

## Information And Communication Service Delivery In The Library As Determinant Factors For Effective Research Among Postgraduate Students: A Case Study Of Ekiti State University, Ado-Ekiti

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**Abstract:** The paper titled “Information and communication service delivery as determinant factors for effective research among postgraduate students. The major aim of any university library is to support teaching, learning and research activities of its parent institution. University libraries must therefore, make sure that their resources are well utilized as this is essential for the educational development of the students. Library is an important intellectual resource of the academic community, and helps them to fulfil the curriculum requirements and to promote studies and research. The library, however, includes the totality of human and organized materials resources available in both book and non-book format for providing and obtaining needed information.

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### 1. Introduction

The major aim of any university library is to support teaching, learning and research activities of its parent institution. University libraries must therefore, make sure that their resources are well utilized as this is essential for the educational development of the students. In agreement with this, Rathinasabapathy (2005) posited that library is an important intellectual resource of the academic community, and helps them to fulfil the curriculum requirements and to promote studies and research. The library, however, includes the totality of human and organized materials resources available in both book and non-book format for providing and obtaining needed information (Ahuazu, 2002).

Previous literature on the role of academic libraries in facilitating research has acknowledged that academic libraries play a pivotal role in ensuring the success of research.

With greater attention on research given by universities, the considerable amount of literatures has showed that libraries have put more emphasis on their services as compare to research facilities. Kaufman (2005) highlighted that what academic libraries are doing today is not like those of the past, even the future.

Ka (2005) suggested that university libraries play a significant role in supporting research University libraries do not just store books and journals and offer space for student learning, but they also provide systematically digitized information. University libraries, as they become more and more digitized, will play an important role in offering a greater

support service for young professors and PhD students which will help in the development of their academic careers. Singh (2007) showed that research is taking on increasing importance in universities and colleges. Universities are making larger allocations for research and the rank of university is based on their research outputs. In order to satisfy the stakeholders of academic libraries, the role of academic libraries in facilitating research have to be reexamined. In doing so, academic libraries could provide more effective services and supports to their users.

Webb (2007) highlighted that the effective academic library are gateways to academic knowledge through their own collection and by facilitating access to material. In the line with its core purpose, providing effective library services could support the research activities of researchers. Haglund (2008) indicated that university libraries are dedicated to what they perceive as the needs of students and researchers at the university. Otherwise, they could not effectively assist the research activities, nor could they contribute to the university’s research. Even though the literature has indicated that academic libraries play a significant role on facilitating research, the overall support of academic libraries for research was not strategic. Instead of developing an extensive research collection, the libraries relied heavily on inter-library loans to support research (Patterson 2009).

Simmonds (2001) found that the use of academic libraries is influenced most by users’ perceived familiarity with the library and its resources. Those who are more familiar with the library are more likely to use academic libraries. To motivate the greater

usage of libraries, librarians need to educate users on how to use library resources not only in the confines of the library building, but even when they access the resources remotely.

Rowley (2004) pointed out that librarians can promote the research culture among researchers. Currently, libraries are undergoing continual changes and development as library managers, information professionals, and knowledge workers need to manage and understand these changes to respond to the dynamic environments. Researchers could benefit from these changes.

As the academic environment is constantly changing, and with universities increasing their emphasis on research, academic libraries need to re-examine their role in assisting the users in their research. While there is much literature on the importance of academic libraries in assisting university research in general, there is little on the needs of specific groups of researchers, including the postgraduate students. Apart from Ka (2005) and Singh (2007) mentioned above, little was found on the needs of postgraduate students, their perceptions, usage and assessment of academic libraries. A lot of studies have been carried out on library use. This is so because it is the users that make the library and its services come alive. A library that is not used is as good as dead as it cannot justify its existence. It is therefore the use to which the library is put that infuses life into its resources and services; hence, use and user studies cannot outlive their usefulness. Akinade (2000) observed that the expectations of people are high when sourcing and retrieving information and when such information needs are not met, frustration usually set in and this may drive the users away from the library. Akande (2003) therefore noted that the use of library resources is uppermost in the minds of the university libraries as this will enable the management know how best they can serve their users. Users' study is thus regarded as a veritable tool for the assessment of libraries and their services (Tsafé, 2004).

However, literature has revealed that information availability does not mean accessibility and utilization; therefore, university libraries have to market their resources and services to attract users. Osinulu (1998) also confirmed in her study that low use of the library is due to lack of awareness on the part of users. Ozoemelem (2009), on the other hand, stated that informed library users know that libraries have resources that are more comprehensive and scholarly than most web sites provide but the problem is that these resources they are not straightforward like that on the webs. Though users use the library for different purposes, Oyesiku and Oduwole (2004) study on the use of academic library revealed that

students use the library mostly during examinations period. In a study conducted by Igun and Adogbeji (2007) among the postgraduate students, majority of the students claimed that their main purpose of using the library is to update their knowledge and skills. It is therefore, essential to know the needs and opinions of the users in order to satisfy them. In buttressing this Bassey (2006) posited that satisfying the request of users implies providing the actual information or services that will meet their needs.

Among many users of the university library are the postgraduate students. This class of students are regarded as 'matured students' because they have pass through the undergraduate stage and are now facing a higher level of academic studies. Rasul and Singh (2010) observed that there are scanty literatures on the needs of the postgraduate students, yet they form a significant group of researchers in a university. Furthermore, they noted that how the postgraduate students perceive the role of their university library matters a lot. This is very important because the nature of postgraduate study demands that students must do a lot of independent studies on their own. The use of library resources and services is thus indispensable to the postgraduate students in order to achieve their academic objective. As a result, Olofinsawe and Oyeniyi (2010) affirmed that academic libraries have to build strong collection of information resources in physical and digital format to cater for knowledge requirements of their users. It is therefore necessary to take the needs of the post-graduate students into consideration in policy planning in any university library.

Communication makes the world habitable. Consciously involves sharing ideas, feelings, thoughts, and many other things that humans share. Ojomo (2004) defined communication as the process of sharing ideas, feelings, thoughts and messages with others. Rothwell (2001) sees communication as a transactional process of sharing meaning with others. Kemoni (2004) citing Ojiambo avers that communication involves the giving and receiving of information, signals or messages by talk, gestures and writing. Odini (1999) identifies communication as one of the core competencies that all information professionals should possess.

Interpersonal communication involves sending and receiving messages between two or more people. DeFleur and Dennis (2002) conceptualized interpersonal communication as a process of using language and non-verbal cues to send and receive messages between individuals that are intended to arouse particular kinds of meaning. Rothwell (2004) posits that interpersonal communication is dyadic communication; according to him, it is a transaction that takes place between two people. Tubbs and Moss

(2003) see interpersonal communication as encompassing many kinds of relationships from the most casual to the longest lasting. The growth of learning today according to Katz (2002) no longer can be termed gradual. He noted that finding specific bits of data among the mass of undifferentiated information is a great challenge and the reference librarian is in the best position to meet this challenge.

Reference librarians are the image makers for the library and the link between the library, library resources, and library patrons. They are the individuals to ask when a patron does not know who to ask, or need to look for specific information and do not know where to begin. The reference librarian interprets information sources to library users and how to explore them.

### **Barriers to Effective Communication of information in the library**

There are several factors that affect the communication process. Kemoni (2004) observed that some of these factors have to do with the sender of messages, others with the receiver or both the sender and receiver. In reference services also, there are some barriers to effective communication. These barriers are as highlighted hereunder:

#### **Inferiority complex**

Self-confidence is important for effective delivery of reference services. Lack of self-confidence makes it difficult for reference librarians to handle difficult questions from supposedly highly knowledgeable clients which in turn make them feel inferior to these groups of users. Inferiority complex arises as a result of low self-esteem. Lin (1997) described it as an abnormal or pathological state which due to the tendency of the complex to draw unrelated ideas into itself, leads the individual to deprecate him- or herself to become unduly sensitive, to be too eager for praise and flattery, and to adopt a derogatory attitude towards others. This can affect communication between the reference librarian and the client. A reference librarian who has low self-esteem may perceive the client to have higher qualifications and superior knowledge. A reference librarian who lacks social skills and is withdrawn will not be able to tease out questions from clients and cannot help them to articulate their information needs. This makes the librarian want to quickly dispatch the client to avoid further queries.

#### **Stereotype**

Reference service is about relationship. Stereotyping makes one presumptuous about certain persons, cultures, languages, belief systems. It involves making assumptions about individuals or groups, usually as a result of information that may or may not be true. McKay, Davis, and Fanning (2003) describe stereotyping as a shortcut to forming

impression of others. Stereotypes in reference services introduce background noise and interference in communication which makes decoding of queries posed by stereotyped patrons nearly impossible, because the reference librarian has a bias towards such an individual or group. This will adversely affect the quality of reference service such persons would have enjoyed.

#### **Etiquette and decorum**

There are acceptable norms, standards, and official language in relating to others, especially in a corporate setting. These standards enable one show courtesy and mutual respect for others. Showing respect toward patrons allows them to feel honoured and eager to visit the library again. A reference librarian, who lacks finesse in language, lacks decorum and good disposition towards the clientele, and whose gestures are demeaning, may not be able to retain users. Patrons will feel ridiculed and resolve to avoiding the reference desk or even locate someone else who will assist them in meeting their information needs.

#### **Boundaries in relationship**

There should be a clearcut demarcation between formal and informal relationships in rendering reference services. Reference librarians should be able to create boundaries in relating with clients not taking undue advantage of them or attempting to project their private needs in an official relationship. Unsolicited comments by the reference librarian should be avoided in order not to send wrong signals that have the ability to irritate the clientele and discourage them from seeking help when information is needed.

#### **Low level of education**

Nwalo (2003) opines that one major step in the reference process is the question clarification process. For reference services to be well delivered, reference librarians must be able to interact at the level of their clientele and answer queries. They must build enough capacity to be able to sustain a high level of communication with clients. Low level of education manifests in diverse ways which include but not limited to lack of capacity to understand user needs and wrong feedbacks as a result of inability to comprehend user requests. It also affects all the other barriers listed above.

#### **Frustration due to poor working conditions**

This is another factor that constitutes a barrier to communication in reference services. If references librarians are not happy with the system they work for, are not well-motivated, and work without commensurate remuneration, there is a tendency to take it out on clients through transferred aggression. Such librarians might not be attentive to the demands of clients, which may be done deliberately to frustrate

the system. The initial verbal and non-verbal responses of the librarian will influence the depth and level of the interaction between the librarian and the patron (Katz, 2002). A reference librarian who is frustrated will not be interested in any conversation, not to talk of trying to understand and meet the information needs of clients.

The objectives of the study are as follows:

I. To identify the various information sources post-graduate students need;

II. To find out the purpose for which they seek information;

III. To identify the methods that post-graduate students of the library adopt to locate the desired information;

IV. To know the extent of satisfaction of post-graduate students with regard to library collection, services, and facilities; and

### Research Questions

I. What are the various information resources needs by post-graduate students?

II. What are the purposes for which postgraduate students seek for information?

III. What are the methods that postgraduate students adopt to locate desired information?

IV. What is the extent of satisfaction of postgraduate students with regards to library collection, services, and facilities?

### 2. Material and Methods

The research design used for this study is descriptive research of the expo-facto. The study population comprised 200 postgraduate students in Ekiti State University. The sampling procedure used was total enumeration techniques. The postgraduate students of Economics and Accounting Department in Ekiti State University were covered. The reason being that the population size of the postgraduate students is very small, and that the available financial resource and time frame for the study could permit it. The instrument used for this study is questionnaire. In drawing this questionnaire, effort was made to see that the instrument is clear and details enough to the information and communication service delivery as determinant factors for effective research among postgraduate students. The questionnaire was divided into five parts. Part A deals with information of the respondents such as age, sex and level of the students. Part B deals with various information resources available in the library. Part C deals with various methods of locating information needed by postgraduate students. Part D deal with purpose for which postgraduate students use the library. Part E deals with extents of satisfaction of postgraduate students with regards to library collection, services

and facilities. 200 copies of the developed questionnaire were administered to the respondents by the researcher.

### 3. Results

This chapter presents the results of the data analysis and the discussion "Information and communication service delivery as a correlate for effective research among postgraduate students: A case study of Ekiti State University. 200 questionnaires were distributed, one hundred and eighty were returned and good for research analysis 180(80%).

#### Demographic of Respondents Distribution Respondents by age

Table 1. Demographic of Respondents and Distribution Respondents by age

Age	Frequency	Percent	Cumulative Percent
25-30	50	27.8	27.8
31-35	20	11.1	38.9
36-40	30	16.7	55.6
41-45	25	13.9	69.5
46-50	30	16.7	86.2
51-55	20	11.1	97.3
56-60	5	2.7	100
61-65	0	0	
Total	180	100	

Table 1 showed that 50(27.8%) of the respondents were within the age range of 25-30 years, 20(11.1%) were within the age range of 31-35 years, 30(16.7%) were within the age range of 36-40 years, 25(13.9%) were within the age range of 41-45 years, 30(16.7%) were within the range of 46-50 years, 20(11.1%) were within the age range of 51-55 years, 5(2.7%) were within the range of 56-60 years, while 0(0%) were within the range of 61-65 years.

#### Distribution of Respondents by Level

Table 2. Distribution of Respondents by Level

Level	Frequency	Percent	Cumulative Percent
Phd Students	30	16.7	16.7
Master students	100	55.5	72.2
Mphil/Phd students	30	16.7	88.9
Mphil	20	11.1	100
Total		100	

Table 2 showed that 30(16.7%) of the respondents were Phd students, 100(55.5%) were master students, 30(16.7%) of the respondents were Mphil/Phd, while 20(11.1%) were Mphil students.

The distribution of post-graduate students according to the adequacy of various information resources is shown in this table (Table 3).

Table 3. The distribution of post-graduate students according to the adequacy of various information resources

Library resources	Adequacy/Percentage	Inadequacy/Percentage
Textbooks	170 94.4%	10 5.5%
Reference Books	120 66.7%	60 33.3%
Periodicals	130 72.2%	50 27.8%
Newspapers	150 83.3%	30 16.6%
Reports	100 55%	80 44.4%
Theses/Dissertation	160 88.9%	11.1

This table showed that 94.4% of the respondents used textbooks, 88.9% used theses/Dissertation, 83.3% used Newspapers, 72.2% used periodicals, 66.7% used reference books and while 55% of the respondents used reports.

The distribution of post-graduate students according to the various methods for locating information needed is shown in Table 4.

Table 4. The distribution of post-graduate students according to the various methods for locating information

Methods	Yes /Percentage	No/Percentage
The library catalogue	100 55.5%	80 44.4%
Library staff	90 50%	90 50%
Guidance of teachers	80 44.4%	100 55.5%
Friends	70 38.9%	110 61.1%
Browsing Shelves	160 88.9%	20 11.2%

This table showed that 88.9% of the postgraduate student's source for information needed through browsing shelves, 55.5% source for information through library catalogue, 50% of the respondents source for information through the assistant of library staff, 44.4% source for information through the assistant of Guidance of teachers while 38.9% of the

respondents source for information through assistant of friends.

#### *Purpose of using the library*

The distribution of post-graduate students according to the purpose of using the library is shown in this table.

This result indicated that 94.4% of the postgraduate students use library to consult periodicals, 88.8% of the respondents use the library to read/borrow books, 66.7% use the library in order to make photocopying of materials, 55.5% of the respondents use the library in order read newspapers while 44.4% of the respondents use the library in order to use internet/email.

The distribution of post-graduate students according the satisfaction of different facilities (Table 5).

Table 5. The distribution of post-graduate students according the satisfaction of different facilities

S\N	Purpose	Yes	No
1	To read/borrow books	160 88.8%	20 11.1%
2	To consult periodicals	170 94.4%	10 5.5%
3	To read newspapers	100 55.5%	80 44.4%
4	To use internet/email	80 44.4%	100 55.5%
5	Photocopying of Materials	120 66.7%	60 33.3%

Table 6 showed the level of satisfaction of postgraduate students on differences facilities available in the library, 88% of the respondents were satisfied for spacing for reading, 83.3% of the respondents were satisfied with the ventilation, 72.2% were satisfied with cleanliness, 61.1% were satisfied with furniture while 56.6% of the respondents were satisfied with lighting (Table 6).

Table 6. The level of satisfaction of postgraduate students on differences facilities available in the library

Library Facilities	Satisfied	Not satisfied
Spacing for reading	160 88%	20 11.1%
Cleanliness	130 72.2%	50 27.8%
Lighting	100 55.6%	80 44.4%
Furniture	110 61.1%	70 38.9
Ventilation	150 83.3%	30 16.7%

Table 7 indicated the level of satisfaction of the respondents on library services, 88.9% of the respondents were satisfied with services rendered by references section of the library, 83.3% of the respondents were satisfied with services rendered by circulation section of the library, 66.7% were satisfied with reader orientation services, 61.5% were satisfied with internet/Email services while 50% were satisfied with reprographic (Table 7).

Table 7. The level of satisfaction of the respondents on library services

Library Service	Satisfied/Percent age	Not satisfied/Percent age
Circulation services	150 83.3%	30 16.7%
References services	160 88.9%	20 11.1%
Reader orientation services	120 66.7%	60 33.3%
Interlibrary loan	100 55.6%	80 44.4
Reprographic	90 50%	90 50%
Internet/Email services	110 61.5%	70 38.9%

#### 4. Conclusion

The university library plays a vital role in assisting the university to fulfil its goal. The effectiveness of the university library to a large extent depends on the utilisation of its resources and services. This study has therefore ascertained that postgraduate students do not maximise the use of library resources provided for them because majority of them do not use the library on a regular basis. They also prefer internet sources to print resource. Their main purpose of visiting the library is to consult research materials and borrow some materials for home use, while their major problem is lack of time. Campbell (2006) observed that as result of digitization "numerous creative and useful services have evolved within academic libraries. In other words if the library is to satisfy the needs of the postgraduate students most of its services will have to be internet based. However, the following recommendations are suggested in order to satisfy the needs of postgraduate students in the library.

#### 5. Recommendation

1. The library should open on 24hours basis and the university management should budget for this so that staff will be remunerated adequately in order to offer quality services.
2. More internet points should be given to the library so that enough points will be dedicated to postgraduate students.
3. In addition to this, wireless access should be provided to the postgraduate students so that they can access the resources from anywhere and not necessarily have to come to the library.
4. Library should package a special users education for the postgraduate students so that they will be aware of various services that are available for them in the library.
5. Moreover the library should establish helpdesk at the Postgraduate School and a very dynamic and competent librarian should manage this, to collate the needs of the students and proffer solution to them; by so doing the postgraduate students will see the library as a hub for their research activities.

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