



Comparative Analysis of Internet Access and Current Awareness Services as Correlates of Library Resource Utilization among postgraduate students in University of Calabar, Nigeria

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Abstract

This study examined a comparative analysis of Internet access and current awareness services as correlates of library resource utilization among postgraduate students in the University of Calabar, Nigeria. Two research questions and two hypotheses were stated in the study. The study adopted a correlational survey research design and involved a population of 1,827 postgraduate students across 13 faculties. Using stratified and accidental sampling techniques, a sample of 435 students was drawn. A structured questionnaire titled Internet Access, Current Awareness Services and Utilization of Library Resources Questionnaire (IACAAULRQ) was used for data collection. The instrument's reliability coefficient, determined using Cronbach's alpha, was 0.81, indicating high internal consistency. Data were analyzed using simple linear regression to test the formulated hypotheses. Findings revealed that Internet access significantly predicted utilization of library resources among postgraduate students (Adjusted $R^2 = .011$, $F = 6.010$, $p < .05$), implying that access to the Internet contributes 1.1% variance in resource utilization. Similarly, current awareness services significantly predicted library resource utilization (Adjusted $R^2 = .007$, $F = 3.949$, $p < .05$), explaining 0.7% of the variance. The study concluded that both Internet access and current awareness services play vital roles in enhancing effective library resource utilization. It was recommended that the university should provide unrestricted and stable Internet access to students and strengthen current awareness mechanisms such as notice boards and online alerts to keep users informed about library resources and services.

Keywords: Current awareness services, Internet access, library resource utilization, postgraduate students, University of Calabar

Introduction

In the 21st century, access to information is central to research, learning, and innovation in higher education. Academic libraries serve as vital gateways to global knowledge networks, offering both print and electronic resources to support students, researchers, and faculty members. However, the level at which library users utilize these resources depends largely on their ability to access information efficiently and stay informed about available materials. Two crucial factors that influence this utilization are Internet access and current awareness services (Adeniran, 2020). The Internet provides seamless connectivity to vast repositories of digital knowledge, while current awareness services help users remain updated on new publications, databases, and scholarly content relevant to their academic pursuits.

Postgraduate students, as advanced users of library resources, rely heavily on both the Internet and

library-mediated alert systems to enhance their research productivity. The extent to which they effectively access online resources and are aware of newly acquired materials may determine their level of library resource utilization. Despite the availability of these services in many Nigerian university libraries, utilization rates among postgraduate students appear inconsistent and sometimes low (Okon & Eno, 2022).

The emergence of the Internet has revolutionized how students and researchers search for, retrieve, and use information. In academic settings, Internet access is not only a technological privilege but an academic necessity that facilitates access to electronic journals, databases, and institutional repositories (Ogunmodede & Adio, 2021). In libraries, the Internet provides a bridge between traditional and electronic services, enabling remote access to information resources. When

Internet connectivity is reliable, users can fully utilize e-resources such as e-books, academic databases, and digital theses (Ani & Edem, 2019). Conversely, poor connectivity or limited bandwidth often hampers effective use of library resources, especially among postgraduate students whose research demands extensive literature searches.

On the other hand, current awareness services (CAS) are designed to keep users informed about recent developments in their fields of interest. Such services include email alerts, bulletin boards, SDI (Selective Dissemination of Information), newsletters, and web-based notifications (Nnadozie & Nnadozie, 2020). Through CAS, libraries ensure that users are promptly informed about new acquisitions, upcoming conferences, or newly subscribed databases. Effective CAS enhances users' awareness and motivation to engage with library resources, thereby improving utilization rates (Ezeani & Igwesi, 2018).

Library resource utilization refers to the extent to which users' access, use, and benefit from both print and electronic resources provided by the library (Adeleke & Olorunsola, 2019). It is often measured through indicators such as frequency of library visits, database logins, borrowing rates, and engagement with digital repositories. Studies have shown that library resource utilization is influenced by several factors including information literacy, accessibility, relevance, and user awareness (Ola & Ojedokun, 2020).

At the University of Calabar, the postgraduate library section provides Internet-enabled computers, access to online databases, and current awareness services through newsletters, notice boards, and social media updates. Yet, anecdotal evidence and preliminary observations suggest that many postgraduate students still underutilize available library resources. This may be due to issues such as poor Internet connectivity, irregular awareness updates, or lack of digital literacy skills.

The use of the internet has enabled easy access to many resources and information sharing has, therefore significantly increased. It has become a challenge for librarians to prove the importance of libraries in the age of easy access to the internet. To meet this challenge, libraries take the initiative to use the internet in their public services and internal operations, and make the internet an integral part of library's infrastructure. The emergence of computer and telecommunication technologies in recent decades has had a great impact on libraries. Many of these technologies have been integrated into library

operations such as acquisition, cataloguing, circulation, interlibrary loan and reference services.

Ameyaw and Asante (2016) noted that access to internet services is of great significance to a school. Updated and current information is well organized on the internet for easy search, and has contributed significantly to student's academic performance and research. The use of the internet has enabled easy access to many resources and information sharing by the students, teachers and the community at large. Internet is a pool of knowledge and any school that fails to provide her students access to the internet is unseating the country from her throne of dignity among other dignitaries.

Brunniy, Schraw, Norby and Ronning (2014) who noted that the internet is a powerful and efficient tool for searching, retrieving and disseminating information, with a significant impact on students and scholars worldwide, stressing that the internet can be consulted and like a reference resources, it is broader and highly dynamic. It also provides a means of scholarly communication. The internet has liberated scholarship from the academic, social, legal, political, economic and geographical constraints associated with traditional print media. This liberation has had a major effect on scholar's research capacity and productivity. It has also aided scholars who want to stay at the forefront of research and keep up to date with developments in his or her research fields by utilizing the internet.

Today's library activities are no longer confined within their physical territories. Many libraries are electronically networked and rely heavily on computer and telecommunication technologies as a means of providing library and information services. Information can be stored in various electronic forms and transmitted at high speed over electronic networks to wherever there are computer facilities to receive it. Internet has become an integral part of library and information centres that helps in meeting the information requirements of the users in a timely manner. Infact, the library and the internet are being viewed increasingly as a versatile unified system, providing an enormous variety of materials in different formats.

According to Ashikuzzaman (2013), current awareness services is the dissemination of information that keeps its users well informed and up to date in their fields of basic interest as well as in related subjects, stressing that it is a system of getting knowledge on recent development and especially those developments which relate to the special interest of the individual.

It is a device of the information system through which the users of information can be

informed promptly, as soon as possible after publications but before absorption into the comprehensive secondary sources of current literature on a broad subject field or on an area in which a group of persons are interested and presented in a manner, volume and rhythm intended to facilitate or cultivate current approach to information. Current awareness services include the selective dissemination of information, publication of current contents, and publication of list of new arrivals, information retrieval and online services. The objective of current awareness services is to make available current information to those who need it, usually for current researcher and to sustain the interest of the library users in services rendered by the library to make them lively and active readers for their benefits. Provision of information on recently required materials benefits all the users in several ways such as providing maximum exposure and utilization of the library information resources.

Current awareness service involves the review of publications as soon as they arrive the library, selection of information pertinent to users' needs and recording individual items to be brought to the attention of those persons whose work are related. It is the act of keeping users abreast of current information on development in their subject area of interest. This service is essentially to advertise the services and resources of a library collection rare books and special materials the library acquired. Exhibition is generally done in the university stimulate readers interest on a particular filed in the community. For example, exhibition of library materials on topics that might be of interest to the public, exhibition of information resources books, periodicals, films, videotapes, tape slides on a subject like Acquired Immune Deficiency Syndrome (AIDS).

According to Roussouw and Fouries (2017), current awareness service involves the review of publications as soon as they arrive the library, selection of information pertinent to users' needs and recording individual items to be brought to the attention of those persons whose work are related, stressing that it is the act of keeping users abreast of current information on development in their subject area of interest. This service is essentially to advertise the services and resources of a library collection rare books and special materials the library acquired. Current awareness services are key elements in libraries and information centres since the ancient times. It's a vital role in keeping library users up-to-date is increasing becoming a measure of the library's contribution to the transformation and development of a society and the nation at large.

Despite significant investments in information and communication technology (ICT) infrastructure and current awareness initiatives, many Nigerian university libraries still face challenges related to low utilization of library resources by postgraduate students. In the University of Calabar, the library provides access to e-resources through Internet-connected systems and maintains various current awareness channels. However, informal observations indicate that postgraduate students often prefer external Internet cafés, personal data subscriptions, or other online sources instead of using the library's digital platforms.

Furthermore, although current awareness services are designed to inform users of newly available materials, many postgraduate students appear unaware of the resources and services the library offers. Consequently, valuable scholarly materials remain underutilized, and the overall impact of the library on postgraduate research productivity is diminished. Previous studies have examined either Internet access or current awareness services in isolation, but few have comparatively analyzed their relative influence on library resource utilization (Nnadozie & Nnadozie, 2020).

This gap underscores the need for a study that empirically investigates and compares how Internet access and current awareness services relate to the utilization of library resources among postgraduate students in the University of Calabar. Understanding these relationships will help library management prioritize interventions that can enhance postgraduate research support, improve service delivery, and optimize library resource use in the digital age.

Purpose of the study

The main purpose of this study is to examine the comparative Analysis of Internet Access and Current Awareness Services as Correlates of Library Resource Utilization among postgraduate students in University of Calabar, Nigeria.

Specifically, the study sought to;

1. Examine the prediction of access to internet and utilization of library resources.
2. Access the relationship between current awareness services and utilization of library resources.

Statement of Hypotheses

The following hypotheses was formulated and tested:

1. Access to internet does not significantly predict utilization of library resources.

2. Current awareness service does not significantly predict utilization of library resources.

Methodology

The study adopted a correlational survey research design. A survey design is one in which a group of people or items are studied by collecting and analyzing data from a few people or items considered to be representatives of the entire group. According to Idaka and Anagbogu (2012), it is a design where the researcher cannot manipulate the variables because their effects have already occurred.

This study was carried out in University of Calabar which is situated in Calabar Cross River State, South-south, Nigeria. It is one of Nigerians second generation federal universities. The University of Calabar was a campus of the University of Nigeria (Nsukka) until 1975. The architecture was designed by John Elliott. It was established by decree to fulfill the traditional mandate; its motto is knowledge for service.

The population of study comprised of all post graduate students in the 13 faculties in University of Calabar, Calabar during the 2017/2018 academic session. The total number of postgraduate students in the programme is one thousand, eight hundred and twenty-seven (1827). The stratified random sampling technique was employed for sample selection. Stratified sampling is a probability sampling technique wherein the researcher divides the entire population into different subgroups or strata, then selects the final subjects proportionally from the different strata. The stratified sampling technique was first used to sub divide the zone into different faculties. First, 40% of the faculties were selected using purposive sampling technique to ensure an equal representation of each faculty. This summed up to a total of 5 faculties. Thereafter, 50% of the students in the faculties were selected using accidental sampling technique. This gives a total of four hundred and thirty-five students and formed the sample of the study. The sample of the study comprised of 435 (50%) postgraduate students of the University of Calabar.

This instrument used for the study is a structured questionnaire titled "Internet access, current awareness services and Utilization of Library Resource Questionnaire (IACAAULRQ). The instrument was divided into three sections. Session A was designed to elicit demographic responses such as age, sex, occupation, and marital status. Section B consisted of 10 items measured access to internet and current awareness services while Section C measured- utilization of library resources with ten

items. Respondents were asked to indicate how much they agree or disagree with the items, using a four-point rating scale (Strongly Agree, Agree, Disagree, Strongly Disagree).

In this study, the face and content validity of the instrument were carried out by two experts in the researcher's department and two test experts in Measurement and Evaluation in the Department of Educational Foundation, University of Calabar. The instrument made up of 20 items was given to experts in measurement and evaluation to ensure that the items measure what the researcher intends to measure. The items were scrutinized and the items that were not relevant were eliminated. All corrections were made and a draft of the instrument was developed for the study.

To determine the reliability of the instrument, a trial test was carried out using a sample of fifty (30) students purposively selected from University of Cross River State, which is not part of the study area and Cronbach's alpha procedure was used to establish the degree of consistency of the instrument. The result revealed an estimate of reliability of .81. The reliability values were high enough to warrant the use of the instrument in the actual study.

The researcher with some trained personnel proceeded to the various faculties sampled to collect data from the selected respondents after due permission and informed consent has been obtained from the Dean of Graduate School. The researcher meets with course representatives to explain his mission; the students selected for the study were assured of their privacy and confidentiality of responses. The questionnaire was administered by the researcher himself together with his trained research assistants and retrieved immediately after responding to them. The researcher instructs the respondents on how to fill each section of the questionnaire. It is hoped that all copies of the instrument administered were successfully retrieved. Data were analysed using Simple linear regression statistical tool.

Results

Hypothesis one

This research hypothesis stated that access to internet does not significantly predict utilization of library resources. The independent variable of this hypothesis was access to internet while the dependent variable was utilization of library resources. Simple regression statistics was used in testing the hypothesis and the results are presented in Table 1.

The simple regression analysis in Table 1 on the prediction of access to internet in predicting utilization of library resources produced an adjusted

R^2 of .011. This implies that only 1.1 percent of the variance can be predicted from the independent variable (access to internet) on utilization of library resources among postgraduate students in University of Calabar. The F-value value of 6.010 of the Analysis of Variance (ANOVA) obtained from the regression table with a p-value .015 with 1 and 433 degrees of

freedom at .05 level of significance showed that the null hypothesis was rejected. This result therefore signifies that access to internet significantly predicted utilization of library resources among postgraduate students by 1 percent. The result therefore implies that there was a significant effect of access to internet on utilization of library resources.

TABLE 1
Summary of data and simple regression analysis on the prediction of access to internet and utilization of library resources among postgraduate students in University of Calabar, Calabar

R	R Square	Adjusted R Square	Std. Error of the Estimate		
.117	.014	.011	7.14131		
Model	Sum of squares	DF	Mean Square	F	Sig.
Regression	306.501	1	306.501	6.010*	.015
Residual	22082.248	433	50.998		
Total	22388.749	434			
Coefficients					
Model	Unstandardized Coefficients		Standardized Coefficients	t	Sig.
	B	Std. Error	Beta		
(Constant)	30.591	1.898		16.118	.000
access to internet	.309	.126	.117	2.452	.015

Predictors: (Constant): access to internet

b. Dependent Variable: utilization of library resources

Hypothesis Two

This research hypothesis stated that current awareness services does not significantly predict utilization of library resources. The independent variable of this hypothesis was current awareness services while the dependent variable was utilization of library resources. Simple regression statistics was used in testing the hypothesis and the results are presented in Table 2.

The simple regression analysis in Table 2 on the prediction of current awareness services in predicting utilization of library resources produced an adjusted R^2 of .007. This implies that only 0.7 percent of the variance can be predicted from the independent

variable (current awareness services) on utilization of library resources among postgraduate students in University of Calabar. The F-value value of 3.949 of the Analysis of Variance (ANOVA) obtained from the regression table with a p-value .048 with 1 and 433 degrees of freedom at .05 level of significance showed that the null hypothesis was rejected. This result therefore signifies that current awareness services significantly predicted utilization of library resources among postgraduate students by 0.7 percent. The result therefore implies that there was a significant effect of current awareness services on utilization of library resources.



TABLE 2
Summary of data and simple regression analysis on the prediction of current awareness services and utilization of library resources among postgraduate students in University of Calabar, Calabar

R	R Square	Adjusted R Square	Std. Error of the Estimate			
.095	.009	.007	7.15813			
Model	Sum of squares	DF	Mean Square	F	Sig	
Regression	202.337	1	202.337	3.949*	.048	
Residual	22186.413	433	51.239			
Total	22388.749	434				
Coefficients						
Coefficients						
Model	Unstandardized Coefficients		Standardized		t	Sig.
	B	Std. Error	Beta			
(Constant)	39.179	2.048			19.135	.000
Current awareness services	-.256	.129	-.095		-1.987	.048

Predictors: (Constant): current awareness services

b. Dependent Variable: utilization of library resources

Discussion of Results

This section is devoted to the discussion of findings of the research questions. The discussion was done according to each of the research hypothesis.

Access to internet and utilization of library resources

This research hypothesis which addresses the prediction of access to internet on utilization of library resources among postgraduate students in University of Calabar revealed that there was a significant influence of access to internet on utilization of library resources. Access to internet services by the students is critical to learning and research. This result is true because with reliable internet, postgraduate students can easily access e-books, e-journals, institutional repositories, and online databases subscribed to by the university.

This result is in tandem with Brunniy, Schraw, Norby and Ronning (2014) who noted that the internet is a powerful and efficient tool for searching, retrieving and disseminating information, with a significant impact on students and scholars worldwide, stressing that the internet can be consulted and like a reference resources, it is broader and highly dynamic. It also provides a means of scholarly communication. The internet has liberated scholarship from the academic, social, legal, political, economic and geographical constraints associated with traditional print media. This liberation has had a major effect on scholar's research capacity and productivity. It has also aided scholars who want to stay at the forefront of research and keep up to date with developments in his or her research fields by utilizing the internet.

This result is also in tandem with Ameyaw and Asante (2016) who noted that access to internet

services is of great significance to a school. Updated and current information is well organized on the internet for easy search, and has contributed significantly to student's academic performance and research. The use of the internet has enabled easy access to many resources and information sharing by the students, teachers and the community at large. Internet is a pool of knowledge and any school that fails to provide her students access to the internet is unseating the country from her throne of dignity among other dignitaries.

Current awareness services and utilization of library resources

This research hypothesis which addresses the prediction of current awareness services on utilization of library resources among postgraduate students in University of Calabar revealed that there was a significant influence of current awareness services on utilization of library resources. This result is true because being abreast with current information in the library boosts student's knowledge and research. This result is in agreement with Ashikuzzaman (2013) who noted that current awareness services as dissemination of information that keeps its users well informed and up to date in their fields of basic interest as well as in related subjects, stressing that it is a system of getting knowledge on recent development and especially those developments which relate to the special interest of the individual.

It is a device of the information system through which the users of information can be informed promptly, as soon as possible after publications but before absorption into the comprehensive secondary sources of current literature on a broad subject field or on an area in which a group of persons are interested and presented

in a manner, volume and rhythm intended to facilitate or cultivate current approach to information. Current awareness services include the selective dissemination of information, publication of current contents, and publication of list of new arrivals, information retrieval and online services. The objective of current awareness services is to make available current information to those who need it, usually for current researcher and to sustain the interest of the library users in services rendered by the library to make them lively and active readers for their benefits. Provision of information on recently required materials benefits all the users in several ways such as providing maximum exposure and utilization of the library information resources.

This result also agrees with Roussouw and Fouries (2017) who noted that current awareness service involves the review of publications as soon as they arrive the library, selection of information pertinent to users' needs and recording individual items to be brought to the attention of those persons whose work are related, stressing that it is the act of keeping users abreast of current information on development in their subject area of interest. This service is essentially to advertise the services and resources of a library collection rare books and special materials the library acquired. Current awareness services are key elements in libraries and information centres since the ancient times. It's a vital role in keeping library users up-to-date is increasing becoming a measure of the library's contribution to the transformation and development of a society and the nation at large.

Conclusion

Based on the result of the study, it was concluded among others that:

1. Access to internet is critical to effective and efficient utilization of library resources.
2. Current awareness services predict utilization of library resources.

Recommendations

On the basis of the findings of the study, the following recommendations were made:

1. The University community should commit her energy in providing unrestricted internet access to all members of the school community for optimum school productivity.
2. Standard notice boards, bulletin boards and bill boards should be placed at vantage points throughout the universities so that the user

communities are duly notified about the information resource and services of the library.

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