

Undergraduate Students' Perception of the Online Public Access Catalogue in University Libraries in Nigeria

Charles Moses *IJANTIKU (CLN)*¹ & Umar Babayi *BABANGIDA (CLN)*²

Ibrahim Babangida Library, Modibbo Adama University of Technology, Yola^{1,2}

ijantiku@mautech.edu.ng¹, babayi@mautch.edu.ng²

Abstract

Purpose: This study was carried out to examine the undergraduate students' perception of the Online Public Access Catalogue (OPAC) in university libraries in Nigeria.

Design/Method/Approach: The population of the study is 163 undergraduate students; structured questionnaire was used for data collection. The data collected were analyzed using descriptive statistics.

Findings: The findings of the study revealed that majority of the respondent indicated agreed that OPAC is quick in accessing library holdings, it also revealed that majority of the respondents indicated low aware that OPAC provides information for retrieving books/journals, the study revealed that majority of the respondents indicated great extent that they utilized OPAC for academic research work, the study revealed that there is available resource for the effective and efficient utilization of the OPAC which includes Internet connectivity and the study revealed that majority of the respondents indicated strongly agreed; that lack of awareness of the existence of OPAC was the factor responsible for their perception.

Originality/Value: The research recommends among others; that University library management should create avenue for effective OPAC awareness and orientation programmes for old and newly admitted undergraduate students', this will arouse their interest and as well its maximum utilization of library resources resulting to their positive perception and effective academic performance.

Keywords: Undergraduate Students; Perceptions; Online Public Access Catalogue (OPAC); Universities Libraries; Nigeria

Paper type: Empirical research.

Introduction

University libraries are established to teaching, learning and research and to serve the user community of lecturers, undergraduates and undergraduate students in providing all needed information resources for its intellectual development and nourishment. The central focus of any educational institution is its library. It is the heart of the system to which both students and staff resort to for academic nourishment because, it is a place where an information seeker (user), gets into contact with information resources (print and non-print) for various consultations. Any library attached to a post-secondary or tertiary institution can be described as an academic library. Thus, academic libraries are as varied and distinctive as the academic institution they serve. Okorie (2006) stated that all libraries attached to universities, polytechnics, and colleges are called academic libraries. He further stated that academic libraries can be grouped into two: university libraries and College libraries. In

Nigerian context, all libraries attached to universities, polytechnics, colleges of Agriculture, colleges of education, are known as academic libraries. Therefore, the distinguishing mark is that any library attached to a university is called a university library. Universities are the leading academic institutions among other tertiary institutions in Nigeria, such as the polytechnics and colleges of education.

The rapid change in universities library setting has necessitated new tools for searching information, from manual public access to online public access, these changes have effects on users' perception and demand of library resources most especially by undergraduate students. In general context undergraduate student are students who gained admission into universities to obtain their first degree in various field or discipline. It therefore, necessary for university library to device a means and to provide access tools to information resources (both print and

non-print) for undergraduate students in particular as well as teaching staff and researchers

However, library resources are been acquired and organized by a trained librarian. The organization of these information resources is made possible through the process of cataloguing. Cataloguing helps in organizing the content of a particular library in such a way that it could be easily accessible to users without wasting their valuable time. It gives the physical and content description to every information material both in (print and non-print) form that a library acquires with consideration to its location in the library. According to Mole (2010), subject cataloguing entails all the professional techniques or processes of identifying or choosing the subject and acceptable word from the acceptable standardized list. Similarly, Ukpebor (2012), stated that cataloguing can also be the list of holdings of a particular library or of many libraries connected via computer. It may include books (referred to as monographs), serials, audiovisual materials, computer files, and digital information.

Moreover, as a result of current trends in knowledge society with innovative technologies automating labor so as to meet up with information instant seeking needs of users, this has led libraries to provide technologies that will grant quick access and retrieval of information materials. Also, the rapid change of new technologies has changed the pattern in the information needs of users and access to this information available online. Online cataloguing constitutes the major changes in cataloguing and is achieved using the computer system. Therefore, according to Ugah (2005), libraries are now expected to provide to users a range of information and communication technologies necessary for retrieving information quickly from both immediate and remote databases, hence the need for online cataloguing. Okoroma, (2010) asserted that online catalogue is the process of cataloguing items using pre-catalogued existing machine-readable recording. Online cataloguing gave rise to OPAC.

The online Public Access catalogue (OPAC) is one technology in the library which provides easy and speedy access to any of the information contained in the record for an item

in the library collection. It is a means that provides mind blowing features, serve users simultaneously, give complete bibliographic details, endless and limitless access and retrieval options to information seekers from teaching to learning and research. It grants quick and easy access to information resources and even more. The Online Public Access Catalogue (OPAC) is a modern and flexible form of online catalogue and it serves as an index to full-text information. OPAC is considerably more user friendly than a card catalogue since it provides a variety of help to the users (Lauren and Derek, 2012)

Perception is referred to as the way people try to understand the world around them. Information is being gathered through sense organs but perception adds meaning to these sensory inputs. For one to accept and utilize a concept or technology he/she must first perceive before responding either negatively or positively. Dinnet, Monk and Jean-Michel (2004) defined perception as an individual's tendency to evaluate an object as positive and negative. Perception satisfies personal motive and at same time affects the acceptance and use habits of users. Attitude opinion or perception starts with a user's beliefs, awareness, his consciousness to the existence of a product or service which later leads to his/her acceptance or rejection of such depending on his negative or positive beliefs. Anyapala & Edzan (2002). Stated that user can hold negative or positive beliefs or feelings toward a product or service, this behavioral intention is defined by the users' belief or feeling with respect to the product or service

Statement of the Problem

The University libraries play a vital role in the education and training of staff and students by providing resources for research and development, as well as provision of on line information resources. However, as a result of changing trends in knowledge society with innovative technologies couple with proliferation of information to meet up with information needs of users, this has led libraries to provide technologies that will grant quick access and retrieval of information materials. Also, the pattern in the information needs of

users has change rapidly as new technologies evolved that compel students to access library resources via online catalogue. Online catalogues have provided academic libraries with more effective access to bibliographic information through capabilities that are impossible via the manual catalogue. It also motivates users and it's easy to use, equips them with problem solving and information retrieval skills and provides them with lifelong learning experiences.

University libraries began to adopt current changes of these technologies, but it seems that most of the undergraduate students are not aware of the existence of new technologies put in place by universities which enhances access to available information, this could be attributed to lack of knowledge/skills of how to utilize search engines such as OPAC. In a related scenario, most library users remain ignorant of this technology, let alone taking advantage of its life changing opportunities resulting to its non-use and negative perception of the OPAC by users. Research has shown that students tends to have negative perception towards use of library resources and this will result to the user inability to explore and discover the available electronic resources in online environment provided by the online catalogue. It is against this background that the researchers conceived to investigate the undergraduate student's perceptions of the online public access catalogue in university libraries in Nigeria.

Purpose of the Study

The main purpose of the study is to determine undergraduate students' perception of the online catalogue in university libraries in Nigeria.

The specific objective of the study is to determine:

1. The undergraduate students' perception of the Online Public Access Catalogue.
2. The extent of awareness of OPAC among undergraduate students in the university libraries.
3. Determine the extent to which undergraduate students use OPAC in the university libraries.
4. The availability of resources for effective utilization of the online catalogue among

undergraduate students in the university libraries.

5. Identify the factors responsible for the user perception of OPAC in university libraries.

Research Questions

The following research questions were formulated to guide the study.

1. To what is undergraduate student's perception of the Online Public Access Catalogue?
2. What is the extent of OPAC awareness among undergraduate students in the university libraries?
3. What is the extent to which OPAC has been utilized by undergraduate students in university libraries?
4. What are the available resources for effective and efficient utilization of OPAC among undergraduate students' in the university library?
5. What are the factors responsible for the undergraduate student's perception of online catalogue OPAC in university libraries?

Review of related literature

The university libraries are set up mainly to support and pursue the objectives of the parent institutions such as teaching, learning and research. According to Yusuf (2009), a university library is any library attached to university and it's established to support teaching, learning and research in ways consistent with and supportive of, the institutions missions and goals. According to Omekwu (2008), academic library resources are considered a good measure of an institutions excellence and quality. University libraries are at the forefront of providing information services to their respective communities which comprises of students, lecturers, and researchers in order to support their learning teaching and research purposes.

According to Fati and Adetemirin, (2015) awareness of OPAC can be described as having a knowledge of the existence, benefits and purpose of OPAC, though the level of awareness vary from one user to another. Similarly, Ruzegwa (2012) sees awareness of OPAC as knowledge of existence. it and maintains that it is also a first step to increase usage (usability)

of the literature materials and other relevant information in library and outside libraries or online databases to aid students in their learning process to get them interested, thereby changing negative opinion of OPAC

Mole (2012), pointed out that cataloguing as the process of describing and listing a material in such a way as to make it as easy as possible to discover the nature and extent of what is available and if appropriate, where they may be located or retrieved. Cataloguing involves the full bibliographic description of each book, monograph, treatise and most other types of materials acquired by the library, adhering to the set down rules of the practice. The essence of cataloguing is to make it easy for a searcher to identify the documents in a collection when seen. Cataloguing according to Mole (2012) involves two activities or stages namely: Descriptive cataloguing and Subject cataloguing. It has changed the ways of providing and retrieval services offered to the user community of the university library. The online public access catalogue (OPAC) is one of these technologies providing access to any of the information contained in the record for an item in the library. Omekwu (2008) described OPAC as an online bibliography of a library collection that is available online to the public. It is a computer-based catalogue which can be accessed through computer terminals in a library. The online public access catalogue was further elucidated by Ekere, Omekwu and Nwoha (2016) stated that OPAC as a database of bibliographic records describing the holdings of a library. It allows users to search a document by authors, subject, titles and keywords from a terminal and allows printing, downloading or exporting records via different electronic means. Mole (2012) puts it without OPAC; there wouldn't have been library automation and eventually easy and timely access to information. Furthermore, Ruzegea (2011) elucidates on the positive effects of OPAC in Nigeria university libraries according to them there are as follows: it allows patron to use search strategies that exceed those that can be used with card catalogs because card catalogs can only be searched only by author, title, subject, and keyboard.

Ruzegea (2011) defined perception as the process in which a person select, arrange and interpret stimuli, these stimuli are filtered and adjusted to become one's own view of the world. According to Lauren & Derek (2012), it is only when you know your user's perceptions of your service, your institutions and products, that you truly know whether your library is going in the right direction or not. Therefore, "User perception" encompasses all aspects of the end-user's interaction with the company, its services, and its products.

Yusuf, (2009) noted that information retrieval system (OPACs) were not designed to take into consideration of aspect of the users, the thing which hinders the effectiveness of user-system interactions. Another problem is that of subject searching, yielding failed results, due to searches that retrieve nothing or do not coincide with what the user had in mind. According Apofiade, (2002), subject searching has been identified as the type of search presenting most problems for the user. Oketunji (cited in Okoroma, 2010), asserts that the major problem that can face libraries as they become progressively involved with the use of technologies may be summarized as follows: General inadequacy in the level of relevant infrastructure, particularly telecommunication facilities and human resources supply. Atinmo, (2009) and Ugah, (2007). state these challenges as follows: Lack of standard Bibliographic Information-a persistent problem with cataloguing web resources is that the creators of those resources is that the creators of resources often do not provide the standard bibliographic information that AACR2 requires. The challenges associated with users' perception of OPAC in university libraries could be external or internal. This is elucidated as follows; inadequate manpower and lack of committed personnel. Since the OPAC system is a new technology, getting adequate manpower to maintain its functionality and operation is difficult in Nigeria libraries. Copy, Right Issue: Service, information can be accessed anytime and anywhere through the online catalogue users are abusing this privilege which they often copy and download information without acknowledging another while some even

reproduced or mass-produced works (Ekere, Omekwu and Nwoha 2016).

Research Method

The research design of this study is descriptive survey Nworgu (2015: 19) established that descriptive survey research is one in which people or items is studied by collecting and analyzing data from only a few people or items considered to be representative of the entire group

Population of the Study

The population of the study is 163 which comprises of undergraduate students of Modibbo Adama University of Technology, (MAUTCH) Yola. This population size was derived from the registered post undergraduate irrespective of departments in the university library (library record, 2019)

Sample and Sampling Technique

The whole population of 163 undergraduate students was used without sampling because the population is manageable. This type of technique where the entire population was used is called consensus survey. The consensus survey technique according to Nworgu, (2015:91) is where the entire population is studied without sampling

Results

Section A: What is the undergraduate students' perception of OPAC in the University library?

Table 1: Undergraduate students' perception of OPAC in the University library

S/N	ITEMS	SA	A	D	SD
1	OPAC is quick in accessing library holdings	-	60(36.08%)	-	-
2	I find OPAC is simple and easy to use	-	30(18.40%)	-	-
3	OPAC is difficult and very ambiguous	-	-	24(14.72%)	-
4	OPAC offers me opportunity to read/use information resources anywhere at any time	-	14(8.58%)	-	-
5	OPAC save my time in searching for library resources	-	10(6.13%)	-	-
6	Information from OPAC does not match with the one on the shelf	-	-	8(4.90%)	-
7	I don't have skills to operate OPAC	5(3.06%)	-	-	-
8	OPAC enhance uniformity	-	7(4.29%)	-	-
9	OPAC is not usually comprehensive: some materials are not covered	-	5(3.06%)	-	-

Source: field study 2019

The above table shows that 60 (36.08%) indicated agree that OPAC is quick in accessing library holdings,30(18.40%) indicated agreed OPAC is simple and easy to use, 24(14.72%)

Instrument for Data Collection

This study used a structured questionnaire as an instrument for data collection. The questionnaire is made up of Six (6) sections A to F and consists of 47 items. The questionnaire is based on a four-point rating scale. This response mode will be presented as follows:

VHA=Very Highly Aware, HA=Highly Aware, FA=Fairly Aware, NA=Not Aware

VGE=Very Great Extent, GE=Great Extent, ME=Moderate Extent, LE=Low Extent

SA=Strongly Agree, A=Aware, D=Disagree, SD=Strongly Disagree

Method of Data Collection

Copies of the questionnaire were personally administered by the researchers. The administration and retrieval of the questionnaire was carried out within the period of two weeks

Method of Data Analysis

Data collected was analyzed using descriptive statistics, percentages, frequencies and tables were employed in analyzing the data generated from the questionnaire.

indicated disagree that OPAC is difficult and very ambiguous,14(8.58%) indicated agreed that OPAC offers me opportunity to read/use information resources anywhere at any time.10(6.13%) indicated agreed that OPAC

save my time in searching for library resources, 8(4.90%) indicated disagree that Information from OPAC does not match with the one on the shelf,5(3.06%) indicated strongly agreed that they don't have skills to operate OPAC 5(3.06%).7(4.29%)indicated agree that OPAC enhance uniformity and 5(3.06%)indicated agree that OPAC is not usually comprehensive:

some materials are not covered. The result revealed that majority of the respondent perception indicated agree that OPAC is quick in accessing library holdings

Section B: What is the extent of awareness of Online Public Access Catalogue (OPAC) among Undergraduate students'?

Table 2: The extent of awareness of OPAC among undergraduate students

S/N	ITEMS	VHA	HA	LA	NA
1.	OPAC facilitates multiple access points to library resources	-	33(20.24%)	-	-
2.	OPAC provides information for retrieving books/journals in the library	-	-	44(26.99%)	-
3.	OPAC is usually accessed online for free or based on subscription	-	-	23(14.11%)	-
4.	OPAC is a library management software that is replacing the dominant card catalogue	-	-	12(7.36%)	-
5.	OPAC serves as a public face on a library's integrated library system	-	-	8(4.90%)	-
6.	OPAC offers the fastest way of accessing a library's resources	-	-	18(11.04%)	-

Source: field study 2019

The above table shows that33 (20. 24%) indicated high aware that OPAC facilitates multiple access points to library resources,44(26.99%) indicated low aware that OPAC provides information for retrieving books/journals in the library, 23(14.11%) indicated low aware that OPAC is usually accessed online for free or based on subscription. 12(7.36%) indicated low aware that OPAC is a library management software that is replacing the dominant card catalogue,

8(4.90%) indicated low aware that OPAC serves as a public face on a library's integrated library system,18(11.04%) indicated low aware that OPAC offers the fastest way of accessing a library's resources. The result revealed that majority of the respondents indicated low aware that OPAC provides information for retrieving books/journals in the library

Section C: To what extent is OPAC being utilized by undergraduate students?

Table 3:The extent OPAC being utilized by undergraduate students

S/N	ITEMS	VGE	GE	ME	LE
1	I utilize OPAC for my academic research work	-	76 (46.62%)	-	-
2	I visit the library to utilize OPAC	-	-	23 (14.11%)	-
3	I utilize OPAC with my personal electronic devices	-	-	-	-
4	I utilize OPAC to check current information resources	-	24(14.72%)	-	-
5	I utilize OPAC for my course assignments	32(19.63%)	-	-	-

Source: field study 2019

The above table shows that 76(46.62%) indicated great extent that they utilize OPAC for academic research work,23(14.11%) indicated medium extent that they visit the library to utilize OPAC,24(14.72%) indicated great extent that they utilize OPAC to check current information resources.32(19.63%) indicated

very great extent that they utilize OPAC for course assignments. The result revealed that majority of the respondents indicated great extent that they utilize OPAC for academic research work

SECTION D: What is the availability of the resources for effective and efficient utilization

of OPAC among undergraduate students in the university library?

Table 4: Available resources for effective and efficient utilization of the OPAC

S/N	ITEMS	SA	A	SN	NA
1	Internet Connectivity	54(33.12%)	-	-	-
2	Local Area Network (LAN)	-	28(17.17%)	-	-
3	Power backups	-	-	-	4(2.45%)
4	WAN (Wide Area Network)	-	-	5(3.06%)	-
5	Database Management System	-	33(20.24%)	-	-
6	Software such as Millennium or KOHA	-	39(23.92%)	-	-

Source: field study 2019

The above table shows that 54(33.12%) indicated strongly available that there is Internet Connectivity, 28(17.17%) indicated available that Local Area Network (LAN), 4(2.45%) indicated not available that Power backups, 5 (3.06%) indicated strongly not available WAN (Wide Area Network). 33(20.24%) indicated available

Database Management System 39(23.92%) indicated available Software such as Millennium or KOHA. The result revealed that majority of the respondents indicated that there is available Internet Connectivity

SECTION F: What are the factors responsible for undergraduate students' perceptions of OPAC among Undergraduate students'?

Table 5: Factors responsible for undergraduate students' perceptions of OPAC in university libraries.

S/N	ITEMS	SA	A	D	SD
1	Lack of awareness of the existence of OPAC among undergraduate students	44(26.99%)	-	-	-
2	There is no library user education on OPAC during undergraduate students orientation	-	23(14.11%)	-	-
3	Lack of basic skills for OPAC search by undergraduate students	-	-	12(7.36%)	-
4	Lack of computer skills/literacy and knowledge of online information retrieval	-	-	-	22(13.49%)
5	OPAC interface design is complicated and non-user-friendly	-	7(4.29%)	-	-
6	OPAC does not offer features such as spell-check, quick search and autocorrect words	-	9(5.52%)	-	-
7	Inadequate computer systems	-	-	-	6(3.68%)
8	Epileptic power supply/power failure	-	13(7.95%)	-	-
9	Inadequate technical staff to assist users	-	-	-	-
10	Poor internet connectivity	-	10(6.134%)	-	-
11	Frequent changes and updates in technology	2(1.227%)	-	-	-

Source: field study 2019

The above table shows that 44(26.99%) indicated "strongly agreed" that lack of awareness of the existence of OPAC among Undergraduate students', 23(14.11%) indicated "agreed" that there is no library user education

on OPAC during undergraduate students' orientation, 12(7.36%) indicated disagree that Lack of basic skills for OPAC search, 22(13.49%) indicated "strongly disagreed" that lack of computer skills/literacy and knowledge of

online information retrieval, 7(4.29%) indicated agree that OPAC interface design is complicated/ not user-friendly, 9(5.52%) indicated "agreed" that OPAC does not offer features such as spell-check, quick search and autocorrect words. 6(3.68%) indicated "strongly disagreed" that inadequate computer systems, 13(7.95%) indicated "agreed" that there was epileptic power supply/power failure. 10(6.134%) indicated "agreed" that poor internet connectivity. 2(1.227%) indicated "strongly agreed" the frequent changes and updates in technology. The result revealed that majority of the respondents indicated "strongly agreed" the lack of awareness of the existence of OPAC among undergraduate students'.

Summary of findings

The findings of the study revealed that majority of the respondent perception indicated agree that agree that OPAC is quick in accessing library holdings

The findings of the study revealed that majority of the respondents indicated low aware that OPAC provides information for retrieving books/journals in the library

The findings of the study revealed that majority of the respondents indicated great extent that they utilize OPAC for academic research work

The findings of the study revealed that the resources made available for the effective and efficient utilization of the OPAC which includes Internet connectivity,

The findings of the study revealed that majority of the respondents indicated "strongly agree" that lack of awareness of the existence of OPAC was a factor responsible for its perception among undergraduate students

Discussion of findings

On the student's perception, the findings of this study revealed that majority of the respondent perception indicated "agreed" that OPAC is quick in accessing library holdings. This has agreed with the study of Prakash and Patil (2014) conducted on Users perception on information sources and services in central Universities in South India: The study revealed that considerable numbers of respondents are using the library. It is found that a smaller number of users is visiting the library for

research purpose which should be encouraged by library staff and also by faculty members.

On the extent of awareness, the findings of this study revealed that majority of the respondents indicated "low awareness" that OPAC provides information for retrieving books/journals in the library. The study disagrees with the study of Fati and Adetimirin (2015) conducted a study on how OPAC awareness affects undergraduates" use of OPAC in two OPAC-compliant federal university libraries in South-West, Nigeria. The findings revealed that majority of the respondents in both universities had high level of OPAC awareness.

On the extent of utilization of OPAC, the findings of this study revealed that majority of the respondents indicated "great extent" that they utilize OPAC for academic research work. The findings disagree with the study of Yusuf (2012) carried out on "utilization of OPAC at the Lagos State Polytechnic Library in Nigeria". The findings revealed from the study was the use of OPAC at the library was low

On the availability and efficiency of resources, the findings of the study revealed that the resources made available for the effective and efficient utilization of the Online Public Access Catalogue OPAC which includes Internet connectivity. This study is in line with study of Mullah and Chandrashekar (2009) conducted on the effective use of OPAC at the libraries in colleges of engineering in Karnataka (India). The findings of the study revealed that OPAC saves time and give quick accurate and efficient information. It was recommended that keeping OPAC up to date by adding new entries and replacing old ones, train users to acquire basic search skills.

On the factor responsible for poor use of OPAC, the findings of this study revealed that majority of the respondents indicated "strongly agreed" the lack of awareness of the existence of OPAC among undergraduate students. This study is contrary to the study of Prakash and Patil (2014) conducted a study on Users perception on information sources and services in central Universities in South India: An evaluative study. The primary objective of the study was to identify problems faced in searching information sources. The study revealed that

considerable numbers of respondents face with problems of Internet bandwidth.

Recommendation

The recommendations are made based on the findings:

1. University library management should create avenue for effective OPAC awareness and orientation programmes for old and newly admitted undergraduate students', this will arouse their interest and as well its maximum utilization of library resources resulting to their positive perception.
2. Library management should make OPAC open to users instead of restricting students from having access to network.
3. OPAC can be effectively used and positively perceived by undergraduate students', only if, university libraries extend their Internet bandwidth so that they can have access to library OPAC in their smart phones, campuses, hostels, homes, lecture rooms or laboratories, at any point in time.
4. In order to provide effective OPAC services university libraries should collaborate with other libraries to form a library consortium.
5. Library management should device a means on how to market OPAC by using fliers, lectures and organize library tours so that undergraduate students' will be more aware of the existence of OPAC.

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