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Faculty awareness and use of Library subscribed online databases in the University of Education, Winneba. Ghana: A survey.

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Abstract

Faculty awareness and use of Library subscribed online databases in the University of Education, Winneba, Ghana: A survey.

Today electronic databases have become the backbone of many academic libraries around the globe including Ghana. This is largely due to its advantages over the print resources. Libraries spend colossal amount of resources on online databases in a bid to enhance teaching, learning and research in institutions of higher learning. This study was carried out to examine the usage of online databases by faculty members of the University of Education, Winneba. It focuses on only the Winneba campus to address the following objectives among others; explore the awareness level of the databases the university subscribes to and to determine the extent of use and the relevance of the databases by faculty. Four research questions were formulated to guide the study. The study was a survey and made use of questionnaire to elicit data from the respondents. A sample population of 210 was given questionnaires bearing in mind the research questions which guided the study. Data was analysed using frequencies and simple percentages. The results of the study revealed that majority of respondents were aware of the databases though there were few of them who did not know the existence of the databases. It further established that a number of faculty members who utilise the databases, had knowledge of some of the databases and use them mainly for research and other educational activities. However, the results indicated that though faculty acknowledges the importance of the databases to their information needs, there were few hindrances that inhibit their effective use of the databases, these were; no access to the databases outside the campus, often passwords to some databases not functioning, and issues bothering on internet connectivity. The paper ends with recommendations to ensure effective and efficient use of the databases.

KEY WORDS: Electronic resources, online databases, technologies, Faculty, Academic Libraries, University of Education, Winneba, Library.

Introduction

It is an undeniable fact that the use of Information Communication Technologies has brought tremendous changes in the way information is generated and stored. Technological advances and innovations have changed the operations of organizations and institutions including libraries of all types. Thus, the technologies have changed the storage, organizing, retrieving and dissemination

of information in libraries. Electronic databases have become a major element of library collections around the globe. They are regarded as essential for learning, teaching and research activities. Samaravickrama and Samaradiwakara (2014) opine that their impact on academic libraries and scholars is noteworthy and unprecedented. These databases are organised digital collections of references to publish literature such as journal articles, newspaper articles, conference proceedings, reports, legal publications, theses, e-books among others. E- Databases are in different types such as bibliographic, full-text, directory, and multimedia.

The advantages of these databases as compared to print are many, they include among others; less storage space, large information capacity, strong sharing ability and great potential for collection expansion (Liyi & Zhang, 2011). In addition, one does not need to go to the library as they can be made available to users anywhere and at anytime. It is therefore convenient to use and accessible. Accordingly, Hamza,Ahmad,Yunusa and Hamisu (2015) are of the view that electronic databases are becoming more popular than traditional print resources due to their many advantages. They therefore have great significance in the research and learning process.

Due to the databases importance to teaching and research, university libraries spend substantial amounts of money for purchasing of these resources even when facing shrinking budgets. In this regard those for which the databases are purchased must equally utilise them to justify the financial involvement. Faculty members are therefore expected to use them for effective teaching and research to contribute to academic achievement. In light of this, it is pertinent to understand and find out the utilisation of these important resources among faculty members. Therefore the aim of this study is to find out how the electronic databases are being used by faculty in University of Education, Winneba campus. Further the study also examines the relevance to their information needs; satisfaction as well as challenges on the use of the resources. These are issues worthy of scrutiny.

Background to the study

The University of Education, Winneba (UEW) was established by the University of Education, Winneba Act 2004, Act 672 on May 14, 2004. It was originally established by PNDC Law 322 (1992) as the University College of Education of Winneba (UCEW) through the amalgamation of Seven (7) diploma awarding institutions. The University was established with the responsibility of producing professional educators to spearhead a new national vision of education aimed at redirecting Ghana's efforts along the path of rapid economic and social development. The University is expected to play a leading role in the country's drive to produce scholars whose knowledge would be fully responsive Kumasi and the College of Agriculture in Mampong. All the campuses offer both undergraduate and graduate courses. Graduate programmes include MA, MSc, MPhil and PhD programmes. Some of the programmes are offered on a regular as well as sandwich basis. In addition, the University also runs a distance programme and currently has thirty three (33) Study Centres across the country. The entire library on each of the campuses has been automated. This means that one can search the

resources of each library holdings outside campus. The role of the academic library is to support the teaching, learning and research needs of students, lecturers and researchers; the library does this through the provision of its resources and services. Towards this goal, the libraries are building rich collection in electronic format in addition to the print resources to enhance scholarly endeavours of its patrons. Therefore all the libraries have rich collection of both the print and electronic resources. The importance and significance of electronic databases to teaching and research cannot be underestimated.

Some, years ago researchers and lecturers had difficulty in accessing peer reviewed articles in scholarly journal in spite of the wealth of information. This was due to huge cost involved and poor information technology infrastructure at that time. Indeed, this was an enormous challenge to academia in Ghana. Scholars, on the country, heaved a sigh of relief at the intervention of benevolent institutions such as International Network for the Availability of Scientific Publications (INASP) and Programme for the Enhancement of Research Institutions (PERI). Thus through the aforementioned institutions access to the electronic databases were made possible at no cost to universities and research institutions in the country for several years. After the elapse of the project, libraries from both the public and the private universities in the country formed a consortium to subscribe to the databases on behalf of institutional members at a reduced cost. The consortium is known as Consortium of Academic and Research Libraries in Ghana (CARLIGH). Through CARLIGH academic libraries in both the private and public university libraries in Ghana have access to an array of electronic databases.

The University of Education, Winneba Library through the Consortium subscribes to a number of varied databases on behalf of the entire university community particularly, lecturers, research fellows and post graduate students. The databases cover subjects offered in the university. These online databases have been of immense help to academia who otherwise would not have been able to afford the cost coupled with the difficulty of having access to scholarly and peer reviewed information. Presently, one does not necessarily need to be physically present at the library to have access to the databases. They can be accessed anywhere on or campus and at no cost.

As has always been the practice in the library whenever a new service or product is introduced, series of workshops and seminars are organised to sensitize members of the university community. Consequently, a number of workshops on the use of the databases were organised for faculty, administrators, students and the entire university community. The workshops and training programmes are still ongoing as and when the need arises. Additionally, one on one tutorial is also given to individuals who call in at anytime for assistance with the use of the databases.

Currently, researchers, faculty, students and the entire university community have access to global information resources such as peer reviewed articles which some years back was non – existent. The University of Education, Winneba through the library has invested substantially into the electronic databases. Therefore, it is worthwhile to ascertain how the resources are being used by faculty to justify the huge amount spent on their subscription. The researcher believes it

will be significant to find the use of the electronic databases, purposes for using these resources and problems encountered while using these resources. It is only through user studies that the library will be able to ascertain how the resources are being utilized. The finding will also inform the adoption of effective measures for improvement.

The Problem

It is an undeniable fact that accessing online databases offer an opportunity for faculty members to obtain accurate and relevant information in a timely manner. Currently electronic resources are the foci of collection development in most libraries worldwide. Academic libraries in Ghana have therefore been challenged to provide access to scholarly information for their users including faculty. It is within this context that the University of Education, Winneba, Library contributes substantially to the subscription of these databases in a bid to enhance the research and information needs of the university community. To ensure that these investments are worthwhile, there is the need to assess how the resources are being utilized, whether it is serving the purpose for which they were subscribed, how relevant and useful the databases are to the information needs of faculty to justify the huge amount spent on subscription. It will be a waste of the university's resources if the databases are not used, particularly by faculty. Surveys are the only means to unravel the utilization of the databases by faculty. It is for these reasons that the researcher feels obliged to undertake a study of this nature.

Objectives of the study

The main objective of the study is to examine the usage of online databases among faculty members at the University of Education, Winneba.

The specific objectives are to identify the following:

- Awareness and familiarity of the databases among respondents
- Extent of use of the online databases by respondent
- Relevance of the online databases to the respondents
- Challenges in the use of the databases by respondents

Research Questions

The study attempts to address the following questions:

- Are respondents aware and familiar with the online databases?
- What is the extent of use of the databases among respondents?

- What is the relevance of the databases to the information needs of respondents?
- What problems do respondents encounter in using the online databases?

Literature Review

Within the last decade information communication and technology has permeated the entire society and institutions including libraries of all types. In view of that, many academic libraries in Ghana are building collections of electronic resources and are striving to continue to increase access to various electronic databases for their cherished patrons. These resources however come at a cost and therefore it is important to understand how the resources are being utilized. Against this background, studies are being carried out by institutions that subscribed to the databases to justify the investment made by the management of the institutions. Several studies have therefore been undertaken on electronic resources in other parts of the world which focused mainly on students' awareness, familiarity, satisfaction and challenges.

Awareness of the databases among users in institutions of higher learning is important because the ultimate use of the databases is for users to be aware and utilise them effectively to contribute to academic achievement in academia. In this vein, Kwafoa, Osman, and Afful-Arthur (2014) examined the awareness and use of electronic databases among faculty members in University of Cape Coast. The study revealed that 92% of the faculty members were aware of the existence of online databases. Furthermore the findings of the study revealed that faculty members were familiar with the databases. The least known database was (BIONNE) database. Similarly, Chirra and Madhusudhan (2009) also undertook a survey on the use of electronic database by doctoral research scholars of Goa University in India. The outcome of the study was that the entire scholars 100% was aware, familiar and utilise the databases extensively. The findings of the study by Kwadzo (2015) was quite interesting, she found from a study she conducted on electronic databases at the University of Ghana, Legon that awareness of the databases was low than usage. The respondents claimed they were not aware of the databases but they utilise the databases. On the contrary, a survey by Dadzie (2005), however, turned to be the opposite of this finding. Her study at the Ashesi University College also in Ghana revealed that users were not aware of the databases subscribed by the library on behalf of the college though the general computer usage was high because of the state-of-the-art ICT infrastructure. The study further revealed that patronage of the databases is very low. They attributed the low utilization to lack of awareness about the databases.

On the use of the databases, early studies in the developed world indicated that the majority of the faculty members were not very interested in using the e resources (Budd & Connway 1997; Bancroft, Croft, Speth & Phillips, 1998). Later studies nevertheless revealed that faculty members were gradually shifting their interests to the e- resources and are moving away from the print – based access. Smith (2003) examined the use of electronic journals in the University of Georgia,

US. She found that faculty members were more active users of electronic format. In the same way, Bar – Ilan , Peritz and Wolman (2003), in a study they conducted in Israeli universities found that academic staffs were heavy users of both electronic databases and electronic journals. In the same vein Ahmed and Amjed (2014) found from a survey they conducted in two Pakistani universities found that the online databases were frequently used by research scholars. Other studies conducted by Gray (2011) and Bar-Ilan & Fink (2005) found that faculty were making fullest possible use of the databases and preferred the electronic format to the print. However, on the Ghanaian scene Kwafoa, Imoro, and Afful -Arthur concluded from their study that patronage of the databases was low in spite of their awareness and familiarity with the databases. Thus, utilization was lower than awareness. The study revealed low patronage, however they found that the most frequently used databases were Emerald, Ebsco, Jstor, Hinari, Sage Journals and AJOL. The least used databases were Taylor&Francis and BIOONE respectively. A study on databases conducted over a period of two years by Atakan (2007) showed that a greater number of faculty members utilise the databases frequently. In addition the databases that were mostly used were Science Direct and Emerald.

The usefulness of databases to the end users is very important. This is because the ultimate goal of the databases is to meet the information needs of users and enhance their scholarly endeavours. Kwafoa et al (2014) found that an overwhelming percentage 87% of faculty members admitted that the databases were highly beneficial. In the same vein, Kwadzo (2015) also reported in his study that 53.1% indicated that the databases were suitable to their information needs. Other investigations by Hamza et al (2015) also brought to light that faculty members of Faculty of Sciences at Umaru Musa Yar,dua University in Nigeria found the databases useful for the information they provide except few of them who had different views.

Various reasons could be assigned to users' unwillingness to patronise electronic databases, though some users would continue to use them despite the challenges they may experience. The prevalence of these challenges have been reported by researchers in several studies; Hamza et al Chirra & Madhusudhan (2009); Gupta (2011); Raza & Upadhay (2006) and Ahmed (2013) reported that lack of training, slow download speed and slow internet connectivity were the problems inhibiting users use of the electronic databases. A survey conducted by Naushad (2005) also found that faculty experienced difficulties like slow downloading of articles and lack of knowledge of the online databases. Touching on the same issue, Kwadzo (2015) identified online access problems and difficulty in searching as some of the challenges they encounter on the use of the databases. On the same issue Ahmed (2013) also noted that online databases are widely used by faculty members, however they were not satisfied with the resources due to challenges such as, slow downloading speed, limited access to back issues and inability to access the resources from their home. The fact is that electronic databases have become a valuable resource of information to teaching and research, and faculty cannot ignore it.

Methodology

The survey research design was adopted for the study aimed at collecting data from members of a population. The main instrument of data collection was a self- developed open-ended and closed-ended questionnaires intended to collect information on the issue. The open-ended allowed the respondents to put their views across without restrictions while the closed –ended offered questions from which participant in the study selected the responses they deemed appropriate. The researcher also deemed it appropriate to use the questionnaire because participants were lecturers who had very little time at their disposal, making it difficult, in some cases, to get them to complete the questionnaire immediately on receiving it. The researcher therefore distributed the questionnaire personally to the respondents and agreed to collect them later at an agreed date. This was done over a period of approximately two months from July to August during the second semester in 2015/2016 academic year. The questionnaires were administered personally by the researcher. In all a total number of 210 were surveyed for the study however only 102 were completed giving an overall response rate of 75%. Data was analysed using frequencies and percentages.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

The total breakdown of respondents is shown in the table below.

Table 1: Respondents Distribution by Faculties

Faculty	No of Respondents
Faculty of Science	18
IEDE	9
Faculty of Languages	19
Faculty of Education	18
Faculty of Social Science	14
Faculty of Social Studies	11
School of Creative Arts	13
Total	102

Source: Field Data, 2016

Table 2: Gender Wise Distribution of Respondents

Gender	No of Respondents	PERCENTAGE%
Male	77	75.49
Female	25	24.51
Total	102	100

Source: Field Data, 2016

A study of data in Table 2 indicates gender distribution of respondents. It could be noted that out of the total of 102 respondents, 77 % belonged to the male group, whilst the remaining 20% were from the female group.

Awareness of Databases among faculty

Table 3: Awareness of Online Databases Subscribed by Library

Gender	No of Respondents	PERCENTAGE%
Yes	91	75.49
No	11	24.51
Total	102	100

Source: Field Data, 2016

As demonstrated in the Table, respondents were asked if they were aware of the availability of online databases subscribed by the library on behalf of the university. It is clear that majority of the respondents 91 (75.49%) was aware of the databases subscribed by the library, only a few 11 (24.51%) indicated that they were not aware. Perhaps those members of faculty who were not aware are new members who had joined the university not long. The study has revealed that awareness of databases is high among faculty and is a clear indication that a number of faculty members are aware of the databases subscribed by the library. This finding coincides with separate studies conducted by Kwafoa, Osman, Afful-Arthur (2014); Kwadzo (2014) Samaravickrama & Samaradiwakara (2014) who revealed that awareness of online databases was high among faculty members in Universities of Cape Coast and Sri Jayewardenepura respectively. The finding, however, disagrees with Dadzie (2014) whose study at the Ashesi University College in Ghana revealed that though the university has a state of the art technology, users were not aware of the online databases despite the rich content of the databases subscribed by the library on behalf of the university college.

Table 4: Databases subscribed that Faculty has knowledge about

Item	Responses	Percentage%
Ebsco	23	13.53
Taylor Francis	20	11.76
Jstor	21	12.35
Science Direct	22	12.94
Emerald	19	11.18
Wiley Blackwell	16	9.41
African Journal Online	17	10.00
Sage Journals	16	9.41
Cambridge	2	1.18
CUDOS	2	1.18
BIOONE	1	0.59
DATAD	1	0.59
Research for Life; HINARI, OARE, ARDI	9	5.29
Inscribe	1	0.59
Total	170	100

Source: Field Data, 2016

Some more information was sought from respondents about their knowledge of the databases subscribed by the library. The data in the table depicts clearly that a number of the faculty members were familiar with the online databases. The databases outline above was mentioned by the respondents of having knowledge about them. Data in the table shows that the popular databases were Ebsco followed by Science Direct, Jstor, Taylor&Francis, Emerald, AJOL, Wiley Blackwell and Sage. The observation from the analysis is that faculty is familiar with some of the databases subscribed by the library. Perhaps the less known databases do not cover information related to their subject areas or have less journal articles in their field. The fact, however, still remains that online databases are indispensable in institutions of higher learning. It is gratifying to mention that the library with the support from the management of the university has enhanced access to varied number of scholarly databases for faculty members and the entire university. The finding is in total agreement of an earlier study conducted by Atakan (2007) who found in a study he conducted on faculty that databases like Ebsco, Science Direct were among the popular databases among faculty members. Similarly, the finding also supports Kwafoa et al (2014) whose study revealed that the most popular database among faculty was Emerald, Ebsco among others and the least known was BIOONE database.

What are the Extent of use and the relevance to your information needs?

Table 5 Frequency of Use

Gender	No of Respondents	Percentage%
Always	12	11.77
Very often	30	29.41
Frequently	32	31.37
Occasionally	28	27.45
Total	102	100

Source: Field Data, 2016

Data in Table 5 demonstrates that respondents 12 (11.77%) indicated that they use the databases always, followed by 30 (29.41%) who also agreed that they use them very often, 32 (31.37%) were of the opinion that they use them frequently, others, 28 (27.45%), however indicated that they use the online databases occasionally. This finding is encouraging in the sense that a number of faculty members access the online databases. This result amply testifies that the electronic databases are in high demand and are not underutilised. Nevertheless the library should continue to market the databases among faculty members and other users of the university community about the importance of the online databases to their information needs. This finding is in consonance with Ahmed and Amjed (2014) whose study in two universities in Pakistan revealed that the electronic databases were frequently used by research scholars who were surveyed.

Table 6: Which of the Databases are accessed by Faculty?

Databases	Responses	Percentage
Taylor and Francis	10	9.80
Jstor	8	7.84
Science Direct	15	14.71
Ebsco	16	15.69
Emerald	13	12.75
Wiley Blackwell	7	6.86
SAGE Journals Online	11	10.78
AJOL	4	3.92
HINARI	3	2.94
OARE	5	4.90
ARDI	4	3.92
Kudos	-	-
Bioone	-	-
Inscribe	-	-
DATAD	-	-
Cambridge	6	5.89
Total	102	100

Source: Field Data, 2016

Table 5 captured the databases that were accessed frequently by faculty members. It reveals that databases which were highly used were Taylor and Francis, Jstor, Science Direct, Ebsco, Emerald, Sage Journals. The least used databases were Wiley Blackwell Cambridge, OARE, ARDI, AJOL and Hinari. The databases which were not used were Kudos, BIONNE, Inscribe and Datad. This implies that not all the databases subscribed by the library were utilised by faculty. It could be that those which were not used do not contain the information needs of faculty. In view of this revelation the management of library should decide either not to subscribe to those databases. The use of the databases has also been reported in similar studies such as Atakan (2007) who stated great number of faculty members (88.8%) was using databases like Ebsco host, Science Direct in Ankara University in Turkey. Similarly Kwafua et al (2014) also concluded that the most frequently accessed database among faculty in University of Cape Coast was Emerald and Ebsco. Nevertheless, the finding is at variance with a study conducted by Samaravickrama and Samaradiwakara (2014) who found that majority of the faculty members were using other databases not subscribed by the university except Jstor.

Table 7: Purpose of using the online Databases by Faculty

Purpose	Frequency	Percentage%
Research activities	28	27.45
Paper writing for publication	23	22.55
Seminar/workshop/presentation	16	15.69
Teaching	14	13.73
To prepare my lecture notes	9	8.82
To find relevant my area of specialization	12	11.76
Total	102	100

Source: Field Data, 2016

The views of respondents concerning the reasons for using electronic databases were the focus of Table 7. It was discovered that that research activities ranked highest with 27.45% followed by 22.55% who used it for paper writing for publication, while, 15.69% indicated that they use it to prepare for seminar, workshop and presentation, also 11.76% agreed that they use it to find relevant information in their area of specialization, the rest 8.82% were of the opinion that the online databases help them to prepare their lecture notes. The outcome is encouraging in the sense that the databases are assisting faculty to contribute to academic achievement. This finding agrees with an earlier study conducted by Atakan (2007) whose survey revealed that faculty members use the databases for research and educational purposes.

Table 8: usefulness of databases accessed by faculty

Variable	Respondents	Percentage%
Highly suitable	48	47.06
Suitable	53	51.96
Not suitable	-	-
Neutral	1	0.98
Total	102	100

Another investigation was asked to indicate the usefulness of the databases to their information needs. An appreciable number 48 (47.06%) agreed that the databases were highly useful followed by 53 (51.96%), surprisingly no respondent indicated that the databases were not useful. One respondent 1(0.98%) was, however, neutral, could not indicate whether the databases were useful or not.

What are the challenges that you encounter on using the online databases

Table 9: Challenges on the use of Online Databases

Challenges	Frequency	Percentage
No access outside the University campus	25	24.50
Slow Internet connectivity as at the time information is needed.	17	16.67
Time consuming	13	12.75
Lack of searching skills	10	9.80
Some articles cannot be accessed freely.	21	20.59
Some password are not functional	16	15.69
Total	102	100

Source: Field Data, 2016

The respondents were asked to indicate the constraints they experience while accessing the online databases. The analysis of the results indicate 24.50% indicated no access to the online databases outside the university campus, others 20.59% pointed that some current articles could not be accessed freely, 16.67% also noted slow internet connectivity as at the time the information is urgently needed, 15.69 % indicated some password of some of the databases were not working, while, 12.75% were of the view that it was time consuming, only few, 9.80% posited that they lack searching skills. These constraints, according to the respondents hinder the effective and efficient use of the online databases. The analysis of the data reveals that faculty members are confronted with the aforementioned challenges thereby inhibiting their effective and efficient use of these resources. This finding of the study is in agreement with earlier studies conducted by Ahmed (2013); Kwafoa et al (2014); Ahmed and Amjad (2013) and Kwafoa et al (2014). The all found from studies they conducted at their respective institutions that faculty complained of slow nature of the internet and lack of proper guidance in the use of the databases was among the challenges stifling their use of the databases. Ahmed (2013) also in his work on the use of electronic resources by the faculty members in diverse public universities in Bangladesh concluded that faculty members were not generally satisfied with the current level of electronic databases subscribed due to challenges such as inability to access from home, slow download speed, just to mention a few. Furthermore, Naushad (2005) also mentioned in a study he conducted on electronic databases that faculty members complained of lack of knowledge about the online databases and slow downloading among others pose a great challenge as far as using the online is concerned.

Table 10: Extent of satisfaction of Online Databases

Variable	Respondents	Percentage%
Highly satisfied	42	41.18
Satisfied	57	55.88
Dissatisfied	3	2.94
Very dissatisfied	-	-
Total	102	100

Source: Field Data, 2016

Respondents were asked how satisfied they are with the databases. The Table indicates that 42 (41.18%) were satisfied with the electronic databases, while 57 (55.88%) confirmed that they were satisfied with the information they obtain from the databases despite the challenges they encounter. Only 3(2.94%) were, however, dissatisfied with the information they obtain from the databases. User satisfaction is the state that results after a library user has favourably or positively experienced a product or service. If users' expectations are met then naturally they would be satisfied because their requests have been met. It is discernible from the findings that faculty have embraced the databases which the university spends fortune for the annual subscription.

Relevance of the database to the information needs of faculty.

General comments were elicited from respondents using an open ended question. Respondents were asked to state in their own words their opinion about the relevance of the databases. A total of 89 respondents had responded to the question. All the comments indicate positive views towards the online databases the library subscribes to on behalf of the university. A significant number of respondents 89 out of 102 indicated that the online databases are very useful and enhances their research output. Some of the responses are as follows:

‘very good to research and makes information timely and convenient’

“One gets opportunity to read research article that are relevant to one’s research”

“Some of the information are relevant and some give the information needed”

“Very relevant but sometimes gets stack when they require authentication”

Helps me with my review of related literature of my research work”

“One gets latest information as well as in depth knowledge on issues

“I get latest information in any area of specialization and various research carried out in different disciplines”

Conclusion and Suggestions

This paper has looked at the usage of the online databases subscribed to by the University of Education Library on behalf of the university. The results of the study revealed that the awareness of the databases among the respondents was reasonably high. It was also revealed that a number of faculty members frequently use the resources although few of them use it occasionally. The study has established clearly that faculty members utilise the databases subscribed to by the library. It is discernible from the findings that, awareness could lead to utilization of the resources although Dadzie (2005) was of the view that awareness of the resources does not necessarily lead to utilization. In this study, it has established clearly that awareness could elicit utilization of resources. Furthermore, the results showed that faculty members have knowledge about most of the databases and utilise a greater number of them, however few of the databases such as BIONNE, Datad, Inscribe and kudos were never used. In addition it came to light that faculty members acknowledge the usefulness of the databases as very crucial to their scholarly and other educational needs looking at the comments they made. Nevertheless, despite the profound usage of the electronic databases, there were few hindrances affecting their access to the databases. These hindrances include, slow Internet connectivity, not having access outside the university campus, lack of searching skills, sometimes some passwords not functioning when one needs information among others. These obstacles need to be tackled by the library to ensure smooth access to the scholarly databases. In sum, one can say that faculty members use the online databases to meet their varied information requirement; nevertheless the library management should make conscious efforts to continue to improve on the constraints encountered by faculty members to ensure efficient and effective use so that there would be enough justification for subscription annually.

Based on the above findings, the following suggestions are made:

The management of the Library should carry out needs assessment of all the databases subscribed to and those that are not being used should not be subscribed again. An abstract of each of the databases and the subject they cover should be put on the library website to make them attractive to users.

Liaison librarians attached to various faculties should continue to market the resources and sensitise faculty members about the value of the databases to their scholarly output. In addition the liaison librarians' should continue to organise training on how to access information using the databases.

Internet connectivity is a critical component in promoting the use of the resources. Concrete efforts should be made by the ICT department in the university towards the improvement of the Internet connectivity on campus to ensure seamless access to electronic databases. Further to this, wireless Internet connection should be established on the campus including the residential areas where students and staff live.

The Library management should collaborate with the ICT to put in place measures so that the electronic databases could be accessed regardless of one's location. Access must not be restricted to on-campus. Everyone should have seamless access to the resources wherever one finds himself.

The Library management should endeavor to ensure that web based guides and tutorials are developed to enhance the search process and enable them use the resources effectively. In addition staff responsible for the resources should locate specific databases that match disciplines taught in the university. This I believe would make their searches easier and simpler for the faculty members and other users too.

The Library management should endeavour to periodically assess the online databases to find how it is being used effectively and if there are challenges inhibiting the use of the resources. If this is done periodically it would go a long way to help the Library to make informed decision regarding the online databases.

The librarian responsible for the electronic resources should endeavour to always alert users that a particular password is not functioning due to some reasons. This would go a long way to help the users so that they need not access a particular database whose password is not functioning. A continuous use of use of disfunctioning passwords would discourage end user's interest in online database usage in general.

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