to suit the information needs of researchers from specific or multidisciplinary subject fields. Abubakar and

Akor (2017) opined that online database is an organized collection of information accessible over a network. Furthermore, these databases are often characterized by the type of information they contain text, numbers or fields.

TYPES OF ONLINE DATABASES

Information sources especially On-line have become a source of public wealth. They are tangible objects for information transfer both in the sciences, technology and humanities. Online database is one of such proprietor source with rich information content which libraries provides to support the information need of their patron. However, online databases vary in types, such as bibliographic, full-text, directory and multimedia (Larson, 2017). Notable among others includes:

Access to Global On-line Research in Agriculture (AGORA)

Is an Internet portal with links to major scientific journals, bibliographic databases and other Internet resources related to agriculture, it is developed by Food and Agricultural Organization (FAO) in collaboration with World Health Organization (WHO), major scientific publishers and Manual Library of Cornell University U.S.A and It also includes information on related sciences and social sciences such as environmental sciences, Food policy and agricultural economics. This is one initiative that has given agricultural researchers, lecturers, and students from this part of the world opportunity to have access to a wide range of sources of On-line resources at a low cost. Some of the founding publishers contributing to AGORA journals are: Blackwell Publishing, CABI Publishing, Elsevier, Kluwer Academic Publishers, Lippincott, Williams and Wlkings, Nature Publishing Croup, Oxford University Press, Springer – Verlag, John Wilseys and Sons, etc. The following databases can be accessed through the AGORA Portal.

African Journals Online (AJOL) is a database of journals published in African, covering the full range of academic disciples. The objective of AJOL is to give greater visibility to the participating journal and to the research community. It was initiated in May 1998 as a pilot project managed by the International Network for the Availability of Scientific Publications (INASP) It aimed to promote the awareness and use of African Journals in the sciences by providing access to table of contents (TOC) on the Internet.

Biomed Central is an independent publishing house committed to providing immediate open access to peer – reviewed biomedical research. Original research articles published by Biomed central are made freely and permanently accessible online immediately upon being published. The database views open access to research as essential in order to ensure the rapid and efficient communication of research findings.

Directory of Open Access Journals (DOAJ) is aimed at increasing the visibility and ease of use of open access scientific and scholarly journals thereby promoting their increasing usage and impact. DOAJ defines Open access as the right of the user to read, download, copy, distributes, print, search or link to the full text pdf articles.

Program for the Enhancement of Research Information (INASP PERI) PERI provides researchers with access, via country-wide access license, to full text journals and bibliographic and reference database, including provides

those from Blackwell, CABI, EBSCO. Emerald, Gale, Oxford University Press, OVID (Silver Platter), Springer and the Royal Society,

The Health Internet-work Access to Research Initiative (HINARI) is another on-line initiative that provides free or very low-cost on-line access to the major journals in biomedical and related social sciences to local, not – for – profit institutions in developing countries. It was launched in 2002, with some 1, 500 journals from six major publishers including: Blackwell, Elsevier Science, the Harcourt Worldwide STM Group, Wolters Kluwer International Health and Science, Springer Verlag and John Wiley. Twenty-two additional publishers joined in May 2,002, bringing the total number of journals to over 2000. The number of participating publishers and of journals and other full-text resources has grown continuously.

Science direct: is a leading full-text scientific database offering journal articles and book chapters from nearly 2,500 journals and more than 30,000 books. It intended audience is librarians and researchers in the health sciences, life science, physical sciences and engineering. It also has a nice complement of materials in social science and business subject area. This database uses a federated search mechanism, which is a single search portal to search and retrieve results from several electronic resources at once.

RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

A survey method was used in carrying out this research. This method were adopted for this study because it will thus, it helps gather information based on which sound decision is made at much less cost but greater efficiency. For the present study the postgraduate students of Federal University Kashere Gombe State, Nigeria constitute the population to which the research problem is related. One thousand and sixty nine (1069) postgraduate students enrolled in the academic year (2021-22) constitute the total population of this study, drawn from the pioneer program of postgraduate diplomas and Masters of philosophy of 2019/2020 academic session. The table below shows the population distribution.

Table 1: Postgraduate students Population

Faculty	Population
Agriculture	204
Education	252
Humanities, Management & Social Science	301
Science	312
Total	**1069**

Source: Registry office, Federal University Kashere, Gombe 2021

Sample Size and Sampling Techniques

A sample is a portion of population selected by a researcher for a study. The sample in this study is made up of the departments PG Student The method used in selecting the sample from a population is known as sampling technique and the percentage of the population selected as the sample is the sample size. 107 postgraduate

students was drawn from the population of 1069 postgraduates through a Stratified Random sampling techniques to form the sample size of this study. Table below represents the 10% of the sample size.

Table 2: Sample size

Faculty	Population	Sample size
Agriculture	204	20
Education	252	25
Humanities, Management & Social Science	301	30
Science	312	32
Total	**1069**	**107**

Instrument for data collection

Questionnaire method of data collection was adopted. Anthony (2006) sees questionnaire as an impersonal survey method and has an advantage of low cost, reduction in bias error, greater anonymity. In the same vein, questionnaire is a series of questions put together to provide answers to the problems under study. Questionnaire was designed to collect data from the 107 postgraduate students and divided into two parts; section A: carries respondent bio-data and section B: contained questions on awareness and utilization of online databases such as: Are you aware of the university online database? Have you ever accessed the university online database? Which of these online databases have you accessed? How often did you use any of these databases? What is your Source of awareness about these databases? For what purpose did you use online database? Which of the problems did you encounter using online databases?

PROCEDURE FOR DATA COLLECTION

The questionnaire was will be administered by the researcher to the respondents of the present study. The distribution of the questionnaire was done within a period of two weeks from 15 April to 28 April for the respondents to fill and return to the researcher.

Results and Discussion

Table 3: Level of awareness of online database among PG Students

Database	Highly aware		Aware		Undecided		Unaware	
	F	%	F	%	F	%	F	%
JSTOR	05	4.9	10	9.8	56	54.9	31	30.4
AGORA	06	5.9	13	12.8	62	60.8	21	20.5
EBSCO HOST	07	6.9	10	9.8	51	50.0	34	33.3
AJOL	08	7.8	13	12.8	52	51.0	29	28.4
DOAJ	30	29.4	53	52.0	02	1.9	17	16.7
TEEAL	61	59.8	30	29.4	04	3.9	07	6.9
HINARI	21	20.5	62	60.8	13	12.8	06	5.9
SCIENCE DIRECT	02	1.9	17	16.7	53	52.0	30	29.4

From the above table, it shows various responses of respondents on the level of awareness of online database among PG Students, respondents with highly aware of JSTOR has a frequency and percentage of 5 (4.9%), aware with frequency and percentage10 (9.8%), undecided with frequency and percentage 56 (54.9%) and unaware with frequency and percentage 31 (30.4%).

Respondents with highly aware of AGORA has a frequency and percentage of 6 (5.9%), aware with frequency and percentage 13 (12.8%), undecided with frequency and percentage 62 (60.8%) and unaware with frequency and percentage 21 (20.5%).

Respondents with highly aware of EBSCO HOST has a frequency and percentage of 7 (6.9%), aware with frequency and percentage 10 (9.8%), undecided with frequency and percentage 51 (50.0%) and unaware with frequency and percentage 34 (33.3%).

Respondents with highly aware of AJOL has a frequency and percentage of 8 (7.8%), aware with frequency and percentage 13 (12.8%), undecided with frequency and percentage 52 (51.0%) and unaware with frequency and percentage 29 (28.4%).

Respondents with highly aware of DOAJ has a frequency and percentage of 30 (29.4%), aware with frequency and percentage 53 (52.0%), undecided with frequency and percentage 2 (1.9%) and unaware with frequency and percentage 17 (16.7%).

Respondents with highly aware of TEEAL has a frequency and percentage of 61 (59.8%), aware with frequency and percentage 30 (29.4%), undecided with frequency and percentage 4 (3.9%) and unaware with frequency and percentage 7 (6.9%).

Respondents with highly aware of HINARI has a frequency and percentage of 21 (20.5%), aware with frequency and percentage 62 (60.8%), undecided with frequency and percentage 12 (12.8%) and unaware with frequency and percentage 6 (5.9%).
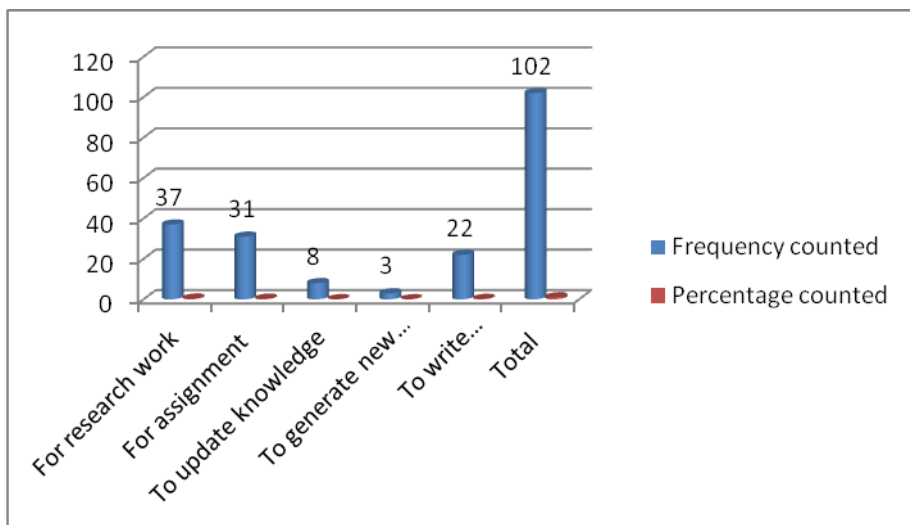
Respondents with highly aware of SCIENCE DIRECT has a frequency and percentage of 2 (1.9%), aware with frequency and percentage 17 (16.7%), undecided with frequency and percentage 53 (52.0%) and unaware with frequency and percentage 30 (29.4%).

Table 4: Purpose of using online database in FUK Library

Purpose of used	Frequency counted	Percentage counted
For research work	37	36.8%
For assignment	31	30.4%
To update knowledge	08	7.8%
To generate new information	03	2.9%
To write conference/seminar paper	22	21.8%
Total	102	100%

Table 4 and Fig 1, it has been reveal that 37 representing 36.8% of the respondents used the university online database for research purpose; this is followed by 31 representing 30.4% of the respondents used the university online database for assignment purpose; next to is 22 representing 21.8% of the respondents who used the university online database for writing conference and seminar paper; 8 representing 7.8% of the respondents used the university online database to update their knowledge. While 3 representing 2.9% of the respondents used the

university online database for the purpose of generating new information. It is obvious that most of the postgraduate students accessed the database with varying needs and for different purposes.
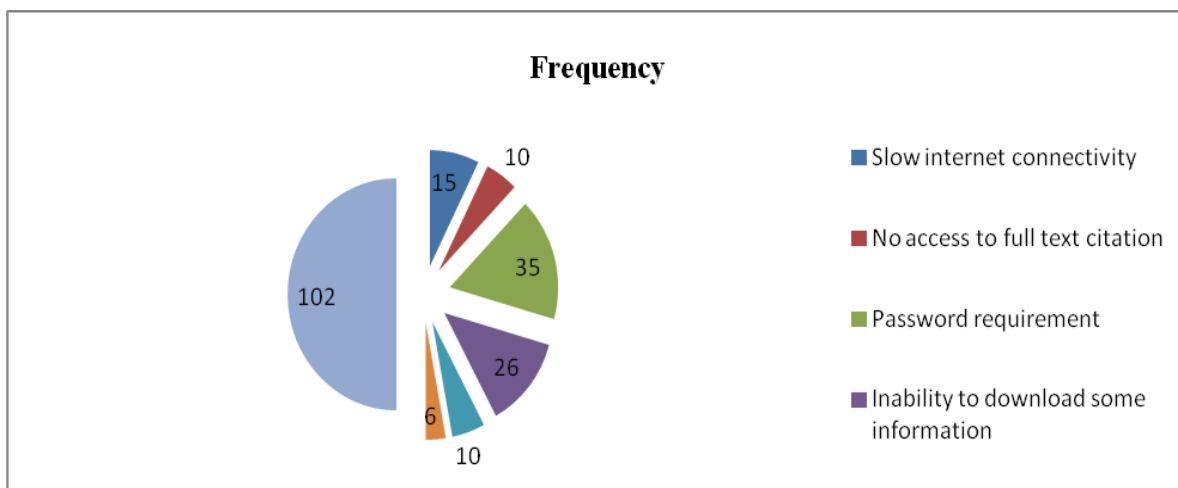

Fig 1: Purpose of using online database in FUK Library

The implication here is that, the university will need to provide 24 hours uptime access with adequate bandwidth to makes the database satisfactory to the information needs of the students.

Table 5: Problems Encountered in Using Online Database in FUK Library

Problems encountered	Frequency	Percentage
Slow internet connectivity	15	14.7%
No access to full text citation	10	9.8%
Password requirement	35	34.3%
Inability to download some information	26	25.5%
Lack of search skills	10	9.8%
Irrelevant content	06	5.9%
Total	102	100%

Fig 2: Problems Encountered in Using Online Database in FUK Library

Table 5 and Fig 2 have been shown that 34.3% of the respondents encounter Password requirement when they trying to use the databases; 25.5% of the respondents encounter inability to download some information; 14.7% of the respondents encountered slow internet connectivity when using the database; No access to full text citation and lack of search skills are the challenges 9.8% of the respondents faced. While 5.9% of the respondents identify irrelevant contents as the problem encountered when using the online database.

CONCLUSION

This study investigated Awareness and Utilization of Online Database among Postgraduate Students of Federal University Kashere, Gombe. To achieve this objective, the first chapter provide a background overview on online database, five research questions were formulated to meet the objective of this study. The second chapter, review related literature on concept of online database, types of online databases, awareness of online databases, use of online databases, challenges associated with access and use of online database. The third chapter discuss the methodology used for this study, to this end a Survey research method was adopted for this study. The population of the study is made up of one thousand and sixty-nine (1069) 2019/2020 postgraduate students of Federal University Kashere, Gombe. Random sampling method was used to select 107(10%) respondents to accommodate the different strata of the subjects involved in the study. The instruments used to generate the data needed to answer the research questions was a questionnaire. The fourth chapter, highlighted the data analysis of this study. This was done descriptively using tables, frequency distributions and percentages.

REFERENCES

[1] Akpojotor, L.O (2016), "Awareness and usage of electronic information resources among Postgraduate students of library and information science in southern Nigeria *Library Philosophy and Practice* (http://:digitalcommons.unl.edu/libphilprac/1408

[2] Anunobi, C.V,& Okoye, B.F, (2008).The Role of Academic Libraries in Universal Access to Print and Electronic Resources in Developing Counties. *Library Philosophy and Practice*

[3] Guruprasad, M., Marimuthu, G. and Khaiser, P. (2012), Online Social Bookmarking Services and Its Impact on Aerospace Scientists and Engineers of Bangalore. *Discovery Science*, 2(4), 1-21.

[4] Hourcade, J. P., B. B. Bederson, A. Druin, A. Rose, A. Farber, and Y. Takayama. (2003). The International Children's Digital Library: Viewing digital books online. Interacting with Computers 15(2): 151–67.

[5] Khan, S. and Haridasan, S. (2015). Use of Online Databases in the Faculty of Arts at Aligarh Muslim University and University of Delhi. *International Research: Journal of Library and Information Science*, 5(1), 1-16

[6] Mbabu, L. G., Bertram, A. and Varnum, K. (2012). Patterns of undergraduates' use of scholarly databases in a large research university. *Journal of Academic Librarianship,* 39(2), 189 - 193. Available at http://dx.doi.org/10.1016/j.acalib.2012.10.004

[7] Olibie, E., Agu, N. and Uzoechina, G. (2015). Characteristics of Post Graduate Education Research Mentoring in Universities in Nigeria: Curricular Enhancement Strategies. *Journal of Curriculum and Teaching*, 4(1), 156–166. Retrieved from http://jct.sciedupress.com

[8] Abubakar, M.S. & Akor, P.U. (2017). Availability and utilization of online information databases for research by agricultural scientists in federal university libraries in North Central Nigeria. *Library Philosophy and Practice (e-journal).* 1600. http://digitalcommons.unl.edu/libphilprac/1600

[9] Ahmed, S. M. D. (2013). Use of electronic resources by the faculty members in diverse public universities in Bangladesh. *The Electronic Library, 31* (3), 290-312.

[10] Ahmed, S., & Amjed, A. (2014). Evaluation of researchers' satisfaction with electronic resources in two universities of Pakistan. *Library Hi Tech News. 31* (7) 20-25

[11] Anaraki, L.N., & Babalhavaeji, F. (2013). Investigating the Awareness and ability of medical students in using electronic resources of the integrated digital library portal of Iran. Journal of electronic library. Emerald Group Publisher.

[12] Atakan, C. (2007). An evaluation of the second survey on electronic databases usage at Ankara University digital library. *The Electronic Library. 26* (2). 249-259.

[13] Bar-IIan, J., & Fink, N. (2005). Preference for electronic format of scientific journals – a case study of the science library users at the Hebrew University. *Library and Information Science Research. 27* (3). 363-376.

[14] Chirra, R., & Madhusudhan, M. (2009). Use of electronic journals by doctoral research scholars of Goa University, India. *Library Hi Tech News. 31* (7), 20-25.

[15] Dadzie, P. (2005). Elctronic resources: access and usage at Ashesi University College. *Campus Wide Information Systems. 22* (5), 290-297.

[16] Anthony, A. (2006). Conducting Research in Education and Social Science. Enugu: Tashiwa Network Ltd.

_____