

**UTILISATION OF ELECTRONIC THESES AND DISSERTATIONS FOR  
RESEARCH BY POSTGRADUATE STUDENTS OF AHMADU BELLO  
UNIVERSITY ZARIA, NIGERIA**

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***Abstract***

*The study investigated the Utilization of electronic theses and Dissertations for Research by postgraduate Students Ahmadu Bello University Zaria. The specific objective was to identify the purpose of utilizing electronic theses & dissertations by postgraduate students of Ahmadu Bello University Zaria and it also investigated the extent of the utilization of electronic theses & dissertations for research by postgraduate students of Ahmadu Bello University Zaria, the study is quantitative and Cross-Sectional Survey research design method was be adopted for the study. Questionnaire on utilisation of electronic theses and Dissertations for Research by postgraduate Students Ahmadu Bello University Zaria (QUETDRO) with 0.912 reliability coefficient was the only instrument used for the study, targeted 320 respondents selected through stratified proportional random sampling technique from a population of 1,964 Postgraduate Students from three (3) Faculties of Ahmadu Bello University Zaria. Data from the survey was analysed using descriptive and inferential statistics of SPSS. Frequency distribution tables and percentages were used for the descriptive statistics. While Findings from the study revealed that the main purposes for utilizing ETDs by postgraduate students of Ahmadu Bello University Zaria include learning, examination preparation, seminar preparation theses or dissertation writing in that order. The study concludes that it is obvious that Ahmadu Bello University Zaria has enough ETDs in its repository and the resources are meant more for research and academic purposes and recommended that the use of ETDs has many purposes of which some postgraduate students are not aware, such as entertainment and for group discussions, therefore there should be adequate awareness on the several uses of ETDs for research purposes and the greatest*

*challenge hindering ETDs utilization is Inadequate Internet search skills, Therefore all postgraduate should undergo compulsory course on how to use the various search engines to source for students information electronically.*

**Keywords:** Utilization, Electronic Theses and Dissertations, Postgraduate Students

Research, Ahmadu Bello University

## **Introduction**

Electronic Theses and Dissertations (ETDs) are regarded as the bedrock of graduate education. As a secondary source of information, ETDs are known to be the rich and unique source of information. Often the only source for research work that does not find its way into various publication channels. Electronic theses and dissertations (ETDs) are a relatively new mode of research and scholarly communication. Lippincott states that an ETD program provides a process, standards, and software to automate functions, as well as a digital infrastructure for access and preservation (Lippincott, 2006). As a primary source of information, theses and dissertations are particularly useful to researchers, but many languish in obscurity in university libraries and archives. Digital library technologies have helped ETDs gain momentum (Jin, 2004). Theses submitted in support of a PhD are difficult to access, as they are only collected by the library of the university that granted the degree. ETDs can be easily located, readily accessible, and delivered over the Web (Vijaykumar and Murthy, 2001).

Electronic theses and dissertations (ETDs) are similar to traditional theses but more appropriate for worldwide access and retrieval with the help of computers, tablets, mobile phones and so on. Depending on the nature of accessibility provided, ETDs can be accessed anytime, anywhere. It helps in increasing the visibility of the individual researcher as well as the institution involved in the research work (Fox, Macmilliam & Srinivasam 2009). An electronic Thesis and Dissertation environment is enabled by the widespread application of information and communication technologies (ICTs) in the universities for effectiveness and efficiency in the research process (Ani, 2013).

According to the Networked Digital Library of Theses & Dissertations NDLTD (2009), Electronic Theses and Dissertations (ETDs) can be accessed on the web in full or partial-text. Theses and dissertations ETDs are documents that are created as an electronic document (or set of electronic documents), the electronic documents that make up ETDs can be created using any popular word

processing software program. One can also use advanced software programs which include Windows Media Player, VLC Media Player, iTunes, Winamp, IPTV Smarters, Media Player Classic, MediaMonkey, Foobar2000 AIMP and JRiver Media Center to produce multimedia animations and Sounds for use in an electronic version of theses and dissertations.

In the past, researchers were not able to utilise all the scholarly literature (theses and dissertations) published across the world due to inadequate communication technology facilities. With the advent of information and communication technology (ICT), this problem is solved to a large extent and the results of the research going throughout the world is made available to the public without any restriction (Ahmed, 2017). Today's Technology has advanced so fast providing newer and effective solutions to many of our problems. Electronic theses and dissertations (ETDs) is one such technology which can enhance the management of theses and dissertations in libraries. The submission of theses and dissertations in electronic format has expanded the opportunity for the user community to have an entrance to the knowledge implanted in these works through different national and international ETDs and databases. ETD documents gives procedures, standards and software to automate functions, and additionally a digital infrastructure for the utilization and preservation of theses and dissertations (Lippincott, 2006). One of the basic goals of a university is to provide an enabling environment for the conduct of research and dissemination of knowledge for societal development. Therefore, this study focused on the utilisation of electronic theses and dissertations for research by postgraduate students of Ahmadu Bello University Zaria.

### **Statement of the Problem**

Utilization of scholarly publications like theses and dissertations is key to research and development of postgraduate students in Universities. Essentially, universities are the centers for the generation and propagation of knowledge through research towards nation building. Past submitted theses and dissertations that are in electronic version have helped postgraduate students to achieve this by overcoming the delay that has been established by the use of library's manual systems. E-theses and dissertations have to some extent perfected efficiency in information dissemination and providing easy utilize offline and on the web (Online) that are freely available on the internet. It has been universally acknowledged that the quality of academic research theses and dissertations is

traceable to the quality of available electronic theses and dissertations therein in an Academic environment (Ani, 2013).

Despite massive investment on institutional repository for housing and dissemination of electronic theses and dissertation, observation made by the researcher and literature revealed that postgraduate students face difficulties when utilizing electronic theses and dissertations for research in Ahmadu Bello University Zaria. In Nigeria, the utilization of electronic theses and dissertations are affected due to factors which include among others difficulties when utilizing theses and dissertations, awareness of the existence of open electronic theses and dissertation websites, copy right issues, policy and many others. As such, these will affect the quality and productivity of research particularly at the university level.

This could lead to an overreliance on print theses and dissertations that are becoming overstretched due to the increasing population of postgraduate students. Hence, the study intends to find out the utilization of electronic theses and dissertations for research by postgraduate students in some selected faculties in Ahmadu Bello University Zaria, Kaduna state Nigeria.

### **Research questions**

The following research questions were answered:

1. What are the purposes of utilizing electronic theses and dissertations by postgraduate students of Ahmadu Bello University Zaria?
2. To what extent do postgraduate students of Ahmadu Bello University Zaria utilize electronic theses and dissertations for research?

### **Literature Review**

A study by Saturday, Madukoma, Bamidele etal (2012) conducted a study on the utilization of Electronic Information Resources and Research Output by Academic Staff in Private Universities in Ogun State, Nigeria. The study examined the use of electronic information resources and research output by academic staff in private universities in Ogun state, Nigeria. Three private universities were selected out of the nine private universities in Ogun state. The purposive sampling method was used to investigate respondents. The instrument used for data collection was a structured questionnaire. The study revealed that most of the academic staff from the three private universities knew and used electronic information resources for their research work as most of respondents

from the three private universities have published their articles and presented papers with the use of electronic information resources, effective use of electronic information resources contribute to the academics' research output hence and It is imperative to state here that lack of personal computer and erratic power supply among others are major constraints that inhibit use of electronic information resources in the three private universities which invariably affects their research output.

According to Edem and Egbe (2016) in their study on the Availability and Utilization of Electronic Resources by Postgraduate Students in a Nigerian University Library, five research questions and a single hypothesis were formulated to guide the study. Descriptive survey was adopted and the population of the study was two thousand, seven hundred and twenty six, while a sample of four hundred postgraduate library users were selected through stratified sampling; Questionnaire was the main instrument used for data collection. Pearson Correlation Coefficient (r) was the statistical analysis technique adopted to test the hypothesis under study at 0.05 level of significance. The result of the analysis revealed that electronic resources were available in Unical Library and P.G. students utilized them. However, online databases were underutilized. The University Library had e-journals, ebooks and access to databases and Internet resources. E-journals were the most often used electronic resources. Lack of computer skills, slow network, inconsistent internet connectivity, power outage and irrelevant electronic information resources were the problems postgraduate students encountered while accessing and using electronic resources in Unical Library. Based on the findings, the following recommendations were made: adequate budgetary allocation should be given to the University Library for subscription to online databases and acquisition of electronic books, more relevant open access databases should be made accessible to users, creation of awareness on the available electronic resources in Unical Library, installation of inverter and battery system in the Electronic Library, and organising users education for better use of electronic resources in Unical Library.

Ahmad (2017) investigated awareness and utilization of institutional digital repositories by Postgraduate Students of the Faculty of Science, Ahmadu Bello University Zaria. The study achieved the following objectives; To find out the extent of awareness of the institutional digital repository, to identify the factors motivating the utilization of the Institutional Digital Repository, to find out the extent at which the institutional digital repository is being utilized by the

Postgraduate Students and to identify the challenges of utilization of the institutional digital repository by the Postgraduate Students. The study adopted a quantitative method for data gathering. A questionnaire was the only instrument used for the study; a stratified proportional random sampling technique was used. Data from the survey was analysed using descriptive and inferential statistics of SPSS. The study discovered that the Awareness of the Institutional Digital Repository by Postgraduate Students of the Faculty of Science Ahmadu Bello University Zaria was very low so also the utilisation of the institutional digital repository, and free access to the IDR was the major motivator of utilization of IDR in A.B.U. Zaria by Postgraduate Students of the Faculty of Science that were opportune to be aware of the IDR.

Saka, Yusufu and Mommoh (2021) work on digital preservation, accessibility, and use of electronic theses and dissertations in university libraries in Nigeria. It adopted a documentary research approach to highlight a critical examination of the various aspects of digitization (to provide electronic information services) as practised by various university libraries and some library schools in Nigeria. use of ETDs includes inadequate information and communications technology (ICT) facilities, low ICT proficiency, and erratic power supply. Attama (2013) determines library resources utilization and publication output of academic staff of Polytechnics in Southeast and South-South Nigeria; the design of this study was an Ex post facto design type of survey research. Okon, Ani, Ngulube, and Onyancha (2015) study the perceived effect of accessibility and utilization of electronic resources on the productivity of academic staff in selected Nigerian universities. A quantitative research approach was adopted for the study with a survey as research method. Data were collected for the study with a self-reporting questionnaire. Regression analysis in the study revealed that accessibility and use of electronic resources had a significant perceived positive effect on research productivity at the surveyed Nigerian universities. it is recommended that the effective development of digital libraries in Nigerian universities would ameliorate the problems of accessibility and utilization of electronic resources by academic staff in research.

### **Methodology**

This study is quantitative in nature and aims in collecting information from a sample of the population such that the results are representative of the population. Cross Sectional Survey research design method was adopted for this study, because it ideal and capable of providing accurate and comprehensive data.

This study targets the population of one thousand nine hundred and sixty-four (1,964) Registered Postgraduate Students that carryout research from the Three (3) Faculties in Ahmadu Bello University, Zaria between the 2018 to 2019 academic calendars. The three faculties were randomly selected from 17 Faculties in Ahmadu Bello University Zaria. Sample size of 320 Postgraduate Students were selected from a population of 1,964 Postgraduate Students using Krejcie and Morgan sample size table, The research adopted Cluster sampling technique. Questionnaire on utilization of electronic theses and dissertations on research (QUETDRO) by postgraduate students of Ahmadu Bello University, Zaria was adopted by the researcher. The data collected from the administration of the instrument was analyzed using appropriate statistical tools such one-way Anova at  $P \leq 0.05$  level of significant differences in order to the research question.

### **Result and Discussion**

**Table 1: Purpose of utilizing electronic theses and dissertations by postgraduate students of Ahmadu Bello University Zaria on the university**

<b>S/No.</b>	<b>Items</b>	<b>Yes</b>	<b>No</b>	<b>Mean</b>	<b>std</b>	<b>RANK</b>
1.	Learning	228	69	0.77	0.423	1
2.	Personal Research	191	106	0.64	0.480	2
3.	Examinations Preparation	153	144	0.502	0.501	5
4.	Group Discussion	94	203	0.32	0.466	9
5.	Entertainment	58	239	0.20	0.397	10
6.	Seminar Preparation	169	128	0.57	0.496	3
7.	Class Note	125	172	0.42	0.495	7
8.	Theses or Dissertation Writing	167	130	0.56	0.497	4
9.	Lecture Note Preparation	103	194	0.35	0.477	8
10.	Professional Growth	139	158	0.47	0.500	6

11.	Workshop Preparation	117	180	0.39	0.489	11
12.	Not at all	7	290	0.02	0.152	12
<b>Cumulative Mean 0.43433</b>						
<b>Decision/standard mean =0.500</b>						

The table above showed the Purpose of utilizing ETDS. It showed that the ETDS level of general utilization for the above purposes is quite low as the general/cumulative mean of 0.434 is below the 0.5 Decision mean. However, the main purpose of utilization ETDS is for learning as this rank first with a total of 228 that said YES they access the ETDS for this purpose as against 69 that said they NO to utilization it for this purpose. In the same vein, another purpose for utilizing ETDS is for examinations preparations as a total of 191 said YES as against 106 that said NO to this purpose. Also, the third main purpose for utilizing ETDS is for seminar preparation as details showed that while 169 said YES, the rest 128 said NO to this purpose. In summary the main purposes for utilizing ETDS include learning, examination preparation, seminar preparation theses or dissertation writing in that order.

**Table 2: Extent for postgraduate students of Ahmadu Bello University Zaria utilizes electronic theses for research.**

S/No.	ITEMS	HU	U	NU	RU	NU	Mean	STD	Rank
<b>ELECTRONIC THESES</b>									
1.	Abstract	152	78	47	2	18	4.16	1.105	1
2.	Preliminary pages	88	112	49	13	35	3.69	1.267	3
3.	Chapters	143	61	37	18	38	3.85	1.409	2
4.	Appendix	102	87	41	11	56	3.57	1.465	
5.	Complete theses	104	81	65	10	37	3.69	1.317	3
<b>Cumulative Mean 3.792</b>									
<b>Decision /Standard Mean =3.00</b>									
S/No.	ITEMS	HU	U	UD	RU	NU	Mean	STD	Rank
<b>ELECTRONIC DISSERTATION</b>									



1.	Abstract	168	64	28	11	26	4.13	1.258	1
2.	Preliminary pages	110	100	28	14	45	3.73	1.396	3
3.	Chapters	127	82	34	14	40	3.81	1.384	2
4.	Appendix	105	95	39	11	47	3.67	1.399	5
5.	Complete dissertation	105	78	63	24	2	3.71	1.275	4
<b><i>Cumulative Mean 3.81</i></b>									
<b><i>Decision Mean =3.00</i></b>									

**Keys: HU: Highly Utilizes, U: Utilize, UD: Undecided, RU: Really Utilizes, NU: Not Utilizes**

The table above shows, the extent postgraduate students of Ahmadu Bello University Zaria utilize electronic theses for research is very high. Reason being that the cumulative general mean of 3.792 is above the 3.000 decision/standards mean. Specifically, they utilize it for Abstract to the highest extent as this has the highest mean of 4.16 as details showed that 152 highly utilize it while 78 utilize as against 47 that were undecided while 2 rarely utilize it and the rest 18 do not utilize it. Again, they utilize chapters with the electronic theses for research to a high extent as this attract the second highest mean of 3.85 as details sowed that while 143 highly utilize it, 61 utilize it as against 37 that were undecided while 18 rarely utilize it and the rest 38 do not utilize it. In summary, the extent postgraduate students of Ahmadu Bello University Zaria utilize electronic theses for research is very high. Additionally, the outcome of the table above, the extent postgraduate students of Ahmadu Bello University Zaria utilize electronic dissertation for research is very high. Reason being that the cumulative general mean of 3.792 is above the 3.000 decision/standards mean. Specifically, they utilize it for Abstract to the highest extent as this has the highest mean of 4.13 as details showed that 168 highly utilize it while 64 utilize as against 28 that were undecided while 11 rarely utilize it and the rest 26 do not utilize it. Again, they utilize chapters with the electronic theses for research to a high extent as this attract the second highest mean of 3.81 as details sowed that while 127 highly utilize it, 82 utilize it as against 34 that were undecided while 14 rarely utilize it and the rest 40 do not utilize it. In summary, the extent postgraduate students of ABU utilize electronic dissertation for research is very high especially in Abstract and Chapters. This corroborates the findings of Attama (2013) and Okon, Ani, Ngulube & Onyacha (2015) that publication of perceived effect of accessibility

and utilisation of ETDs on productivity of academic staffs in some selected Nigerian University. However, the result was not favorable as the number of respondents that have published articles with the use of ETDs were less than 50% of the total respondents in each of the population.

### **Summary of the Findings**

Arising from this research below are the following findings; On the basis of the outcome of the study, the following summary are presented.

1. The main purposes for utilizing ETDs by postgraduate student of Ahmadu Bello University Zaria include learning, examination preparation, seminar preparation theses or dissertation writing in that order and the ways of accessing electronic theses and dissertations for research, is quite high especially through their phones and through their ETDs.
3. The extent do postgraduate students of Ahmadu Bello University utilize electronic theses dissertation for research, is high especially as most utilizes Abstract and complete dissertation.

### **Conclusion**

It is obvious that Ahmadu Bello University Zaria has enough ETDs in its repository and the resources are meant more for research and academic purposes. Nevertheless, most postgraduate students particularly Masters Student of the University are not aware of the existence and important of the available electronic information resources provided, hence do not patronize the resources and services. It is imperative that postgraduate students are not properly sensitized and enlightened about the availability ETDs databases provided. The researcher is of the opinion that the use of ETDs by the postgraduate students of Ahmadu Bello University Zaria in particular and other Nigerian universities in general is not only inevitable but sacrosanct.

### **Recommendations**

Based on the findings, the following recommendations were made:

1. The use of ETDs has many purposes to which some Postgraduates students are not aware about, such as entertainment and for group discussions, therefore there should be adequate awareness on the several uses of ETDs for research purposes.
2. There is gross Lack of awareness of the existence of open free e-theses and dissertations among the post graduate students. The school management should as a matter of necessity make available all open free

e-theses and dissertations to them during orientation and at the point of registration.

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