

## Obstacles to Academic Staff Using Electronic Databases in Delta State University Library, Abraka

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### ABSTRACT

Electronic information resources are gaining popularity in place of traditional print resources due to their mobility, flexibility, and rapid access to current information. Libraries, more than ever, are also devoting a significant portion of their funds on online services. The reason for this research was to determine the barriers to academic staff using electronic databases at the Delta State University Library in Abraka. Three (3) research questions were developed to accomplish this purpose. The study employed a survey method and a questionnaire-based survey to gather information from academic staff at Delta State University, Abraka. The study discovered that HINARI, AJOL, EBSCO Host, JSTOR and AGORA were the types of electronic databases used by the academic staff; respondents use the electronic databases for specific purposes such as thesis/ dissertation writing; the study also exposed that lack of user education and guidance on use of databases is the major constraint faced by the respondents. Base on the findings, the study recommend among others that there should be training for the academic librarians on how to use the databases to assist users in their search for information, it also should be regularized and more participants be encouraged to attend.

**KEYWORDS:** *Electronic; Databases; Academic Staff; University; Library*

### INTRODUCTION

Online databases are one type of electronic resource that university librarians across the country are promoting through (Nigerian University Libraries Consortium) (NULIB), in relationship with eIFL.Net (Electronic Information for Libraries Network) and NUC (National Universities Commission) (Okiki, 2018). Principally, the goal is to offer access to electronic materials in order to substitute excellence in teaching and research in Nigerian universities. Since the cost of

payments to relevant online databases is somewhat costly for individual universities, the co-operation between NULIB, eIFL.Net, and NUC has significantly decreased the cost. According to Otokunefor and Kari (2016) and Nok (2016), archives in Nigeria are steadily expanding their collections of electronic resource databases. Some databases include Access to Global Online Research in Agriculture (AGORA), Directory of Open Access Journals (DOAJ), The Health Internet-network Access to Research Initiative (HINARI), EBSCOhost (EltonB Stephens CO (company),

Journal Storage (AJOL), Access to Research for Development and Innovation (ARDI), and Online Access to Research in the Environment (OARE), among others. According to Kofi (2019), the most habitually used materials in underdeveloped countries include ELSEVIER, EBSCO Host, and AGORA (Aina, 2014).

According to Ani and Ahiauzu (2008) it is no longer news, but rather common information that practically all scholarly and academic publications, electronic databases, online library catalogues, and other vital scholarly resources in all area of knowledge are now accessible online. Various university libraries subscribe to a diversity of online databases that are made accessible to and available to university instructors and students. Databases are accessible in various Nigerian university libraries for free or on a subscription basis. It should be emphasized that they receive just the materials to which the library subscribed. Akinseye (2014) noted that several university libraries have subscribed to 2-3 years' worth of online databases for lecturers and students in order to provide access to material and keep their expertise current for the purposes of teaching, learning, and research.

Bashurun et al., (2017) observed that currently, the FUTO Library subscribes to approximately eight databases, some of which are free and some of which are not. Several databases are currently available, including Agora, Hinari, EBSCOhost, and Nigerian Virtual Library, OARE, all of which can be accessed via library computers and the library website. All instructors and students are welcome to utilise this service. The databases available through the Nnamdi Azikiwe University Digital Library (Festus Aghagbo Nwako Library) include Online Access to Research in the Environment (OARE), Access to Global Online Research in Agriculture (AGORA), Health Internet Network Access to Research Initiative (HINARI), Directory of Open Access Journals (DOAJ), British Library of Developmental Studies (BLDS), and EltonB Stephens Company (EBSC) and Journal Storage (JSTOR).

Emmasiegbu and Anaehobi (2021) discovered that the utilization of information sources and services had both direct and

indirect effects on the research productivity of academic employees. Apart from teaching and community service, academic staff members are required to produce high-quality research, convey ideas within their field, and therefore contribute to the existing body of knowledge. Lecturers use databases in academic libraries to keep their knowledge current in their fields of specialization and to become more effective in carrying out their tasks. Information is a necessary commodity for academic staff and researchers to increase their teaching and research productivity. They concluded that researchers' output will improve utilization of information sources or services. The researcher by stating that if academic staff utilizes the information sources and services available through institutional information systems or elsewhere, their research productivity will be considerably be boosted. Despite the numerous benefits of database resources, there are significant impediments and hurdles to their successful usage.

Databases are generally accessible and can be accessed by multiple people concurrently from any location. As a result, it is user-friendly. University libraries invest significant sums on these resources to support faculty and student teaching, learning, and research. Given that colleges invest significant sums in subscriptions to these databases, it is only reasonable and cost effective for these databases to be optimally utilized to support students' and faculty's academic accomplishment. Lecturers' non-use of database information resources has a significant negative impact on not only the lecturers, but also on the educational system as a whole (Obuh, 2010).

However, investigations indicate that instructors in Nigerian universities appear to be underutilizing the available database resources. Could it be that they are unaware of these database resources, or if they are, why is usage restricted? Okiki (2018) asserted, based on this premise, that database resources enjoy widespread patronage and functional acceptance in other nations, in contrast to the situation in Nigeria.

According to Aina (2014) who conducted a survey on awareness, accessibility, and usage of electronic databases

amongst academic workforce at Babcock University, respondents ranked their awareness of nine out of thirteen databases as average. This indicates that more awareness is required to encompass all electronic resources to which the library subscribes. Aina (2014) also indicated that less than 17% of academic employees at Babcock University used any database.

Akinola et al., (2018) examined how academic staff at the Federal University of Agriculture in Abeokuta, Ogun State, Nigeria, used library Electronic Information Resources (EIR). According to the study, the most frequently accessed e-resources were the CAB Abstract, TEEAL, AGORA, egranary, and HINARI, in decreasing order. According to a study conducted by Bashurun et al., (2017) academic staff at Unilorin did not use databases at the estimated level that would efficiently improve knowledge and resource process, as stated in the university's mission statement. In their study, low usage of e-books, bibliographic databases, and e-journals was reported.

Numerous impediments exist in the use of database resources. Kofi (2019) discovered that a lack of consistent power supply, a lack of online access, a lack of technical know-how, a dislike for reading from a screen and a lack of awareness, a preference for other sources such as general search engines such as Google, a lack of search skill, a lack of inadequate ICT infrastructure, a slow download speed, and at times a lack of user attitude.

According to Bakare et al., (2013), the primary hurdles to e-source use are a lack of time and ineffective information retrieval abilities. Chukwusa (2020) and Prangya and Rabindra (2015) discovered that a lack of training, inadequate infrastructure, and a high cost of use all contribute to the inability to fully utilize database resources. In line with the foregoing, Gupta (2011) discovered that lack of training, a slow internet connection, and a lack of connectivity are all issues that influence users of online databases.

There are numerous debates over whether Professors in federal institutions should use databases in comparison to their counterparts in state colleges. While some

authors advocated for lecturers at federal universities to teach students how to use databases, others argued that ownership is irrelevant. Additionally, some research indicates that science educators are expected to use databases than arts lecturers. Other research indicates that characteristics such as consciousness and ability may spur consumers' conclusion to use database possessions (Obuh, 2010; Omotayo, 2010; Prangya & Rabindra, 2015). Thus, the effectiveness of users, particularly lecturers in institutions, is often contingent upon a number of aspects, including the availability of these databases, understanding of their usage, each user's capacity to discover knowledge items, and power supply.

Literature in this subject appear inadequate in terms of the barriers to academic staff use of databases in Delta State University, Abraka (no study in this area has been conducted to her knowledge). Thus, the paper is to ascertain the difficulties associated with academic staff usage of electronic databases at Delta State University Abraka.

#### OBJECTIVES OF THE STUDY

The objectives of this paper are:

1. To discover the types of electronic databases being used by academic staff of the Delta State University, Abraka
2. To discover the reasons for using electronic databases
3. To determine the constraints encountered by the academic staff of the Delta State University, Abraka. on the use of electronic databases

#### RESEARCH QUESTIONS

1. What types of electronic databases are used by the academic staff of the Delta State University Abraka?
2. For what purpose does academic staff of the Delta State University, Abraka use electronic databases?
3. What are the constraints encountered by the academic staff of the Delta State University, Abraka in the cause of using electronic databases?

## LITERATURE REVIEW

Electronic resources have become an integral and substantial component of academic library collections worldwide, and these resources are regarded as critical for learning, teaching, and research activities (Okiki, 2018). In the United States, it was reported that "between 1994/1995 and 2001/2002, expenditures on electronic resources (Electronic journals) account for the largest share of electronic spending, accounting for 92% of total expenditures in 2001/2002". According to Vibert et al., (2007), being conscious of electronic materials amongst academics and administrators at Israeli universities was already widespread, with more than half of respondents considering electronic services necessary. Nonetheless, discrepancies in utilization trends were discovered among fields. Akinseye (2014) reported in another study on students' usage of electronic materials at Carnegie Mellon University that when students are browsing information on the internet, they frequently rely on the assistance of library staff, particularly academic staff, to carry out their search activities. Nevertheless, numerous studies on the usage of database have been conducted by students, researchers, and teachers from a variety of institutions worldwide. Maunissamy and Swaroop (2005) identified the use of electronic journals by patrons of the NIT. Online Database (2012) presented personal experiences with the usage of databases materials and their impact on teaching and learning activities in his paper, insights on electronic library materials in advance teaching.

Additionally, Kember et al., (2004) reported on a survey of the ease of access to and usage of databases (CD-ROM and online resources) containing full-text journals, as well as their effect on the information seeking behavior of health sciences academics at the University of Ghana's College of Health Sciences. Academics' preferences for print and electronic resources, as well as for precise databases and full-text periodicals, were reported in the study. The findings indicated that Academics were ignorant of the Library's two full-text journal databases (HINARI and PERI), and hence relied on PUBMED to access full-text publications. They observed that, in

comparison to traditional print indexes and abstracts, the majority of academics now prefer electronic access to information (CD-ROM/online resources).

Meanwhile, Nworgu (2015) discovered that, in addition to routinely visiting the web, users accessed e-journals, online databases, and telnet services on the internet. Additionally, Kumar (2015) research of users at the Indian Institute of Technology (IIT) in Delhi discovered that the majority of users encounter difficulties while searching for electronic resources. Users are discouraged from utilizing electronic information services due to inadequate production abilities, terminals, and skilled employees. Additionally, Ojo (2014) research found that pupils make use of automated materials (such as e-books, e-journals, e-encyclopedias, e-theses, CD-ROM databases, e-mail, internet and the OPAC). Kumar and Kumar (2010) discovered that both faculty and students are quite familiar with electronic resources and the internet in a comparable study. Additionally, the majority of the hypothetical community prefers print to electronic information sources, and they discovered electronic information sources either by trial and error or through the recommendation of friends. Similarly, Madden et al., (2006) discovered that students are most enthusiastic about the use of electric journals, followed by e-books, e-newspapers, e-reports, and e-articles.

## RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

This study is being conducted as a descriptive survey. According to Nworgu (2015), descriptive surveys are studies that collect data and describe the traits, features, or facts about a certain community in a systematic manner. The research population comprised of all academic staff members (75) at Delta State University, Abraka's faculty of social sciences. The questionnaire was used to obtain the data. The researcher and two other research assistants distributed the questionnaire to respondents. The study's sample includes 75 respondents who completed the questionnaire completely. The table below summarized the study's population of academic staff at Delta State University, Abraka's faculty of social sciences.

**Table 1: List of Department**

S. No.	List of department in the faculty of social sciences	No of Respondents
1	Accounting	14
2	Baseness Administration	14
3	Geography and Regional Planning	15
4	Sociology	17
5	Economics	15
<b>Total</b>		75

**Sample of the study**

Because the population is small and controllable, the researcher studied the entire population. Nok (2016) backed this up by stating that if a study's population is smaller

than two hundred (200), the complete population should be employed.

**Research Question One:**

What are the electronic databases used by academic staff of Delta State University Abraka?

**Table 2: Academic staff use of electronic databases in Delta State University Library, Abraka**

Types of Electronic Databases	Strongly Agree	Agree	Disagree	Strongly Disagree	Decision
AGORA	27	40	5	3	3.21
AJOL	54	19	2	-	3.77
EBSCO Host	51	22	1	1	3.64
JSTOR	44	31	-	-	3.59
HINARI	61	14	-	-	3.81
ARDI		2	45	28	1.65
ELSEVIER		5	7	60	1.35
<b>Aggregate Mean</b>					3.00

The aggregate mean of 3.00 reveals that academic staffs have a positive disposition towards the use of electronic databases in Delta State University Library, Abraka which are HINARI, AJOL, EBSCO Host, JSTOR and AGORA. Only two items received a rating of less than 2.50 which is the cut-off point. They are ARDI and ELSEVIER with mean score of

1.65 and 1.35 respectively. Therefore, most of the databases are being used in the university.

**Research Question Two:**

What is your purpose of using electronic databases by academics in Delta State University Library, Abraka.

**Table 3 Purpose of using electronic databases by the academics staff of Delta State University, Abraka**

Purpose for the use of online	Strongly Agree	Agree	Disagree	Strongly Disagree	Decision
Research activities	43	22	7	3	3.4
Paper writing for publication	39	19	9	8	3.19
Teaching	28	32	7	8	3.07
Seminar/workshop presentation	45	30	-	-	3.6
Preparing note	27	45	3	-	4.28
Self-development	53	22	-	-	3.70
Consultancy service	27	22	12	14	2.82
Lecture Note	38	37	-	-	3.51
Thesis/ Dissertation writing	27	45	3	-	4.28
<b>Aggregate Mean</b>					3.54

Table 3 shows as 2.50 cut-off point and 3.54 as grand mean score. The highest mean score in the distribution was for “thesis/ dissertation writing (4.28)”. Again, all the nine identified variables had mean scores above the cutoff point. The respondents use all the nine items

in their teaching and learning activities but utilized thesis/ dissertation (4.28) more.

**Research Question Three:**

What are the constraints encountered by academic staff on the use of electronic databases in Delta State University library?

**Table 4: Mean ratings of academic staff on the constraints they encountered in the use of electronic databases in Delta State University Library, Abraka.**

Constraints to the use of electronic databases	Strongly Agree	Agree	Disagree	Strongly Disagree	Decision
Lack of user education and guidance on use of databases	53	16	4	2	3.24
Slow downloading of resources	41	25	5	4	3.51
Lack of knowledge of search techniques	47	25	3	-	3.59
Lack of materials relevant to your field	28	35	9	3	3.17
Erratic power supply	16	28	30	1	2.79
Slow internet connectivity	34	28	11	2	3.25
Lack of access to full text of citation/abstracts	37	29	5	4	3.32
Difficulty in locating relevant e-resources in the databases	32	35	8	-	3.32
Inaccessibility to username and password to some databases	9	12	53	1	2.39
Non-subscription of relevant electronic databases by the University Library	47	19	9	-	3.51
Others (please specify)					
<b>Grand Mean</b>					<b>3.31</b>

Table 4 was on the constraints they encountered in the use of electronic databases. With 2.50 as cutoff point and 3.31 grand mean score the study concluded that aside “Inaccessibility to username and password to some databases with 2.39 mean score” the other 9 items had mean scores above the cutoff point.

**DISCUSSION**

**Electronic Databases used by Academic Staff**

On the use of electronic databases by academic staff, the study revealed that academic staff have a favorable attitude toward the use of electronic databases in the Delta State University Library Abraka, specifically HINARI, AJOL, EBSCO Host, JSTOR, and AGORA. The aforementioned findings, agrees with Otokune for and Kari (2016) and Nok (2016) reported that some of the most often used databases in universities are AGORA,

DOAJ, HINAR, EBSCO-Host, AJOL, ARDI, and OARE. These contrasts with Kofi (2019) assessment that the most frequently utilized resources in developing nations include ELSEVIER, EBSCO Host, and AGORA. ELSEVIER's low rating may be linked to the fact that numerous university libraries do not subscribe to it.

**Purpose of Using Electronic Databases**

The studies also establish that the respondents use the electronic databases for specific purposes such as thesis/ dissertation writing. This finding supports the findings of Akintola et al. (2018) that it was discovered that research activities, thesis writing, lecture note, teaching, preparing writing for publication were the main intents for the use of electronic databases. According to Webber and Johnston (2000) the primary reasons for utilizing electronic databases are to conduct research, literature searches, develop new information,

refresh knowledge, complete course assignments, and prepare seminar/conference papers.

### Constraint

On constraint to the use of electronic databases, the study revealed that lack of user education and guidance on use of databases is the major constraint faced by the respondents. This supports the study undertaken by Gupta (2011) who observed that users of online databases encounter a variety of challenges, including a lack of training, a slow internet connection, and a lack of connectivity. According to Wildemuth (2004), the key barriers to electronic resource utilization are a lack of subscriptions in a particular field of study, a lack of user orientation or training, insufficient bandwidth, and inadequate production abilities, terminals, and training.

### CONCLUSION

The most use electronic databases by respondents as revealed in the study are HINARI, AJOL, EBSCO Host, JSTOR, and AGORA. The study also established that respondents use electronic databases for different purposes like research work, literature searching, new information and spawn to modernize knowledge. Finally, the study therefore conclude that lack of user education and guidance on use of databases, lack of knowledge of search techniques and slow Internet connectivity are the major problems militating against the use of electronic databases in Delta State University Library, Abraka.

### RECOMMENDATION

1. Database training for academic staff should be more regular and more participants are encouraged to attend.
2. The various types of databases available on the library's homepage and other metadata search options should be supplied to academic staff and other users in other to increase awareness.
3. Reducing overload effect like increasing the bandwidth size will definitely increase database usage, thus enhancing positive attitude to internet use.
4. In order to exploit the database usage, and also increase its access speed, the

university should make all efforts to get a broadband connection.

5. University library management should find an alternative way to generate power supply such as a standby generator, inverter or solar energy system with automatic change-over to avoid loss of information already gathered. Even when these alternatives are provided, they should be utilized for the purpose not mere provision.
6. University management should improve internet connectivity inside the campus and its environs to enable staff access to internet whenever and wherever they deem it fit or want to make use of it.

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