

Research

The Awareness and Use of Indexes by Postgraduate Students of Babcock University

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The study investigated the awareness and use of Indexes by Postgraduate Students of Babcock University, Ilishan-Remo, Ogun State, Nigeria. The study aimed to find out the extent of awareness, use and the challenges facing the use of indexes by post graduate students of Babcock University. Survey research design was adopted for the study. The population of the study consists of all the postgraduate students of Babcock University. A sample of 150 postgraduate students was randomly selected from the entire population. Self-developed Questionnaire was used as an instrument for data collection. 132 copies out of 150 questionnaires were successfully retrieved and analyzed using descriptive statistics such as percentages, mean and standard deviation. The study discovered that Majority of the post graduate students of Babcock University are not aware of the indexes. Most of the postgraduate students (more than 50%) of Babcock University do not utilize indexes at all. Among others, it was concluded that substantial percentages of the Post graduate students of Babcock University are not aware of the indexes and most of them do not utilize indexes at all. With this in mind, one could conclude that generally, awareness and use of indexes has significantly affected their satisfaction with the library services. It was recommended that Babcock University Library management should ensure that postgraduate students are given adequate orientation to increase their level of awareness of indexes. Postgraduate students of Babcock University should be encouraged, by the library, to make proper use of the various types of Indexes through various user- education programs.

Keywords: Awareness, Use, Indexes, library, Postgraduate Students and University

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INTRODUCTION

Indexes are essential tools for quick search, access and effective retrieval of information at the right time by the right user. Indexes are not the main information resource needed by users but rather a pointer to the real source of information. Indexes assist in managing the challenges of information explosion. It plays a great role in information retrieval, facilitates quick and timely access to information resources. It helps to minimize the time and effort of the client in locating the needed information and to maximize the success of the user in searching which eventually saves the period of the client. This is in line with the fourth law of Library science championed by R. S. Ranganathan as cited in Bhatt (2011) "save the time of the reader". Time is a valuable asset to every person and its effective management is indeed a key to success in life. Postgraduate students need to learn, possess and acquire the habit of saving their precious time. Indexes are indicators that help and guide one to easily find information. They are systematic guide to location of words, concepts and other information items in books, periodicals or other publications. It consists of series of entries appearing in alphabetical order to enable users find information with references to show where each item of information is located.

Reitz (2004) defined Indexing as the "process of compiling one or more indexes for a single publication such as a monograph or multivolume references work or adding entries for new document to an open end index covering a particular publication format (example newspapers), works of a specific literacy form (biography, book reviews etc.) or the literature of an academic field discipline or group of disciplines.

University libraries are, the nerve- Centre of the Universities, saddled with the basic functions of carefully selecting, acquiring, processing and disseminating information to satisfy the information needs of its clients as well as support Teaching, learning, Research and community services. They select and acquire different types of Information resources of various formats such as textbooks, electronic resources, scholarly journals, thesis, dissertations, workshop papers and conference proceedings and numerous others to satisfy the information needs of users. Hence, without proper organization and use of Indexing services gaining access to these resources as quickly as possible will be cumbersome and frustrating. Emorah (1984) as cited in Umar, Mohammed and Shittu (2014), while writing on the relevance of indexes for Nigerian development, stated that without indexes and abstract to journals and other publication, other academic pursuits will be impossible because tracing a piece of information will be very difficult. Therefore, for effective realization of the goal, mission and vision of their parent organizations, University libraries should pay more attention to the

provision of indexing services. Meanwhile, postgraduate students are very crucial in the field of research and scholarship because they are trained to be future professionals, consultants, researchers and scholars. More so, they are required by their respective Universities to prepare and produce a thesis and/or dissertations as one of the basic requirements or condition for graduation. Hence, they need access to scholarly, accurate and timely information which cannot be realized without proper awareness and use of indexes. Aina (2004) stressed that, libraries, have devised tools such as catalogues, bibliographies, indexes, abstracts etc. which are expected to make users or readers aware of the variety of information carriers such as books, serials, audio-visual materials available in the library and information Centre's collections.

STATEMENT OF THE PROBLEM

Indexes facilitate quick and easy access to the relevant, comprehensive and right information resource. It also saves the time of the users as well as assists in managing the challenges of information explosion. Indexes play a great role in information retrieval by narrowing down search to specific information needed. There are limited studies on the awareness and use of indexes by Postgraduate students in Nigeria. Literature revealed that most of the studies carried out on indexes such as that of Musa and Dangani (2013), Garba, Mohammed and Umar (2013) and Umar, Mohammed and Shittu (2014), among others, did not cover postgraduate students awareness and use of indexes. Hence there is need to carry out the study in order to fill in the knowledge gap.

OBJECTIVES OF THE STUDY

The main objective of this study is to find out the extent of awareness and use of indexes by postgraduate students of Babcock University and specific objectives are as follows:

1. To find out the extent of awareness of indexes by post graduate students of Babcock University;
2. To find out the extent of use of indexes by post graduate students of Babcock University; and
3. To discover the challenges of using indexes by post graduate students of Babcock University.

RESEARCH QUESTIONS

1. To what extent are the post graduate students of Babcock University aware of indexes?

2. To what extent do post graduate students of Babcock University use indexes?
3. What are the challenges of using indexes by post graduate students of Babcock University?

REVIEW OF RELATED LITERATURE

Awareness according to Ani and Ahiauzu (2008) refers to knowledge about something that exists or understanding of a situation or subject based on the available information or experience. Onifade, Ogbuiyi, and Omeluzor (2013) defined it as knowledge or perception of a situation, fact, consciousness, recognition, realization, grasp and acknowledgement concern about and well-informed interest or familiarity in a particular situation or development. Awareness of indexes by postgraduate students leads to its utilization. Akande (2003) stressed that the use of library resources is one of the top priority of the university libraries as this will enlighten the library management to realize how best they can serve their respective clients. Contributing to this, Tsafe (2004) stated that Users' study is considered as a veritable tool in appraising libraries and their services. Studies confirmed that there is a positive correlation between awareness and use of library resources. Osinulu (1998) confirmed in her study that low use of the library is due to lack of awareness on the part of users.

The ultimate aim of university library is to support teaching, learning, research and community development. University libraries must therefore, make sure that their resources and services are well utilized by their patrons and Postgraduate students were among the regular patrons of the university library. This may be partly due to the fact that they now face an advanced level of academic pursuit. Rasul and Singh (2010) discovered that there are scanty literatures on the needs of the postgraduate students, yet they constitute a significant group of researchers in the university system. They also observed that the extent to which postgraduate students perceive the role of their university library matter a lot. This is very important because the nature of postgraduate studies require a student do a lot of independent studies on their own. The use of library resources and services such as indexes is thus critical to the postgraduate students in order to excel and achieve academic excellence. As a result, Olofinsawe and Oyeniyi (2010) affirmed that academic libraries have to build strong collection of information resources in physical and digital format and provide relevant retrieval devices like indexes to cater for the diverse information

and knowledge needs of their clients. It is therefore necessary to take the needs of the post-graduate students into consideration in policy planning and operations of any university library.

Umar, Mohammed and Shittu (2015) carried out a research on the assessment of indexing and abstracting services in Nuhu Bamalli Polytechnic Library, Zaria, Nigeria. The finding reveals that all the types of indexes and Abstracts are available in the Polytechnic library.

More so, Garba, Mohammed and Umar (2015) appraised indexing and abstracting services in the Institute of Education library, Ahmadu Bello University, Zaria and the results revealed that Indexing and abstracting services are available with the exception of Reviews, Author's abstract and descriptive abstracting services. Subject index has the highest response of 36.4% while specific index has the lowest response of 4.5% only. Indicative abstract and Subject abstract with 31.8% and 4.5% response rate respectively. While Indexing services were moderately utilized with 59% response rate, abstracting services were not utilized with 50% response rate. Musa and Dangani (2013) Assessed the use of indexing and abstracting services by patrons of Federal College of Education Katsina library, they found out that non-use of indexing and abstracting services by patrons is largely due to lack of awareness of its availability. It can be deduced here that, awareness and availability of indexes can influence their use by library clients.

METHODOLOGY

Survey research design was adopted for the study. Aina (2003) asserted that survey research is a systematic and comprehensive collection of information that reflects the opinions, attitudes, feelings, beliefs and behaviors of people on an issue. This involves the collection of data about a target population using a selected Sample and putting together the results of the findings obtained from analysis of the sample as representative of the whole population to generally describe the characteristic of the whole population. 150 postgraduate students were randomly selected to serve as the sample of the study. Self-developed Questionnaire was used as the instrument for data collection and was validated by the senior colleagues in IRM department. The questionnaires were randomly administered to Postgraduate Students during Chapel seminar and 132 copies out of the 150 administered Questionnaires were successfully retrieved and found useful for the study. Descriptive statistics with tables, percentages, mean and standard deviation were used in analyzing the data collected.

Data analysis and interpretation

Table 1: Extent of Postgraduate Awareness of indexes in Babcock University

S/N	Awareness of Indexes	4	3	2	1	Mean	SD
1	Alphabetical Indexes	18(14%)	27(20%)	18(14%)	69(52%)	1.77	1.23
2	Author Indexes	15(11%)	09 (7%)	21(16%)	87(66%)	1.98	1.25
3	Book Indexes	09(7%)	42(32%)	15(11%)	66(50%)	1.73	1.17
4	Periodical Indexes	24(18%)	45(34%)	27(20%)	36(27%)	1.68	1.18
5	Classified Indexes	30(23%)	27(20%)	30(23%)	45(34%)	1.80	1.18
6	Cumulative indexes	09(7%)	33(25%)	30(23%)	60(45%)	1.91	1.09
7	Faceted Indexes	12(9%)	21(16%)	48(36%)	51(39%)	2.11	1.02
8	Internet and Multimedia Indexes	15(11%)	24(18%)	45(34%)	48(36%)	2.05	1.02
9	Word Index	33(25%)	18(14%)	36(27%)	45(34%)	1.89	1.15
10	Coordinated Index	06(5%)	36(27%)	30(23%)	60(45%)	1.91	1.07

Key: 4- Very much aware, 3- Somewhat aware, 2- Aware, 1- Not aware, SD= Standard deviation

Table 1 presents the opinion of the respondents on the extent of awareness of indexes in Babcock University. The result shows that most Postgraduate students in Babcock University are not aware of Author Indexes 87(66%), Alphabetical Indexes 69(52%), Book Indexes 66(50%), Cumulative indexes and Coordinated Index with 60(45%), Faceted Indexes 48(36%) and Internet and Multimedia Indexes 45(34%) scores respectively. Only 45% and below are somewhat aware and very much aware about indexes.

This finding confirmed the study of Musa and Dangani (2013) who Assessed the use of indexing and abstracting services by patrons of Federal College of Education Katsina library, and found that there is lack of awareness of indexing and abstracting services by the patrons which lead to low patronage of the facility.

Table 2: Level of Use of Indexes by Postgraduate Students in Babcock University

S/N	Extent of Use of Indexes	4	3	2	1	Mean	SD
1	Alphabetical Indexes	8(6%)	36(27%)	27(20%)	61(46%)	1.87	1.10
2	Author Indexes	24(18%)	33(25%)	24(18%)	51(39%)	1.75	1.20
3	Book Indexes	24(18%)	27(20%)	33(25%)	48(36%)	1.86	1.13
4	Periodical Indexes	12(9%)	39(30%)	39(30%)	42(31%)	1.91	1.00
5	Classified Indexes	15(11%)	21(17%)	48(36%)	48(36%)	2.09	1.01
6	Cumulative indexes	06(5%)	24(18%)	51(39%)	51(39%)	2.16	0.99
7	Faceted Indexes	09(7%)	39(30%)	21(17%)	63(48%)	1.80	1.13

Table 2: continues

8	Internet and Multimedia Indexes	18(14%)	24(18%)	39(30%)	51(39%)	1.98	1.07
9	Word Index	27(20%)	15(11%)	45(34%)	45(34%)	2.02	1.07
10	Coordinated Index	06(5%)	24(18%)	45(34%)	57(43%)	2.11	1.03

Key: 4- Highly Utilised, 3- Moderately Utilised, 2- Lowly Utilised, 1- Not Utilised, SD= Standard deviation

Table 2 shows the opinion of the respondents on the level of use of indexes by postgraduate students in Babcock University. The results reveal that 50% and above of the respondents do not use indexes at all. 51% lowly utilized faceted index, 39% and below moderately utilized indexes and 24% and below highly utilized indexes. This finding is also in line with that of Garba, Mohammed and Umar (2015) who appraised indexing and abstracting services in the Institute of Education library, Ahmadu Bello University, Zaria and discovered that Indexing services were moderately utilized with 59% response rate.

Table 3: Challenges of the use of Indexes

S/N	Challenges of the use of Indexes	4	3	2	1	MEAN	SD
1	Lack of training	51(39%)	36(27%)	30(23%)	15(11%)	1.57	1.42
2	Incessant Power supply	36(27%)	30(23%)	33(25%)	33(25%)	1.75	1.20
3	Poor internet access	51(39%)	30(23%)	36(27%)	15(11%)	1.66	1.32
4	Lack of Awareness	48(36%)	33(25%)	30(23%)	21(17%)	1.61	1.36
5	Inaccessibility to some types of Indexes	48(36%)	36(27%)	24(18%)	24(18%)	1.55	1.45
6	Inadequate/Lack of skills in search for needed information	51(39%)	45(34%)	24(18%)	12(9%)	1.45	1.57
7	Lack of Assistance from Library Personnel	39(30%)	39(30%)	27(20%)	27(20%)	1.61	1.32

Key: 4- Strongly Agree, 3- Agree, 2- Disagree, 1- Strongly Disagree, SD= Standard deviation

Table 3 shows the opinion of the respondents on the challenges of the use of indexes. 51(39%) strongly agree that Lack of training, Poor internet access and inadequate/Lack of skills in search for needed information were the challenges being faced while using indexes. 36(27%) disagree that poor internet access is among the challenges of utilizing indexes and 27(20%) disagree that lack of assistance from the library personnel is the challenges of utilizing indexes.

2. Most of the post graduate students (50% and above) of Babcock University do not utilize indexes at all; and
3. Post graduate students of Babcock University strongly agree that Lack of training, Poor internet access and inadequate/Lack of skills in search for needed information are the major challenges being faced while using indexes

SUMMARY OF THE MAJOR FINDINGS

The major findings of the study are:

1. Majority of the postgraduate students of Babcock University are not aware of the indexes;

CONCLUSION

The findings revealed that substantial percentages of the Post graduate students of Babcock University are not aware of the indexes and do not utilize indexes. With this in mind, one could conclude that generally, awareness and use of indexes has significantly affected their

satisfaction with the library services.. This is not without challenges as Lack of training, Poor internet access and inadequate/Lack of skills in search for needed information. This has pretentious the level of use of indexes as well as the level of satisfaction with the library services by postgraduate students.

RECOMMENDATIONS

1. Babcock University Library management should ensure that postgraduate students are given adequate orientation to increase their level of awareness of indexes. This can be achieved with the printing of leaflets to showcase all available services in the library including the indexing and abstracting services;
2. Postgraduate students of Babcock University should be encouraged by the library to make proper use of the various types of Indexes through various user- education programs such as brief talks during departmental seminars by library representative to educate students on the benefits of using the indexing and abstracting services; and
3. Babcock University Library management in collaboration with the department of Information Resource Management should organize training workshop on the awareness, use and challenges of using indexes for the benefit of the university community.

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