

Assessment of Availability, Level of Utilization of Information Resources among Postgraduate Students in Ahmadu Bello University, Zaria

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Abstract

The availability and utilisation of information resources are crucial for academic success, particularly among postgraduate students. This study explores the dynamics of information resource availability and utilisation among postgraduate student in Ahmadu Bello University Zaria. The study employed a descriptive survey method with a questionnaire. The population was 12,356, and a sample size of 622 was selected using the research advisor table, out of these, 539 questionnaires were returned, and the responses were analyzed using tables and percentages. The objectives were to assess the availability of information resources, evaluate their level of use in research, and identify challenges faced by students in accessing these resources. Findings revealed that commonly available and used resources include books, journals, newspapers, theses/dissertations, and seminar/conference papers, all with a 100% response rate. In contrast, encyclopedias, offline and online databases, indexes, and abstracts were the least available and utilized. Journals had the highest usage (mean score: 4.0000), followed by online databases (3.7291). The least-used resources included e-newspapers, government publications, pamphlets, yearbooks, and atlases/maps, with mean scores below 2.2. The major challenges identified were time constraints, poor study environments (each with a mean of 3.7291), and high publication costs (3.2709). Lesser issues included delays in manual processes, lack of awareness about available resources, poor electricity supply, and limited assistance from library staff. The study concludes that most postgraduate involved were early-career professionals more actively engaged in library services. It recommends increased university funding to improve access to underutilized resources, such as encyclopedias and databases. It also emphasizes the need for stronger library orientation programs and awareness campaigns to improve students' knowledge and use of available information resources for better research productivity.

Keywords: Availability, Utilisation, Information, Resources, Postgraduate Students

Introduction

Every human being requires one form of information or the other to satisfy his/her information need. Effective utilisation of information resources and services is key to the success of postgraduate studies in any institution and the library plays the central role in making information available and accessible. Availability and utilisation of information resources are indispensable factors in acquiring knowledge, learning and research; hence every University library regardless of size should have adequate information resources available for its users for reading, learning and research, as it is inevitable for institutions of higher learning to succeed without libraries, library users exploit and benefit from information resources and services in different formats to satisfy their information needs.

Innocent 2022 observed that there is a direct link between academic research and the utilisation of library resources. Innocent believed that in order to draw in more patrons, particularly academics and postgraduate students, university libraries in Nigeria should have both print and electronic materials available, and as well ensure that they are effectively utilized. While there is a correlation between the utilisation of information resources and the academic productivity of postgraduate students in higher institutions of learning, few studies have been conducted with an emphasis on postgraduate students, especially at Ahmadu Bello University, Zaria like that of Muhammad (2024) on the Utilisation of reference management software among postgraduate of Ahmadu Bello University, Zaria. Therefore, this paper evaluates information resources' utilisation and postgraduate students' use of information resources research Ahmadu Bello University, Zaria, Kaduna State, Nigeria.

The objectives of the study were to:

1. Assess the types and availability of information resources accessible to postgraduate students for research purposes at Ahmadu Bello University, Zaria.
2. Evaluate the extent to which postgraduate students utilize available information resources for enhancing their research productivity at Ahmadu Bello University, Zaria.
3. Identify the key challenges encountered by postgraduate students in accessing and using information resources for research at Ahmadu Bello University, Zaria.

Review of related literature

Ahmadu et al. (2024) conducted a comprehensive study on the availability and use of digital information resources among postgraduate students in university libraries across Kaduna State, including Ahmadu Bello University, Zaria. The study, which surveyed 377 postgraduate students, revealed that digital resources such as e-journals and OPACs were widely available and accessible. However, despite this availability, the level of utilization was not optimal. The authors recommended increased awareness campaigns and user education programs to improve effective usage of these digital resources.

Esharede (2023) conducted a study on the availability, awareness, and utilization of digital information resources among postgraduate students in three state-owned universities in Ondo State, Nigeria. The research aimed to determine how effectively students accessed and used digital resources such as e-journals, online databases, and institutional repositories. Findings revealed that

while these resources were available in university libraries, their utilization was significantly low. Key barriers identified included unstable internet connectivity, lack of adequate user training, frequent power outages, and limited awareness of available digital services. The study highlighted a gap between availability and practical use, emphasizing the need for university management to invest in ICT infrastructure and regular user education programs. Esharede recommended that libraries should intensify efforts in promoting digital literacy and ensure more reliable access to improve research productivity among postgraduate students.

Ajiboye et al. (2023) explored the influence of library resources and services on the research activities of postgraduate students in federal universities in Southwest Nigeria. The study found that key supports such as textbooks, e-books, and Wi-Fi significantly contributed to students' academic work. Despite the availability of these resources, gaps were identified in terms of service quality and resource adequacy. The authors recommended strengthening library services through better funding, enhanced ICT facilities, and user-focused service delivery to boost research output.

Smart and Ogbomo (2023) examined the awareness and utilization of Open Educational Resources (OER) among postgraduate students at the National Open University of Nigeria. The study revealed a moderate level of awareness and consistent use of OER materials such as e-books, open courseware, and educational videos. Despite this, the authors noted that many students lacked in-depth knowledge of the full range of OER platforms and how to maximize their use for academic purposes. They recommended continuous training and sensitization programs to deepen students' understanding and integration of OER into their research and learning activities.

Methodology

This study employed a descriptive survey design, deemed most appropriate for examining existing conditions and obtaining relevant data on the subject under investigation. This approach enabled the researcher to gather quantifiable information directly from the target population.

Population and Sampling Technique

The target population comprised 12,356 postgraduate students of Ahmadu Bello University, Zaria. A sample size of 622 was determined using the Research Advisors Table, based on a confidence level of 0.05 for a population of 10,000 and above. Simple random sampling was employed to ensure each member of the population had an equal chance of being selected.

Instrument for Data Collection

A structured questionnaire served as the primary instrument for data collection. This tool was chosen for its efficiency in gathering standardized responses suitable for statistical analysis.

Data Collection Procedure

An introductory letter was obtained from the Head of the Department of Library and Information Science, Ahmadu Bello University, Zaria. The researcher, assisted by two trained research assistants, personally administered the questionnaires to the selected respondents. The data collection exercise spanned two weeks, during which all distributed questionnaires were also retrieved.

Table 1 Population of the Study

S/N	Faculty/College/School	Total Number of Postgraduate Students
1.	Faculty of Administration	1,950
2.	Faculty of Agriculture	542

3.	Faculty of Art	475
4.	Faculty of Education	1,970
5.	Faculty of Engineering	950
6.	Faculty of Environmental Design	992
7.	Faculty of Law	750
8.	Faculty of Life Sciences	678
9.	Faculty of Physical Sciences	1,250
10.	Faculty of Pharmaceutical Sciences	380
11.	Faculty of Social Sciences	690
12.	Faculty of Veterinary Medicine	257
13.	College of Medical Sciences	782
14.	Business School	690
	Total	12, 356

Data Analysis and Interpretation

Collected data were analyzed using Statistical Package for the Social Sciences (SPSS) version 26. Descriptive statistical methods, including tables and percentages, were employed to summarize and interpret the data in line with the research questions.

Response Rate

In this study, a total of 622 copies of the questionnaire were administered to the postgraduate students of Ahmadu Bello University, Zaria. Out of this total 539 were duly completed and returned for the analysis giving a response rate of 86.6. The high response rate was due to the constant follow up by the researcher and his assistants. The response rate was considered adequate as supported by Fincham (2008) who explains that in any survey study in social science research a response rate of 80% are considered adequate.

Types of Information Resources Available for Research Activity by Postgraduate students of Ahmadu Bello University, Zaria, Nigeria

The first research question sought to ascertain the availability of information resources for research productivity in Ahmadu Bello University, Zaria. In order to achieve this objective, a list of various information resources was provided for the respondents to indicate the option that best suit their opinion in Table 4.

Table 4. Types of Information Resources Available for Research Productivity among the Respondents

S/N	Types of Information Resources	Available	Not available
		Frequency (%)	Frequency (%)
1.	Text Books	539 (100.0%)	0 (0%)
2.	Journals	539 (100.0%)	0 (0%)
3.	Newspapers	539 (100.0%)	0 (0%)

4.	Encyclopedia	393 (72%)	146 (27)
5.	Thesis/Dissertations	539 (100.0%)	0 (0%)
6.	Magazines	362 (67.2%)	177(32.8)
7.	Government Publication	139 (25.7%)	400 (74.2)
8.	Handbooks	177(32.8%)	362(67.2%)
9.	Year books	177(32.8%)	362 (67.2%)
10.	Almanac	39(7.2%)	500(92.8%)
11.	Pamphlet/posters	39(7.2%)	500(92.8%)
12.	Seminars/ conference papers	539 (100.0%)	0 (0%)
13.	Abstract	392 (72.7)	147 (27.3)
14.	Indexes	392 (72.7)	147 (27.3)
15.	Technical report	216 (40.1%)	323 (59.9%)
16.	Atlases/Maps	216 (40.1%)	323 (59.9%)
17.	E-journals	362 (67.2%)	177 (32.8%)
18.	E-thesis/Dissertation	362 (67.2%)	177 (32.8%)
19.	CD- ROM	177 (32.8%)	362 (67.2%)
20.	Online Database	393 (72.9%)	146 (27.1%)
21.	E-newspaper/magazines	146 (27.1%)	393 (72.9%)
22.	Offline Databases	393 (72.9%)	146 (27.1%)

The data in table 4 indicated that majority of the information resources are available. The most available information resources were books, journals, newspapers, thesis/dissertations, seminar/conference papers with 539 (100.0%) response rate. This means that these information resources were available across all the discipline covered by the studies. However, the least available information resources reported by the respondents were encyclopedia, offline database and online database with the same response rate of 146 (27.1%), this was followed by indexes and abstracts with 147 (27.3) responses, respectively.

The findings arising from this study is not surprising because for a university to serve all in members of the community, its information sources must be diverse and varied in nature in order to serve the library clientele in general.

Extent of utilization of information resources for research productivity postgraduate by postgraduate students of Ahmadu Bello University, Zaria, Nigeria

The third research question, which set out to determine the level of utilization of information resources for research productivity postgraduate by postgraduate students of Ahmadu Bello University, Zaria, Nigeria. Items in this section were analyzed to answer the research question.

Table 5 Extent of utilization of information resources for research productivity postgraduate by postgraduate students of Ahmadu Bello University, Zaria, Nigeria

S/N	Item	Very Large Extent	Large Extent	Low Extent	Very Low Extent	Mean	SD
		Frequency (%)	Frequency (%)	Frequency (%)	Frequency (%)		
1.	Text Books	216 (40.1)	323 (59.9)	0 (0%)	0 (0%)	3.4007	.49050
2.	Journals	216 (40.1)	323 (59.9)	0 (0%)	0 (0%)	4.0000	.00000
3.	Newspapers	216 (40.1)	323 (59.9)	0 (0%)	0 (0%)	3.4007	.49050
4.	Encyclopedia	140 (26.0)	294 (54.5)	81 (15.0)	24 (4.5)	3.0204	.76733
5.	Thesis/Dissertations	172 (31.9)	122 (22.6)	164 (30.4)	81 (15.0)	2.7143	1.07004
6.	Magazines	96 (17.8)	129 (23.9)	266 (49.4)	48 (8.9)	2.5065	.88642
7.	Government Publication	96 (17.8)	129 (23.9)	48 (8.9)	266 (49.4)	2.1020	1.19897
8.	Handbooks	0 (0%)	115 (21.3)	400 (74.2)	24 (4.5)	2.1688	.47938
9.	Year books	0 (0%)	145 (26.9)	313 (58.1)	81 (15.0)	2.1187	.63714
10.	Almanac	48 (8.9)	253 (46.9)	132 (24.5)	106 (19.7)	2.5492	.90583
11.	Pamphlet/posters		223 (41.4)	154 (28.6)	162 (30.1)	2.1132	.83832
12.	Seminars/ conference papers	295 (54.7)	139 (25.7%)	81 (15.0)	24 (4.5)	3.3080	.88448
13.	Abstract	155 (28.8)	104 (19.3)	159 (29.5)	121 (22.4)	2.5436	1.12897
14.	Indexes	174 (32.3)	80 (14.8)	163 (30.2)	122 (22.6)	2.5677	1.16028
15.	Technical report	0 (0%)	174 (32.3)	259 (48.1)	106 (19.7)	2.1262	.71028
16.	Atlases/Maps	95 (17.6)	131 (24.3)	48 (8.9)	265 (49.2)	2.1039	1.19648
18.	E-journals	362 (67.2)			177 (32.8)	3.0148	1.41019
19.	E-thesis/Dissertation	130 (24.1)	98 (18.2)	263 (48.8)	48 (8.9)	2.5751	.95211
20.	CD- ROM	98 (18.2)	231 (42.9)	48 (8.9)	162 (30.1)	2.4917	1.10315
21.	Online Database	393 (72.9)	146 (27.1)			3.7291	.44482
22.	E-newspaper/magazines	0 (0%)	146 (27.1)	216 (40.1)	177 (32.8)	1.9425	.77270
23.	Offline Databases	89 (16.5)	64 (11.9)	314 (58.3)	72 (13.4)	2.3154	.90268

Table 5 shows that out of the 23 items presented 7 seven items had a mean score of above 3.00. Ranking based on the mean score values obtained, the findings shows that the five most utilized information resources by the respondents were journals with a mean score of 4.0000,

followed by online database with a mean score of 3.7291. Textbooks and newspaper had a mean score of 3.4007 and seminar paper/conference with a mean score of 3.3080. While the 5 least used information resources were e-newspaper/magazines with a mean score of 1.9425, followed by government publication with a mean score of 2.1020, year book obtained a mean score of 2.1187 and pamphlet had a mean score of 2.1132, while, atlases/maps had a mean score of 2.1039. The findings suggest that the extent of utilization of information resources by the postgraduates' student may likely improve their research productivity as extant literature reported positive correlation between extent of utilization of information resources and their research productivity.

Challenges Faced by Postgraduate Student in their Quest for Research Productivity Ahmadu Bello University, Zaria, Nigeria

The respondents were asked to indicate the problems the faced in their quest for research productivity. To ascertain the challenges faced by the researcher during their research work, a list of possible challenges was identified and the respondents were asked to indicate the challenges they faced while conducting their research. Table 4.8 indicated the challenges face by the respondents measured based on 4-point lickert scale.

Table 6 Challenges Respondents Faced

S/ N	Item	Strongly Agree	Agree	Disagree	Strongly Disagree	Mean	SD
		Fre (%)	Frequenc y (%)	Freque ncy (%)	Frequenc y (%)		
1.	Time pressure and deadline	300 (55.7)	139 (25.7%)	7 (1.3)	93 (17.3)	3.7291	.44482
2.	Work load	300 (55.7)	23 (4.3)	200 (37.1)	16 (2.9)	2.5993	.49050
3.	Poor research skills	77 (14.2)	100 (18.6)	200 (37.1)	162 (30.1)	2.6568	.94012
4.	Poor orientation	77 (14.2)	100 (18.6)	200 (37.1)	162 (30.1)	2.6568	.94012
5.	Difficulty in accessing information resources	100 (18.6)	77 (14.2)	206 (38.2)	156 (29)	2.3284	.47006
6.	Lack of relevant and current information resources	100 (18.6)	77 (14.2)	206 (38.2)	156 (29)	2.3284	.47006
7.	Cost of publication	77 (14.2)	100 (18.6)	200 (37.1)	162 (30.1)	3.2709	.44482
8.	Lack of knowledge on how to source for research grant	140 (26.0)	6 (1)	300 (55.7)	93 (17.3)	2.9276	.85161
9.	Poor infrastructural facilities	177 (32.8)	146 (27.1)	200 (37.1)	16 (2.9)	2.2709	.44482

10.	Poor internet connectivity	177 (32.8)	146 (27.1)	200 (37.1)	16 (2.9)	2.2709	.4448 2
11.	Lack of awareness about the existing information resources	140 (26.0)	6 (1)	93 (17.3)	300 (55.7)	2.0000	.0000 0
12.	Limited access to some information resources	95 (17.6)	131 (24.3)	48 (8.9)	265 (49.2)	2.1039	1.1964 8
13.	Lack of skills on how to use the resources	77 (14.2)	100 (18.6)	200 (37.1)	162 (30.1)	2.9276	.8516 1
14.	Poor electricity supply	177 (32.8)	146 (27.1)	200 (37.1)	16 (2.9)	2.0000	.0000 0
15.	Lack of assistance from the library staff	177 (32.8)	146 (27.1)	200 (37.1)	16 (2.9)	2.0000	.0000 0
16.	Limited subscribed titles	89 (16.5)	64 (11.9)	314 (58.3)	72 (13.4)	2.3154	.90268
17.	Delay in library operations through manual process	7 (1.3)	170 (31.5)	216 (40.1)	146 (27.1)	1.7291	.4448 2
18.	Non-conducive working environment	00 (00.0)	300 (55.7)	93 (17.3)	146 (27.1)	3.7291	.4448 2

The data in table 6 shows the challenges faced by the respondents based on their level of intensity. Ranking the challenges based on the mean score shows the three most intense challenges were time pressure and deadline, non-conducive working environment with the same mean score of 3.7291, followed by cost of publication with a mean score of 3.2709. While the three least challenging issues were delay in library operations through manual process with a mean score of 1.7291, followed by lack of awareness about the existing information resources, poor electricity supply and lack of assistance from the library staff with the same mean score of 2.0000.

The findings arising from this study is not surprising because for a university to serve all in members of the community, its information sources must be diverse and varied in nature in order to serve the library clientele in general.

Discussion of Findings

The data of this study corroborate the findings of who revealed that 93(90%) of the respondents indicated that all the identified information resources were available for use with the highest mean of $\bar{X} = 3.71$; $SD = 0.499$. Also, Naidu, Rajput, and Motiyani,(2007) identified library resources at Guru Gobind Singh Indraprastha University (India) and Okiki (2013) who reported information resources at Nigerian federal university respectively to include journals, data archives, manuscripts, maps, books, magazines, theses, newspapers, e-mail, research reports, and bibliographic databases. Based on the finding of the mean scores obtained it could be deduced that

journals, books, websites, search engines, e-journals, e-books and so on were the most available information resources to the academic staff members in Nigerian federal universities.

The findings of this study are in line with that of Kutu (2020) who reported textbooks, newspapers, journal collections, encyclopedias and dictionaries. While the least utilized information resources were indexes, manuscripts and technical reports. This result corroborates the findings by Ishola and Obadare (2014), who reported that textbooks, dictionary, encyclopedia and Newspapers as the most utilized information resources in South-West Nigeria. This result is in line with the submission of Ani (2013) who indicated that a positive influence exists amongst accessibility as well as utilization of information resources by faculty members for the enhancement of their academic and research productivity.

The findings of this study is in agreement with the findings of Oyedapo and Ojo (2013) reported that postgraduate students and researchers in Obafemi Awolowo University indicated frequent power failure (68%), difficulty in finding relevant information (62%), lack of information retrieval skills (61%), slow access period (61%), lack of internet access (50%), lack of relevant e-resources in the library (57%) and cost of access to internet is too high (53%) as obstacles to their research productivity. Similarly, Majyambere (2015) found that humanities/arts international postgraduate students of UKZN identified several problems that hinder their use of Electronic Information Resources. The problems are summarized into: lack of off campus access to Electronic Information Resources; insufficient computers to access OPAC; slow internet connection within campus; problem of password requirements during search process; insufficient skill to construct search terms; some academic journals are not accessible; low computer use skills; lack of printing option; Inability to access full-text of books or journal articles; slow download speed and difficulty to read on screen.

Conclusion

The study demonstrated that the availability, accessibility and utilisation of information resources remain critical factors for enhancing the research productivity of postgraduate students Ahmadu Bello University, Zaria, Kaduna State, Nigeria. Information resources, such as books, journals, newspapers, thesis/ dissertations, seminar/conference papers, were found to be the most available resources among the respondents, while the least available included least available information resources reported by the respondents were encyclopedia, offline database, online database indexes and abstracts. It is noticeable from the overall findings of this study that hand book and encyclopedia and e-newspaper/magazines has low research productivity by postgraduate students in Ahmadu Bello University, Zaria, Kaduna State, Nigeria in the surveyed faculties was low. The findings indicated that cost of publication, time pressure etc have affected the extent of research productivity by lecturers in private Universities in Nigeria.

Recommendation

The Department of Library and information science should made provision on necessary facilities that will enhance high level of utilization of library resources which will should be adequately provided and work pressure should be reduced at the postgraduate level.

Reference

- Ahmadu et al. (2024) – *Availability and Use of Digital Information Resources and Services for Access and Use by Postgraduate Students in University Libraries in Kaduna State*. Survey of 377 postgrads across three universities (including ABU, Zaria) found robust offerings (e-journals, OPAC, etc.) but called for enhanced user awareness initiatives (ljisr.net.ng).
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