

LIBRARY DATABANK AS A PANACEA FOR ELEARNING AND RESEARCH OUTPUT AMONG BINGHAM UNIVERSITY ACADEMIC STAFF: A CASE OF COVID-19 LOCKDOWN

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Abstract

Purpose: This paper examines library databank/database as a means of enhancing eLearning and research output of academic staff of Bingham University during the Covid-19 lockdown.

Design /Methodology /Approach: A descriptive survey research design was adopted in conducting the research; A structured electronic questionnaire using 'Google Form' was employed in selected Bingham University Staff whatsapp group to obtain data from 120 respondents, out of which 102 responses were received. This gave a response rate of 85%. The data obtained were analyzed using Percentages to answer the research questions. Hence, any percentage that ranged from 50% and above was regarded as positive and accepted while below 50% was regarded as negative and rejected.

Findings: The paper revealed among others that majority of the academic staff rarely have the knowledge of the various databases hosted by their library hence, the extent of use of these databases for their day to day academic work is grossly underutilized. However, ignorance of the existence of these databases was identified as a major cause for its underutilization.

Implications: The primary aim and objective of a library or any information resource centre is to select, acquire, process, store and make available for users essential and relevant information resources either in physical or e-copy for easy retrieval, however, users' knowledge of the existence of these resources is paramount and a prerequisite to its maximal utilization.

Originality: The library should embark on a deliberate awareness campaign regarding the existence of the library's databases using mediums like the university's radio station, billboards, handbills, fliers, social media platforms such like facebook, tweeter, blogs, whatsapp, instagram, etc.

Keywords: Databank, eLearning, Academic staff, Bingham University

Paper Type: Empirical

Introduction

The emergence of online databases has introduced a new era for information searching and retrieval from traditional retrieval systems to network based IR systems. Gray (1976) sees online databank as a collection of bibliographic information stored in a computer or a central computer and retrospective search is made possible remotely from a distance computer through the use of software. In the same vein, Rouse (2019) also sees databank as a collection of information that is organized so that it can be easily accessed, managed and updated. Cena (2020) further stressed that databanks are computer structures that save, organize, protect and deliver data. Consequently, databases are

basically containers for data. However, for the purpose of this study, databank and database would be used interchangeably because it means the same. Meanwhile, some popular academic databases hosted by library websites are; Directory of Open Access Journals (DOAJ), Directory of Open Access Books (DOAB), African Journal Online (AJOL), Journal Storage (JSTOR), Bentham Science Publishing (BSP), BioMed Central, Bioline International, Online Access to Research in the Environment (OARE), Health International Network Access to Research Initiative (HINARI), EBSCOHost, PDF drive etc. However, the library databank or database contains basically electronic resources and are used by library users' especially academic staff

for teaching, research, forming note and assignment. E-learning according to AllenComm (2018), simply puts it as the use of digital learning assets to promote the growth of knowledge and shape behaviors, deployed via computer, phone, or another digital device. Market Business News (2019) further stressed that E-learning refers to a learning system that we can obtain through the internet using an electronic device. It also stated that e-learning is also called online learning or online education. The 'E' in E-learning stands for 'Electronic'. Hence, the original term 'electronic learning'. The word 'online' in this context means with an internet connection or via the internet. In other words, E-learning is training provided via a computer or digital device, allowing technology to facilitate learning anytime, anywhere. However, the following are some of the modalities that are considered e-Learning: Module or course, Videos and motion graphics, Gamification, Virtual instructor-led training (VILT) such as WebExs or webinar, MOOCs, Social forums, Podcasts, Real-time polling, among others.

Academic staff are academic professionals who are responsible for planning, directing and undertaking academic teaching and research within the institutions (Harvey, 2019). The University of Cardiff (2004) further stated that, an academic staff means the academic staff of the university which includes any person who holds the title of Professor, Reader, Senior Lecturer or Lecturer. Hence, academic staff are staff bestowed with the responsibility of teaching, learning and research in an academic environment. The library owns these groups of users the obligation to provide them with apt, relevant and current information resources that will meet their information needs and assist them to carry out their task effectively. Meanwhile, the contents of any library database which are also referred to as electronic resources, have become major tools in carry out research in universities by academic staff. Academic staff should be able to access library databanks offline right in their university offices/ laboratory or in the university library and as well access the database off campus via

the Internet. However, this is possible when a university library has subscribed to various electronic resources and databases which are either closed accessed/fee based or open accessed/free of charge. Some of these databases contain numerous electronic resources in various forms ranging from books, journals, pamphlets, magazines, reports, theses, dissertations, projects, etc.

Bingham University was established by the Evangelical Church Winning All (ECWA) following its formal licensing by the National University Commission (NUC) on 5th January, 2005. As the name implies, the University was named after one of the trio pioneer of Sudan Interior Missionaries, Rowland Victor Bingham whose vision along with those of other founding fathers desired to produce committed Christians thus, the University emerged as a tool through which Christian centered leaders would be produced. The founding fathers intend to meet the soaring need for not only quality secular tertiary education but education that recognizes and integrates moral and spiritual values in the face of degenerating social decadence in Nigerian University campuses (Ajibili and Gana, 2013). Academic programmes of Bingham University began in May 2006 at Jos ECWA Theological Seminary temporary site and moved to its permanent site two years after, precisely in March 2008 to Karu, Nasarawa State, Nigeria, at the outskirts of Abuja, the Federal Capital City. The University has in place an ICT centre with a student portal for integrated services developed and maintained by the staff of the ICT, headed by a Director. The University library works in conjunction with the ICT unit to provide Electronic Library Services both via intranet and the internet, providing students and staff access to a wide range of academic resources and databases including the robust NUC Virtual Library.

Statement of the Problem

With the sudden outbreak of Covid-19 pandemic and the devastating health threat it poses to the society at large, The Federal Ministry of Education, Nigeria was left with no choice but to direct the closure of all institutions

as a last resort to control the wide spread of this deadly virus. Meanwhile, as a way of engaging these students who would be home indefinitely till further notice, all Institutional heads such as Vice Chancellors and Rectors were directed to immediately commence an eLearning programme for their students during the lockdown period. However, with the proposed eLearning amidst this lockdown, the library would be required to meet the information needs of its users by providing them with online access to numerous, apt, current and relevant information resources contained in its databank. This study intends to investigate the extent of awareness and utilization of these databases by academic staff, the extent of relevance and usefulness of these databases in their day to day academic activity, and the challenges militating against the maximum utilization of these resources will also be investigated with possible solutions proffered.

Research Questions

To achieve the objective of the study, the following research questions were raised:

1. To what extent are the users familiar with the existence of the databases?
2. To what extent are the databases utilized?
3. For what purpose are the databases used for?
4. What are the challenges associated with the utilization of the databases?

Review of Related Literature

Emergence of electronic resources has cut the barrier to valuable information resources which until now were difficult to access especially by scholars in the developing nations of the world (Isah, 2010). Electronic resources are invaluable research tools which complement print based resources in any traditional library; they provide access to information that might be restricted to the user because of geographical location or finances (Sabouri, Shamsaii, Sinaki and Aboueye, 2010).

Egberongbe (2011) stated that the emergence of electronic resources has tremendously affected how information is been accessed and used by academic staff in Nigerian University. In her study, she surveyed the use of electronic resources by academic staff at the University of Lagos, Nigeria. It was found that over 90% of the respondents accessed and used electronic resources in carryout research in their various disciplines.

Manda (2005) examined the extent of access and use of electronic resources by researchers by ten academic staff in Tanzania. The findings of the study revealed that majority of the respondents were using electronic resources in their research. Madhusuudhn (2010) examined the use of electronic resources by research scholars of Kuruksetra University in India. It was found that electronic resources have become a major part of the information needs of research scholars at Kurukshetra University.

In a study conducted by Ajala, Adegun, Adetunji and Oyewunmi (2010) on the use of electronic resources by academic staff in Ladoke Akintola University of Technology Ogbomoso, Nigeria, found that a vast majority of respondents were using electronic resources in their research.

Electronic databases can be accessed anywhere from remote location and users do not need to go to the library to get information (Soyizwapi, 2005). Online databases involve searching of remotely located information through interactive computer and communications networks irrespective of any physical or geographical location.

Al-Ansari (2006) studied the use of Internet by academic staff in Kuwait University, the Interest resources that are used and the purpose for use. He postulated that, the Internet has changed the research process in the universities, but, that the intensity of Internet use varies from individual to individual, institution to institution and from country to country. Sharma (2009) perceived that availability of electronic resources is now common in university libraries in India; and carried out a survey to find out the preferences and frequency of use of online resources among

research scholars at the Guru Gobind Singh Indraprastha University. It was found that the use of electronic journals was relatively high among the researchers, with high frequency of use. This shows an increasing trend towards access and use of relevant electronic resources. In another study in Botswana by Ojedokun and Owolabi (2003) studied the extent of use of electronic resources for teaching and research activities by academic staff at the University of Botswana. The results showed that most respondents were using electronic resources.

Research Methodology

A descriptive survey research design was used for the study. A structured electronic questionnaire using 'Google Form' was employed in selected Bingham University Staff whatsapp group to obtain data from 120 respondents, out of which 102 responses were received. This gave a response rate of 85%. Electronic questionnaires eliminate the costs associated with printing and distributing paper-based questionnaire. Collecting data in

electronic format reduces time and costs required for data processing and may increase public confidence in the anonymity of their responses. However, random sampling technique was used to overcome problems associated with large and dispersed population or where it is expensive and time consuming. Also, this justification is based on Nwana's account (as cited in Bassi and Camble, 2011) who stated that, if a population was in many hundreds, one needs a sample size of 20%, and if a population is in a few thousands, one needs a sample size of 10%, but for a population of several thousands, one needs a sample of 5% or less. The data collected were analyzed using percentages to answer the research questions. The decision for determining the lower and upper limits of the respondents' opinions was based on the real limits of number. Hence, any percentage that ranged from 50% and above was regarded as positive and accepted while below 50% was regarded as negative and rejected.

Data Analysis and Discussion

Table 1: Which of the Databases Hosted by BHU Library Online are you familiar?

S/N	ITEM	RESPONSE RATE (%)				Decision
		SA	A	SD	D	
1.	I am aware that <i>HINARI</i> is hosted on BHU Library website	18.8	33.6	13.3	34.3	A
2.	I am aware that <i>AGORA</i> is hosted on BHU Library website	16.1	25.8	9.7	48.4	D
3.	I am aware that <i>EBSCOhost</i> is hosted on BHU Library website	16.1	22.6	9.7	51.6	D
4.	I am aware that <i>GOALI</i> is hosted on BHU Library website	16.1	16.1	9.7	58.1	D
5.	I am aware that <i>JSTOR</i> is hosted on BHU Library website	22.6	22.6	9.6	45.2	D
6.	I am aware that <i>OARE</i> is hosted on BHU Library website	16.1	16.1	9.7	58.1	D
7.	I am aware that <i>PDF-DRIVE</i> is hosted on BHU Library website	22.6	25.8	0	51.6	D
8.	I am aware that <i>National Digital Library of India</i> is hosted on BHU Library website	9.7	12.9	19.4	58.1	D

Key1: SA-Strongly Agree, A-Agree, SD-Strongly Disagree, D-Disagree.

Table 1 shows the responses of respondents presented in percentages as regards which of the databases hosted by BHU library that they are familiar with. The overall response showed that HINARI had a general positive response of 52.4% (18.8+32.6) while the awareness of AGORA, EBSCOHost, GOALI, JSTOR, OARE, PDF-

Drive and National Digital Library of India, all received responses below 50% thus this is generally assumed as a negative response.

Therefore, going by the real limits of number, only item 1 (HINARI) scored above 50% on the positive thus, it is assumed that the academic staff of the University are more familiar with it.

Table 2: Which of the Databases Do you often Use for your Day to Day Academic Activity?

S/N	ITEM	RESPONSE RATE (%)				Decision
		SA	A	SD	D	
1.	I often use HINARI for my day to day academic activity	15.4	23.1	3.8	57.7	D
2.	I often use AGORA for my day to day academic activity.	4.0	8.0	4.0	84	D
3.	I often use EBSCO Host for my day to day academic activity.	7.4	22.2	7.4	63	D
4.	I often use GOALI for my day to day academic activity.	0	12	12	76	D
5.	I often use JSTOR for my day to day academic activity.	12	24	4	60	D
6.	I often use OARE for my day to day academic activity.	0	12	12	76	D
7.	I often use PDFDRIVE for my day to day academic activity.	20	20	8	52	D
8.	I often use National Digital Library of India for my day to day academic activity.	4	0	12	84	D

Key1: SA-Strongly Agree, A-Agree, SD-Strongly Disagree, D-Disagree.

Table 2 shows the percentage ratings of the respondents on the general use of the databases by the academic staff. The general response rate showed that item 1-8 (HINARI, AGORA, EBSCOHost, GOALI, JSTOR, OARE, PDF-Drive and National Digital Library of India) all received an overall negative response of 61.5%,

88%, 70.4%, 88%, 64%, 88%, 60% and 96% respectively.

Therefore, going by the real limits of number, all items (1-8) scored above 50% on the negative thus, it is assumed that the utilization of the library's databases among the academic staff of Bingham University is overly low.

Table 3: What do you Basically Use the E-resources of these Databases for?

S/N	ITEM	RESPONSE RATE (%)				Rating
		SA	A	SD	D	
1.	I basically use them for my Research Works	43.3	36.9	6.7	13.3	1 st
2.	I basically use them for my Students' Assignments	16	36	12	36	4 th
3.	I basically use them for my Students' Notes	8.7	52.2	8.7	30.4	3 rd
4.	I basically use them for my Teaching/Lessons	8.7	60.9	0	30.4	2 nd

Key1: SA-Strongly Agree, A-Agree, SD-Strongly Disagree, D-Disagree.

Table 3 shows the ratings of the response of academic staff as regards the purpose in which they use the database for. The overall rating showed that item 1 (I basically use them for my research works) had a response rate of 80.2% and was ranked highest, followed by item 4 (I basically use them for my teaching/lessons) with a response rate of 69.6%, then item 3 (I

basically use them for my students' notes) with a response rate of 60.9% was ranked thirdly, while item 2 (I basically use them for my students' assignments) was ranked lowest among the academic purpose for the use of the library's database by academic staff of Bingham University.

Table 4: Which of the Challenges Militates your Maximum Utilization of these Databases?

S/N	ITEM	RESPONSE RATE (%)				Decision
		SA	A	SD	D	
1.	Lack of Internet searching skills limits me from accessing and utilizing the database	10.7	14.3	10.7	64.3	D
2.	Lack of knowledge of the existence of the databases hinders my use of it	14.8	70.4	3.7	11.1	A
3.	Slow Internet connectivity hence, delay in opening and downloading resources from the database	14.3	25	14.3	46.4	D
4.	The databases are not user friendly and are difficult to navigate	10.7	7.1	14.3	67.9	D

Key1: SA-Strongly Agree, A-Agree, SD-Strongly Disagree, D-Disagree.

Table 4 shows the response rate of the respondents on the challenges associated with the utilization of the library's databases. The overall percentage showed that item 2 (Lack of knowledge of the existence of the databases hinders my use of it) received a positive response rate of 85.2%, while item 1,3-4 (lack of Internet searching skills limits me from accessing and utilizing the database, slow Internet connectivity hence, delay in opening and downloading resources from the database, and the databases are not user friendly and are difficult to navigate) all received a high negative score of 75%, 60.7% and 82.2% respectively.

Therefore, going by the real limits of number, only item 2 (lack of knowledge of the existence of the databases hinders my use of it) scored a positive response of above 50% thus, it is assumed that the academic staff of the University see lack of knowledge of the existence of the databases as a major challenge militating their maximal use of the library's database.

Discussion of Findings

The findings are discussed according to the four research questions in their sequential order below, which are: To what extent are the users familiar with the existence of the databases? To what extent are the databases utilized? For what purpose are the databases used for? What are the challenges associated with the utilization of the databases?

The findings reveal that majority of the academic staff rarely have the knowledge of the various databases hosted by their library. Users were asked to indicate the level to which they agree on the knowledge they have on the various databases hosted by their library. This

inquiry only further buttresses the poor awareness of the existence of the databases hosted by the library amongst academic staff as revealed in Table 1. However, going by this result, it will be extremely difficult for users to maximize apt, current and relevant scholarly resources that are of great benefit to them via the library's database because you can only judiciously use what you are aware of and also know how to get to it. In other words, awareness is still a pre-requisite to subsequent usage of database resources unless an individual uses it unknowingly. That was why Fullard (2007) stressed that in open access environment, awareness has always been acknowledged as an important factor determining usage of this mode of scholarly communication. However, it is very essential for information custodians to rise up to the occasion by devising methods and media to create awareness, and certainly access to this beautiful modern academic initiative called 'open access'. Also worthy of note, the respondents freely comment on the need for subscription to additional databases.

Also, the findings on the extent of utilization of these databases of the library by academic staff of the University, for their day to day academic activity revealed that the databases were highly underutilized. Iwighreghweta and Onoriode (2012) buttressed that maximal use of digital resources can be hampered by the ignorance of the existence of these resources. But however, once awareness is attained and there are no barriers to accessibility like internet connectivity, epileptic power supply and poor searching skills, then one is bound to experience maximum utilization of these database resources.

Furthermore, the findings reveal that the few users (academic staff) who use the library's database, often use them for four major purposes which all received positive responses. These four purposes were listed according to their ranking of selection thus: I basically use them for my research works, I basically use them for my teaching/lessons, I basically use them for my students' notes, and I basically use them for my students' assignments. This basically reveals that, the databases are mainly used by academic staff for their research interest more than for teaching, students' notes and assignments. Nevertheless, the response rate for the four purposes for utilizing the library's database all received positive responses.

The results obtained reveals that the lack of knowledge of the existence of the databases hosted by the library was a major hindrance to the maximal utilization of its contents or resources by academic staff of Bingham University. Nevertheless, other militating factors like lack of Internet searching skills, Slow Internet connectivity hence, delay in opening and downloading resources from the database, and the databases not being user friendly and difficult to navigate, were all not seen as issues militating users' use of the library's database.

Conclusion and Recommendations

Databases are vital source of information where materials are access by library users especially the academic staff for their day to day academic activity. Academic staffs are expected to take advantage of the academic resources hosted in their library's database for their academic

activity especially in this pandemic time when libraries are physically lockdown and library services are rendered online. Yet, the utilization of these invaluable resources for their research and teaching interest has been hampered by the ignorance of the existence of these databases hosted on the library's website

However, based on these findings, the following recommendations were made:

1. The library should embark on a deliberate awareness campaign regarding the existence of the library's databases using mediums like the university's radio station, billboards, handbills, fliers, social media platforms such like facebook, tweeter, blogs, whatsapp, instagram, etc.
2. The library should encourage the academic staff to use these databases by organizing training and workshops on how these databases can be accessed and used for their day to day research works.
3. As a way of improving general utilization of these databases, the university library and its branches should subscribe to additional relevant databases to cover more courses run in the university.
4. The University library should exploit all mediums available to it to inform the university community whenever they acquire new databases, and the library should also make the library website user-friendly for easy navigation.

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