Influence Of Demographic Factors N Use Of Online Public Access Catalogue (OPAC) By Undergraduates In Selected University Libraries In Southern Nigeria

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Abstract: The present study investigated the influence of some demographic factors which include gender, age, and level of study on the use of online public access catalogue (OPAC) by undergraduate students of two selected universities in Southern Nigeria. These schools include university of Benin, Benin, and Ambrose Ali University, Ekpoma both of Edo State, South-South, Nigeria. The descriptive survey method was adopted for this study and the purposive sampling technique was used to select two hundred and eighty three (283) from both institutions. Results revealed that gender, age and level of study had influence on the use of OPAC. Relevant recommendations concerning the influence of these demographic factors were made

Index Terms: Demographic factors, Online Public Access Catalogue (OPAC) use, Undergraduates, University libraries, Nigeria

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INTRODUCTION

In response to the challenges of the use of the library (e.g. catalogue bibliographic information search), many public and academic libraries are establishing and offering online services such as access to community information, catalogue bibliography, electronic journals, digital collections and virtual reference services through their websites [12] and one of this service provided is the OPAC. OPAC is the acronym for Online Public Access Catalogue (OPAC) and it is an information system that contains bibliographic information of an information centre or library. It is a modern and flexible form of the catalogue usually instantaneous and sophisticated access to any recorded information within a computer [11]. It is a computerized catalogue that acts as an information retrieval system for the user. Devandra and Khaiser [15] defined it as an inventory of the stock of any library and also a tool for accessing the collection of the library in most of the libraries. OPAC according to them allows the true interrogation of traditional and electronic resources entries. According to Antell and Huang [16], OPAC makes it easy for catalogue indexing and textual database to be linked so that users will have enormous access to local and remote information. Rattan [17] confirmed that OPAC as an information and communication technology based library service availability now in a wide range of university and public libraries around the world alongside, other services like audio/video materials, e-mailing, internet facilities, surfing, fax and online database. The ability to locate a resource and reference materials without stress makes the Online Public Access Catalogue (OPAC) a tool of importance in the library. One major pivot of modern day education in schools is the researching power of academicians within the school. Research in its context makes use of

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resources which can be retrieved from libraries. Most recently, the library has upgraded into its services by the introduction of OPAC. This bibliographic search too evolved due to the complexity of the use of the traditional card catalogue. The library catalogues have evolved since it started some twenty years ago through several years from traditional physical form to the current OPAC [7]. The use of OPAC as a digital library resource and reference tool has gained popularity in several university libraries globally and even in [14]. There is an increased recognition of social, economic, manpower, infrastructure and technological development in the world in various facets of endeavour including academics, research and education in general (Diyaolu, Okunlaya and Ibrahim, 2012). These developmental changes had also brought innovations and creative services as found in the case of OPAC as a digital library resource of information technology which aid research and information search much easier and faster. However, the use of digital resources or information and communication technology device of modern days is faced with series of challenges. Islam [5] listed some of these challenges to be related to level of education, programme of study, age and gender to be significant in the effectiveness of the use of OPAC and other digital resources in the library that has such services. Gender which a state of being male or female as been seen as a possible factor influencing the use of electronic information resources and OPAC has been identified as an information and communication technology (Steinrova and Susol, 2007; [8]). In Oyeniyi [8] human behaviours show tendencies of men and women to manifest differences in their characteristics when using digital resources such as OPAC. Behavioural perspectives of male and females are better understood in the concept of gender in socio-psychological literatures where the physical, mental and social differences in the use of OPAC and other electronic resources. Khahid [6] opined that the place of age, gender, level of study have no relevant influence on the utilization of OPAC digital resources, computer use and their users attitude. Gohain and Saikia [4] sees OPAC as one of the information and communication technology (ICT) that provides access to any of the information contained in the records describing the holding of a library that allows users to search document by authors ,titles subject and keyword from terminal and also allows printing, downloading or exporting records via

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electronic mails. They revealed that OPAC provides users a means of searching and accessing information. In it (OPAC), multiple users can query the database simultaneously unlike the traditional card catalogue. The use of libraries and its resources are influenced by variables like age, level of education, sex, occupation, economic status, marital status, religious, race, residence, opinion and community leadership. However education is the most significant and influential factor [12]. These factors are sometimes determinant in the increasing recognition of the complexity of human information behaviour.

OBJECTIVES OF THE STUDY
The research tends to find out the following:
i.   What is the influence of gender on the use of OPAC
ii.   What is the influence of age on the use of OPAC
iii. Assess the place of level of the study on the utilization of OPAC
iv.   The relationship between the use of OPAC with respect to the demographic factor influence in the universities.

LITERATURE
There are several existent literature on the influence of demographic factors like gender, age, and level of study on the utilization of the online public access catalogue (OPAC) as a specific digital library resource and a host of documentations are available on the influence of some demographic factors on the use of other digital library resources and ICT tools other than OPAC. The Pew Internet and American Life Project report that women appreciate especially the communicative features of the internet, while men are more likely to use online transactions, get information, play games and use entertainment. Steinerova and Susol (2007) asserted that gender as a cultural and social construction of a personality can be manifested in qualities and behaviour of men and women. Their study revealed that women use information and communication technology slightly more than men that show high population of rare use and non-use of OPAC and a low proportion of frequent use. Rahman, Mahmud and Jamaludin [10] assessed the influence of gender and race differences in the utilization of digital library in Malaysia. The study showed that the distribution of means score usage of digital library between male and female respondents are comparable with the exceptions of few respondents who use digital library more frequently. Comparing across the age group, median usage of digital library was comparable for the age of digital library was comparable for the age group (between 41 and 51 years old; 22 and 30 years old). These between 31 and 40 years old were found to have used digital library more frequently compared to other age catalogue. About 50 % of respondent in this group have accessed digital library for about four times on average in a week. The study concluded that there was no evidence of significant differences in mean score usage of digital library between male and female group. This finding was in contrast with that of Anfinnsen, Ghinea and Cesare [2] who found that male are more satisfied than female in using the digital library. Female users found it harder for them to learn to operate and explore the digital resources than male users. There was however significant difference between an age group and race groups. The differences were significant between age 22 and 30 years old and 31 and 40 years old. Their funding were consistent with these of Frias-Martinez and Chen [3] who found higher levels of expertise of users of

digital library resources lower the degree of satisfaction. In the study of Rahman, Mahmud and Jamaludin [10], younger users whose age were between 22 and 30 years old have higher level of expertise than older users. Gohain and Saikia (2013) in their study revealed that female users (58.2%) utilize OPAC more than their male counterpart (41.8%) making the female folks out across from different fields of endeavours in engineering are most users of the OPAC. Fabunmi and Asubiojo [14] in their research investigated the across to library resources by undergraduate student of 5 level of study in the Obafemi Awolowo University, Ile-Ife Nigeria. They discovered via their research that the gender of the respondents was not statistically significant the difference between users at various level of study and their awareness of OPAC were statistically significant. Respondent in 400,500 and postgraduate level were less aware of the library OPAC. In their research, majority (8.1%) of the respondents who used OPAC to access library resources were in 100 level in their various faculties. Gender distribution on the use of OPAC was 14.8% for male and 9.0% for females, while for age 10.0% were less than 20 years, 3.7% were between age 20-24, 8.1% were between 25-29 years of age while 2.1& were 30 years and above. This shows that students of younger age range of less than 20 years use the OPAC in the university. Similarly the study level of respondents who use OPAC independently varies as about 8.3% (100 level), 6.5% (200 level), 1.3% (300 level), 0.8% (400 level) 6.9% (post graduate) while more of the 500 level student was found to be using OPAC as at the time of the study. Quadri [9] similarly investigated the influence of demographic factors (age, gender, level of study, and religion) in the use of online library resources in the universities in Nigeria. He realized that the most frequent level that uses OPAC was 300 and 400 level students 26.5% and 46.5% respectively from Babcock University and 30.9% and 27.3% for 200 and 400 level respectively. For Redeemers University 52.5% males in Babcock and 58.2% in Redeemers University use the OPAC making the majority for the age-wise utilization of OPAC was 35% and 39% for age group 19-21 years old and 22-24 years of age respectively which was majorly among other age groups in Babcock University. Similarly, same age group had high percentage of use in Redeemer' University for 47.3% (19- 21 years) and 23.6 % (22-24 ears). The study generally revealed that level of study, age and gender influence the use of OPAC in the selected universities. Sivaathasan [13] revealed that demographic characteristics can influences the use of library facilities where OPAC is one of them. In his study second years students was most frequent with library facility use (31% of the population) followed by first year (25.7%). There were more male users (52%) the female counterparts (48%). The documentations reviewed so far has revealed that similar and contracting findings to the influence of demographic factors on the use of OPAC. The present study will however reveal if the trends are same with earlier reports.
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METHODOLOGY
Descriptive survey research method was adopted for this study. The application of this research design for the study is to enable the researcher to obtain opinions and data from the population sample of the undergraduate students in the selected two universities in Nigeria in respect of the utilization of OPAC in their libraries. 100 level to 400 level undergraduate students in the University of Benin and Ambrose Ali University,

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Ekpoma. The purposive sampling technique was used to determining a sample for a study. The instrument used for data collection was questionnaire. The data retrieved from the instrument was analyzed using frequency counts and simple percentages.

Table 1: Sample used for the study

Institutions	Library Usage		Average	10%
	Peak Period	Low Period	(Actual users)	
Ambrose Ali University, Ekpoma	2,500	680	1,590	159
University of Benin, Benin	2,000	470	1,235	124
TOTAL	4,500	11,501	2,825	283

The population of this study includes two thousand eight hundred and thirty five actual users (2825 undergraduates) of the two selected universities. Ten percent (10%) of the population (actual users) formed the sample size for the study. The two hundred and eighty three (283) copies of the questionnaire were administered the respondents in both Universities. One hundred and twenty four (124) copies were retrieved from the University of Benin, which represents 95% return. While Ambrose Ali University Ekpoma had one hundred and fifty nine (159) with one hundred and fifty four (154) duly filled and returned representing 97%. Thus, the overall of research instrument returned and found usable were two hundred and seventy two (272).

Table 2: Distribution of respondents by Faculty

Faculty	Frequency	Percentage (%)
Science	13	5
Law	37	14
Art	30	11
Engineering	16	6
Social Sciences	38	14
Education	84	31
Medicine	22	8
Management	32	11
Total	**274**	**100**

Table 2 showed that 13(5%) of students were from Science Faculty, 37(14%) faculty of Law, 30 (11%) Faculty of Arts 16(6%) Faculty of Engineering, 38(14%) Faculty of the Social Sciences, 84(31%) Faculty of Education, 22(8%) Faculty of Medical Sciences and 32 (11%) Faculty of Management with majority of students who use the library were from Education Faculty while the Faculty of Science was lowest. This is not unconnected with the fact that Faculty of Education is the oldest and largest faculty in most universities.

RESULT AND DISCUSSION

This section presents the results of the analysis that was carried in the study in Tables 3-7 below.

Table 3: Distribution of respondents by usage and non-usage of OPAC

Status	Frequency	Percentages (%)
Usage	210	77.2
Non-Usage	62	22.8
Total	272	100

Out of the 272 questionnaire returned, 22.8% of the respondents signified non-usage of OPAC.

Table 4: Distribution of respondent by gender

Gender	Frequency	Percentages (%)
Male	88	42
Female	122	68
Total	**210**	**100**

Table 4 revealed the distribution of respondents by gender. The study revealed that 88(42%) were males while 122 (58%) were females. This shows that majority of the respondents that constitute OPAC users were females.
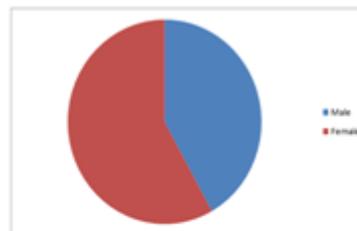

Figure 2: Graphical representation of the influence of gender on the use of OPAC

Table 5: Distribution of respondents by age range

Age Range (Years)	Frequency	Percentage (%)
Less than 16	8	4
16-18	24	11
19-21	49	23
22-24	58	28
25-27	33	16
27-30	26	12
Above 30	12	6
Total	210	100

Table 5 revealed the age influence on the use of OPAC. It

showed that 8(4%) of respondents who use OPAC were within age range of 0-16 years, 24(11%) 16-18 years, 49(23%)19-21years, 58(28%) 27-30 years and 12 (6%) were above users of OPAC were within age range 22-24years (28%), followed by 19-21 years (23%) ranking highest users.
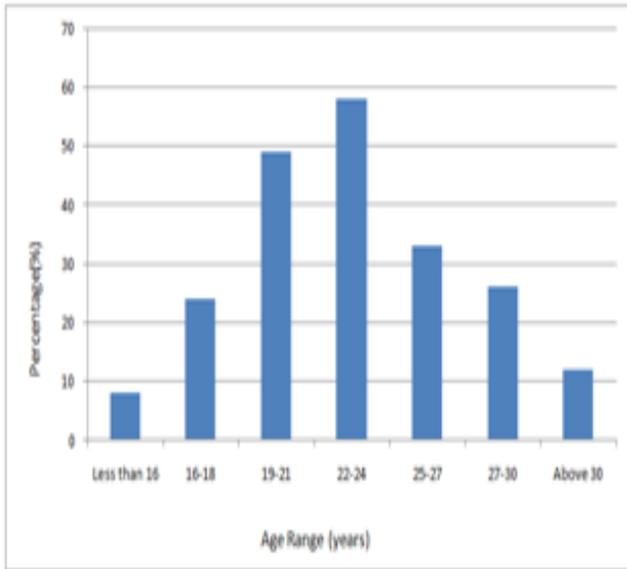
Table 7: Distribution of respondents showing the comparison between both selected universities

Demographic Factors		N (Ekpoma)	%	N (Benin)	%	Total
Gender	Male	51	58	37	42	88
	Female	58	48	64	53	122
Age (years)	Less than 16	3	38	5	62	8
	16-18	14	58	10	42	24
	19-21	28	57	21	43	49
	22-24	31	53	27	47	58
	25-27	14	42	19	58	33
	28-30	16	62	10	38	26
	Above 30	8	67	4	33	12
Level of Study	100	8	67	4	47	15
	200	18	62	11	38	29
	300	25	44	32	56	57
	400	36	52	33	48	69
	500	11	61	7	39	18

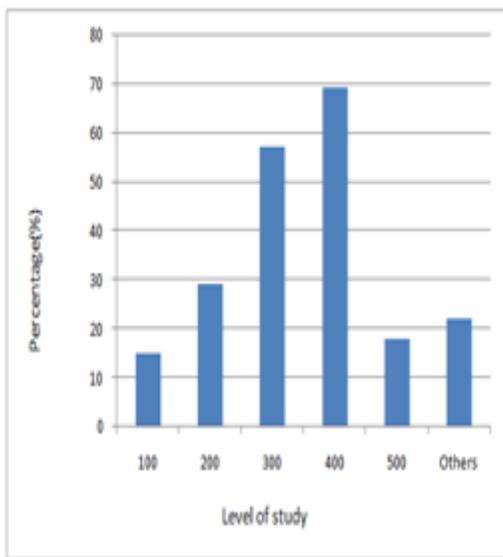Figure 3: Graphical representation of the influence of age on the use of OPAC

Figure 4: Graphical representation of the influence of level of study on the use of OPAC

The influence of level of study on the usage of OPAC revealed in table 6 above showed that 15(7%) were 100 level, 29(14%) 200 level, 57 (27%) 300 level, 69(33%) 400 level and 22(10%) other level users. The analysis revealed that most users were 300- 400 level students with 400 remarking highest. This implies that the higher your level the more your tendency to use the OPAC.

Table 7 compared the influence of the demographic factor on the usage of OPAC in the two sampled university. The analysis showed no significant variations in the influence of the demographic factors for age, gender and level of study on both universities.
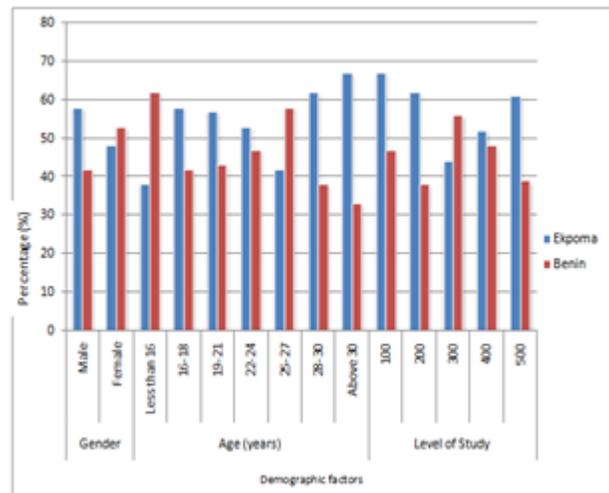

Figure 5: *Graphical representation of the comparison between the two selected universities on the influence demographic factors on the use of OPAC*

FINDINGS
The following findings were made from the study.

i.   More females use the OPAC than their male counterparts. This corresponds with the study of Gohain and Saikai [4] who found more female users of OPAC then male users. However, the study contradicts the findings of Anifinnsen, Ghinea and Casare [2] who affirmed that the male gender has more desire for the use of OPAC.

ii.   Age has influence on the use of OPAC and it is in correspondence with the study of Frias-Martinez and Chen [3] which revealed that younger age ranges show consistency and expertise on the use of OPAC.

iii.   300-400 level students are found to use OPAC more than other levels in the selected universities. This may be because they are more familiar with OPAC having spent

more years in the university. This is in-line with the findings made by Quadri [9] who showed in his study that 300-400 level students use OPAC more frequently than other levels.

iv.   There are no significant variations in the influence of demographic factors (age, gender and level of study) in the use of OPAC in both universities.

RECOMMENDATIONS

Arising from the findings of the study, the following recommendations are put forward by researcher:

i.   Students should be oriented on entrance to institution on the use of library and OPAC and be told the relevance of these OPAC to academic achievement.

ii.   All age groups should be trained or taught on the use of OPAC and other digital library resources to that they can benefit from the services provided.

iii.   Library use should be encouraged if not made compulsory by university authorities.

iv.   Library management should ensure that OPAC user interface should be complicated.

CONCLUSION

It is pertinent to note that age, gender and level of study as demographic factors has significant influence on the use of OPAC. This may have implications at long run on the academic performance the library of students it is necessary for interventions to be made at all level of study, age group and gender as revealed in the analysis.

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