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Ganiyu Oluwaseyi Quadri

Quadri, Ganiyu Oluwaseyi, *Kenneth Dike Library, University of Ibadan, Nigeria*, [qudriseyi@gmail.com](mailto:qudriseyi@gmail.com)

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**Influence of Demographic factors on Use of Online Library Resources by Undergraduate Students in Two Private Nigerian University Libraries.**

**Ganiyu Oluwaseyi Quadri**  
**Kenneth Dike Library,**  
**University of Ibadan, Nigeria.**  
**E-mail: qudriseyi@gmail.com**

*ABSTRACT*

*This study investigates the influence of demographic factors on use of online library resources by undergraduate students in two private Nigerian university libraries. Descriptive survey design was adopted for the study and the study population consisted of 7500 undergraduates from Babcock University and 2200 from Redeemer's University. Random sampling was used to select a sample of 291 and questionnaire was the main instrument used for data collection. Data was analyzed using descriptive statistics consisting of tables of frequency and percentage for the demographic characteristics and spearman non-parametric correlation was used for the hypotheses. The findings revealed that there was significant relationship between level of study and utilization of online library resources ( $r=.933$ ;  $P < 0.05$ ) and age and use of online library resources ( $r=.44$ ;  $P > 0.05$ ). There was no significant relationship between gender and use of online library resources ( $r=.95$ ;  $P < 0.05$ ) and between religion and use of online library resources ( $r=.46$ ;  $P > 0.05$ ). The internet and e-journals were important sources of information for the university undergraduate students. Students' demographic factors should not be a barrier to e-resources use and as a result, students of all ages and gender should endeavor to acquire knowledge required to enable them make effective use of online library resources anytime and anywhere. Both young and old students should be encouraged and sensitized on the benefits available in the use of library online resources.*

**Keywords:** *Demographic factors, online library resources, undergraduate, utilization.*

## **Introduction**

The traditional functions of universities are teaching and research. In their teaching activities, universities provide the professional training for high-level jobs, as well as the education necessary for the development of the personality. University research increased the body of theoretical knowledge as well as its application to practical problems.

University students patronize their university libraries to search and retrieve relevant and current information in electronic/online format for effective teaching, learning and research purposes. University patrons includes undergraduate, postgraduates students, researchers, information professionals, staffs and other users from outside the university who intends to use the university library. The undergraduate students are expected to read further after class instructions to collect and retrieve information for class work, assignments, seminars, term papers, dissertations, theses and project and this information could be retrieved from online library resources.

The undergraduates of a university library need information to satisfy their needs promote and enhance their academic pursuit during their course of study in the university. The mandate of the university library is therefore to provide adequate and relevant information resources both in print and online for users. The print information resources includes journals, textbooks, magazines, newspapers and reference materials and non-print includes CD-ROM, audio-visual materials, microfilms, micro fiches, databases and online resources are to support class work, assignments, research/project work, term papers, seminar presentation by providing relevant information and services provision for effective and efficient achievement of academic pursuit.

Online library resources are an integral part of the research process for these students. After doing preliminary research such as speaking with their professor or looking at the references in class readings, students turn to online library databases to begin their research process.

Online Resources is defined as any work encoded and made available for access through the use of a computer-based device (Library of Congress, Collections Policy Statements: Online Resources, 1999). These materials may require the use of peripheral directed connected to computer (e.g CD-ROM drive) or a connection to computer network (e.g Internet).

Computers, online library resources and e-resources are now playing a central role in higher education. University libraries and students in many countries are working regularly with Internet

resources and search engines, and using e-mail as a normal form of communication (Kindilchie & Samarraie, 2008).

The benefits of online library information resources are often faster than consulting print indexes, especially when searching retrospectively and are more straight forward when wishing to use combinations of keywords. They open up the possibility of searching multiple files at a time, a feat accomplished more easily than when using printed equivalents. Online resources can be printed and searches saved to be repeated at a later date; they are updated more often than printed tools. One main benefit, especially to distance learners or those with limited time to access the library is their accessibility from outside the library by dial-up access Ray & Day (1998). Also, benefits of using online library resources include: information being available frequently, the ability to work from any location, the information being available all in one place, the diversity of resources provided and the availability of resources that they would not have access to otherwise. Students believe online library resources improve the quality of their papers by allowing them to spend less time in the research phase and more time in the writing phase. Online library resources also result in students obtaining more resources, a diversity of resources, and more up-to-date resources.

Emphasizing on the advantages of online library resources and e-resources, Dadzie (2005) writes that they are invaluable research tools that complement the print based resources in a traditional library setting. Their advantages, according to her include: access to information that might be restricted to the user due to geographical location or finances, access to more current information and provision of extensive links to additional resources related contents. This rapid emergence and development of online library therefore makes it possible to envision radically different ways of organizing the collections and information services that the library has traditionally provided (Dadzie, 2005).

Apart from the benefits aforementioned, the shortcomings of the online library resources are that they provide students with too much information, there is a need to sort through the vast amounts of information to find what is useful, it is easy to get distracted or lost on a tangent, and that it is hard to determine when to quit searching for information in order to start writing.

University libraries have been employing Information and Communication Technology (ICT) and online information resources to satisfy diverse information needs of the users. Undergraduate students irrespective of their age, gender and religion, have in turn been exploring

the advantage offered by the availability and use of the online library resources to support their academic activities.

Demographics often yield important clues as to what factors contribute to undergraduates' use of online resources. Whitmire (2001) found that there was a correlation between background characteristics such as gender, race, and initial critical thinking scores and library use during the freshmen and sophomore years, although these played less of an important role in the junior year.

### **Research Hypotheses**

The following are the research hypotheses for the study:

- H<sub>0</sub>1: There is no significant relationship between level of study and online library resources use by undergraduates
- H<sub>0</sub>2: There is no significant relationship between gender and online library resources use by undergraduates
- H<sub>0</sub>3: There is no significant relationship between age and online library resources use by undergraduates
- H<sub>0</sub>4: There is no significant relationship between religion and online library resources use by undergraduates

### **Review of Related Literature**

Ojo and Akande (2005) in a survey of 350 respondents examined undergraduate's access, usage and awareness of online information resources at the University College Hospital (UCH) Ibadan, Nigeria. The study revealed that the level of usage of the electronic information resources by undergraduates is not high. A major problem however identified is lack of information retrieval skills for exploiting electronic resources, thus making the level of usage of resources by medical students very low.

According to Bar-Ilan, Peritz, and Wolman (2003), the most active users of electronic journals are the younger members of the teaching and research staff. On the other hand, a recent survey of the medical teaching and research staff at the University of Tennessee (Bush et al, 2004) showed that age was not an influential factor in whether the respondents read articles on paper or in electronic/online format. However, these results did not coincide with those obtained by the same

researchers among astronomical scientists (Jamali et al, 2005). The relationship between the use of online journals and academic ranks are studied which show that as time goes by, researchers progress in their careers and obtain higher positions in the academic hierarchy.

Fatoki (2004) investigated the impact of library resources and the Internet among undergraduate students in Ibadan and found that 65% of the students use the Internet for research work while 35% do not use the Internet for research work. Her findings also revealed that 72% of students preferred to use the university library's Internet services, 35% the cybercafé, and 5% neither.

Watts and Ibegbulam (2006) examined some of the barriers to the usage of online/electronic library resources available at the medical library of College of Medicine, University of Nigeria, Nsukka. Their findings reveal that lack of an adequate ICT infrastructure and affordable online access, absence of in-depth ICT skills and information searching skills among library staff, and cost of using the cybercafé are barriers to the use of online resources. In the same vein, Ondari-Okenwa (2004) Ashcroft and Watts (2005), Adomi (2005), and Oduwole and Sowole (2006) identified problems in the adoption and usage of ICT and online resources in Nigeria. These include lack of adequate ICT skills among staff and users, low basic information literacy levels in the Nigerian population, and prohibitive cost in developing countries to gain access to internet through cybercafé.

Okiki (2011) examined the factors that influence the use of online information resources among postgraduate and undergraduate students. The study covered six Universities in the South West, Nigeria namely; University of Ibadan, University of Lagos, Olabisi Onabanjo University, Ogun State; Federal University of Technology, Akure; University of Agriculture Abeokuta and Lagos State University. The results show that males seem to enjoy browsing on the internet for enjoyment while female tend to only use it for work related purpose. Ford et al (2001) also found that females tended to experience more difficulty finding information online, to feel competent and comfortable using the internet, to use the internet less frequently than males and to make use of a less varied set of internet application, though found a similar result in studying faculty members; while males tended to have computing skills than females, age and year of obtaining highest educational qualifications were also important factors in establishing computers skills. Tenopir (2003) on use and users of electronic library resources: An overview and analysis of recent research studies using the University of Tennessee, Knoxville as a case study posits that there is some

evidence that younger users are more enthusiastic adopters of digital resources than the older users. Younger users rely on electronic resources more heavily and rate themselves more expert in using them than older users. Age is a variable which have been found to correlate with computers and use of online library resources, according to Okiki (2011) Younger generations are brought up with computers. It also found that there were significant age differences on the computer task, as measured by older adults making few correct decisions and taking longer time to make their decisions than younger adult.

### **Methodology**

The survey research design was adopted for this study and the target population consisted of two private Universities in Ogun State: Babcock and Redeemer University. There were 7,500 library users in Babcock and 2,200 in Redeemer respectively which gave a total of 9,700 respondents. Simple random sampling technique was employed to select Two Hundred and Twenty-five (225) respondents from Babcock and Sixty-six (66) respondents from Redeemer universities giving a total of 291. The questionnaire was the major instrument used for the data collection. Data collected was analyzed using descriptive statistics such as tables, frequencies and percentages for the demographic characteristics of the respondent, while Spearman non-parametric Correlation was used for the research hypotheses.

### **Result of Findings**

#### **Table 1: Response rate of questionnaire**

A total of two hundred and ninety one (291) copies of the questionnaire were administered to respondents in both Babcock and Redeemer Universities. Two hundred and twenty five (225) copies were administered to Babcock University, out of which 200 copies were duly filled and returned giving a response rate of 88.9%. While 66 copies were administered to the respondents in Redeemer University and 55 copies were duly filled and returned giving 83.3% response rate. Thus, the overall response rate was 87.6%.

**Table 1. Demographic Characteristics of Respondents**

<b>Variable</b>	<b>Babcock</b>		<b>Redeemer's</b>	
	<b>N</b>	<b>%</b>	<b>N</b>	<b>%</b>

<b>Level of Study</b>	100	11	5.5	9	16.4
	200	28	14.0	17	30.9
	300	53	26.5	14	25.5
	400	93	46.5	15	27.3
	500	15	7.5	-	-
<b>Sex</b>	Male	105	52.5	32	58.2
	Female	95	47.5	23	41.8
<b>Age</b>	Less than 16years	3	1.5	1	1.8
	16-18	24	12.0	12	21.8
	19-21	70	35.0	26	47.3
	22-24	78	39.0	13	23.6
	25-27	16	8.0	3	5.5
	Above 27	9	4.5	-	-
<b>Religion</b>	Christianity	179	89.5	44	80.0
	Islam	19	9.5	11	20.0
	African Traditional Religion (ATR)	2	1.0	-	-

Table 2 revealed that majority of the respondents 93 (46.5%) in Babcock University were in their 400 level of study while most of those in Redeemer University 17(30.9%) were in 200 level. The least of the respondents 11(5.5) were in 100 level in Babcock and 9(16.4%) in Redeemer. Also, 105(52.5%) of the respondents in Babcock and 32(58.2%) in Redeemer were male while 95(47.5%) in Babcock and 23(41.8%) in Redeemer were female. Most of the respondents 78(39%) in Babcock were between 22 and 24 years of age while majority of those in Redeemer 26(47.3%) were between 19 and 21years of age; with a mean value of 3.59 and standard deviation of 2.67. Most of the respondents, 179(89.5%) for Babcock and 44(80%) for Redeemer were Christians while only few of them were practicing Islam.



The analyses revealed that majority of the respondents in Babcock were in their final year, while most of the respondents in Redeemer were in 200 level. It was also shown that respondents in Babcock were a little older than those in Redeemer.

**Hypothesis 1: There is no significant relationship between level of study and online library resources use by undergraduates.**

**Table 2: Relationship between level of study and online library resources use**

		LEVEL	USE
LEVEL	Correlation Coefficient	1.000	.933
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.	.000
	N	255	255
USE	Correlation Coefficient	.933	1.000
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.000	.
	N	255	255

The Pearson Product Moment Correlation was used to analyze the data for this hypothesis. The correlation coefficient was .933 which indicated a high level of correlation (Table 2). This implied that there was a strong relationship between the level of study and utilization of online library resources by the university undergraduate students. Therefore, the hypothesis was rejected.

**Hypothesis 2: There is no significant relationship between gender and online library resources use by undergraduates.**

**Table 3: Relationship between gender and online library resources use**

		GENDER	USE
GENDER	Pearson Correlation	1.000	.446
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.	.000
	N	255	255
USE	Pearson Correlation	.446	1.000
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.000	.
	N	255	255

Table 4 showed that Pearson Moment Correlation result was .000 at 0.05 level of significance. It revealed that the correlation coefficient was .446 which indicated a low level of correlation. This implies that there was a very weak relationship (no significant relationship) between gender and utilization of online library resources by the university undergraduate students. Therefore, the hypothesis was accepted.

**Hypothesis 3: There is no significant relationship between age and online library resources use by undergraduates.**

**Table 4: Relationship between age and use of online library resources**

		<b>AGE</b>	<b>USE</b>
AGE	Correlation Coefficient	1.000	.952
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.	.000
	N	255	255
USE	Correlation Coefficient	.952	1.000
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.000	.
	N	255	255

Table 4 showed that correlation result was .000 at 0.05 level of significance and the correlation coefficient was .952 which indicated a high level of correlation. This indicated that there was a strong relationship between age and utilization of online library resources by the university undergraduate students. Therefore, the hypothesis was rejected.

**Hypothesis 4: There is no significant relationship between religion and online library resources use by undergraduates.**

**Table 5: Relationship between religion and use of online library resources**

		<b>RELIGION</b>	<b>USE</b>
RELIGION	Correlation Coefficient	1.000	.461
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.	.000
	N	255	255

UTILISATION	Correlation Coefficient	.461	1.000
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.000	.
	N	255	255

Table 5 showed that Pearson Moment Correlation result was .000 at 0.05 level of significance. The Table revealed that the correlation coefficient was .461 which indicated a low level of correlation. This implies that there was a very weak relationship (no significant relationship) between religion and utilization of online library resources by the university undergraduate students. Therefore, the hypothesis was accepted.

The non-correlation of religion with the use of online library resources by the university undergraduate students could be attributed to the fact that being a Christian or Muslim does not determine the students' level of IT competence. The online library resources use really has to do with the purpose for which it is being used.

### **Discussion of Findings**

This study investigates the influence of demographic factors on the use of online library resources by undergraduate students in private universities using Babcock and Redeemer University in ogun state as a case study. Four research hypotheses were formulated. A total of two hundred and ninety-one questionnaires were distributed using descriptive statistic such as tables, percentage and spearman non-parametric correlation respectively. The respondents in Babcock were a little older than that of Redeemer University.

The level of study of the undergraduate students in both universities was found to be highly correlated and significantly related to the use of online library resources in the university libraries. This was supported by Olatokun (2009) who found that level of education had the strongest influence on the capability to use personal computer and computer with internet services by different categories of people including students, with the respondents having less education being more disadvantaged in using the facilities. This factor also explained the reasons for their capabilities of using some of the ICT facilities such as the personal computer, computer with internet services.

There was a weak correlation between the gender of the undergraduates in Babcock and Redeemer and the use of online library resources in the university libraries. The finding was

contrary to Sacks (1993/94) cited in Waldman (2003) who found that gender was a relevant factor in examining use of electronic databases by high school students at Buruch College, New York USA, whose attitudes towards computers and their computer use tended to vary by gender. This difference, however, tended to diminish with computer experience. Also, in a study of highly successful students at the University of Sheffield UK, Ford, *et al.* (2001) found that "...females tended to experience more difficulty finding information on-line, feel less competent and comfortable using the Internet, use the Internet less frequently than males, and to make use of a less varied set of Internet applications."

There was a high significant level of correlation between the age of the undergraduates in both universities and the use of online library resources in the university libraries. This is in support of Waldman (2003) who asserted that age was one variable that correlates with comfort with computers and use of electronic resources. Younger generations have been brought up with computers; many do not even remember a time when computers were not around. Older and returning students may not have had as much exposure to computers, resulting in increased computer anxiety (Waldman, 2003). The finding showed that there was a weak correlation between the religion of the undergraduates in both universities and the use of online library resources in the university libraries.

### **Conclusion**

The internet and e-journals were important sources of information for the university undergraduate students. The utilization of electronic information resources is a prerequisite to information acquisition by undergraduate students in the universities.

The study also concluded that there was a high significant level of correlation between the age of the undergraduates in both universities and the use of online library resources in the university libraries. Furthermore, the study ascertains that there was weak correlation between the religion of the respondents and use of online library resources in both private universities.

It is therefore important to note that as undergraduate students, there is always the need to consult and use the online library resources for information, academics and research needs irrespective of any demographic factors. Students' demographic factors i.e. level of study, age, gender, religion etc. should not be a barrier to online library resources use and as a result, students of all ages and gender should endeavor to acquire knowledge required to enable them make effective use of the online resources anytime and anywhere.

## **Recommendations**

Consequent upon the above conclusion, the following recommendations are hereby made:

1. Both young and old students should be encouraged and sensitized on the benefits available in the use of library electronic resources.
2. The cost and access to the use of e-resources and the Internet should be made affordable irrespective of the age, level of study, religion and gender so as to be privileged to use the Internet and e-resources.
3. Level of awareness of the availability of e-resources should be increased to the library users.
4. Trained personnel should be on ground to assist the students in the usage of the available electronic resources in the university libraries.

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