

Perception and Use of Open Access Electronic Thesis and Dissertations by the Undergraduate Students of University Of Ilorin, Nigeria

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Abstract

The study examined the used and perception of open access electronic thesis and dissertation by undergraduate students of the University of Ilorin, Nigeria. A total of 375 students drawn from 15 faculties that made up the university represent the sample for the study. Survey research was adopted for the study while a questionnaire titled 'Use and Perception of Open Access Electronic Thesis and Dissertation Questionnaire' was used for the collection of data. Five research questions were developed and answered. The results revealed that the use of open access electronic thesis and dissertation is very low and most of the respondents demonstrate limited awareness of the availability of the thesis and dissertation for research which negatively its use. Some of the challenges identified with the use of ETDS include lack of awareness of software and hardware for using ETDS, difficulties of access to computer and internet where ETDS can be retrieved, printed and downloaded, discomfort reading text on a computer screen and inadequate skills in using search engine to browse for ETDS online. The study recommends among others that students should acquire more skills in the use of open electronic thesis and dissertations as it is vital source of information research.

Keywords: Electronic Thesis and Dissertations, ETDS, Open Access, Perception, Research, Institutional Repository, Undergraduate, University of Ilorin, Nigeria.

Introduction

The world is rapidly changing to the extent that the future is basically unpredictable. This change has fundamental dimensions and nature and partly due to Information and Communication Technology (ICT). During the last decade, this technology has had profound impact on various dimensions of learning and education. Nowadays, it is widely acknowledged that the methods of learning and education are affected by and closely associated with information

technology. Therefore, it can be predicted that technology will continue to play a significant role in all levels of education and learning in the future.

Information and Communication Technology (ICT) has provided genuine opportunities for educational institutions to open up, have access to new markets, and reap economic and educational benefits such as reduced time to introduce products to the market and greater opportunities for

international cooperation and collaboration. Unique capabilities of this technology bring fundamental changes to the social structure and in the way things are done. Educational institutions react to these changes and respond to opportunities and challenges that result from widespread application of this technology in education. These institutions need to address the question of how the very nature of this technology may bring changes in different aspects of their organization and activities (Hanna and Latchem, 2002; Oh, 2003). E-Learning and education is one of the responses by universities to this question. E-learning is a form of distance learning presented through computer and more specifically through the Internet (Henderson, Clark and Mayer, 2003). Such learning is rapidly expanding in universities and organizations and is believed to be the dominant form of education in the near future (Beaubien, 2002).

The recent rapid development of Web-based communication technologies and high-speed retrieval engines enable the world to share information on the Internet beyond the limits of time and space. With the generation of numerous kinds of data, information formats have changed from traditional text format to a variety of complex multimedia ones. From the mid-1990s most documents have been

produced by various word processors and stored in electronic form. Furthermore, it is possible to transform text in paper to digitized form using OCR technique. Today, most universities require their students to submit electronic theses and dissertations (ETDs) for their graduation. Since ETD documents are full-text and generated by various word-processors, a full-text database and retrieval system is necessary for their effective utilization.

So far, one of the resources used in libraries, especially in university libraries, have been Master's dissertation and Ph.D. thesis. These resources have been recognized as major library resources and are considered of primary importance as research reference (Zhenglu & Yuntao, 2006). In fact, theses and dissertations are not only considered the first research experience of many graduate students, but also signs of the quality and status of education and research in universities; as well as reflecting the research level and areas of expertise and focus of research in universities (Zhenglu & Yuntao, 2006). These documents help and guide researchers and students to initiate or accomplish further research projects. The significance of these documents on the one hand and the limitations of their print form in terms of availability or access on the other

(Weisser and Walker, 1997), have contributed to the emergence of their electronic versions, known as Electronic Thesis and Dissertations (ETDs) in recent years. Widespread attempts are currently under way to develop ETDs and to establish Networked Digital Library of Theses and Dissertations (NDLTD) as well as ETD databases, all of which aimed at enhancing the acceptance, creation, access, application, expansion, restoring, archiving, and maintenance of electronic versions of ETDs (Park, Zou, and McKnight, 2007).

The concept of ETD was first publicly discussed at a 1987 meeting in Ann Arbor, Michigan, arranged by University Microfilms International (UMI), Virginia Polytechnic Institute and State University (Virginia Tech), the University of Michigan, SoftQuad and ArborText. Since 1992 Virginia Tech has worked with the Coalition for Networked Information (CNI), the Council of Graduate Schools, (CGS) and UMI in developing a digital library for ETDs.

The NDLTD was established in 1997 to coordinate the international efforts related to ETDs. NDLTD focuses on supporting education, research, exchange of scholarly

information and technology transfer related to digital libraries and theses and dissertations (Fox, 1999). It currently has 98 members, 87 member universities (including 3 consortia) and 11 institutions. However, much is not known about the use and perception of open access electronic theses and dissertations particularly the undergraduate students who are research beginners.

There is no doubt the fact that we are now in an information age, the dawn of a new era where information flows before use with promise of new ways of thinking, living and working through the role of ICTs and other information technologies. Unfortunately, despite the undoubted benefit/potentials of ETDs, students especially the undergraduate are still not familiar and are still far from using it for their research work, assignments (Goldsmith, 2002). Most students are still reluctant to use of open access electronic thesis and dissertations. One of the major reasons for this is that they are not aware of ETDs availability, and how easy they can be accessed and their usefulness in carrying our research and assignments. Therefore, the researcher consider it important to bring to the fore the usefulness of ETDs especially to the undergraduate students.

Similarly, it is observed from extant literature that research on the use and perception of ETDs by undergraduate students particularly in Nigeria and in the context of the University of Ilorin in particular is limited. Students are less likely to use open access electronic thesis and dissertations unless they are encouraged to do so. It is considered necessary that students are made to be aware of the ETDs availability free of charge on the University of Ilorin website and other university's websites for use in their research work, assignments and other academic works. In addition, the University of Ilorin is currently investing huge resources to make available Master's degree dissertations and Ph.D. theses available on her website to improve research in the university. This research therefore is one of the efforts to create awareness on the usefulness of ETDs for teaching, research and other activities. It is against this background that this study examined use and perception of open access electronic theses and dissertations by the undergraduate students of the University of Ilorin.

This study is significant in many respects; this is because the outcomes will help the

university authority to develop the quality measure for maintaining electronic thesis and dissertation. The outcomes from this research will help and enable the undergraduate students of University of Ilorin to be aware of ETDs and the benefits they can derive from using it. It will enable the undergraduate students to know what the service is capable of doing and how it can be used. This study will hopefully encourage greater use of ETDs among the Undergraduate students of University of Ilorin for their research work, leisure reading, to gather knowledge and also for their assignments.

Objectives of the Study

The main objective of this study is to examine the use and perception of undergraduate students on open access ETDs. Specifically the study is designed to:

1. Find out the awareness of the undergraduate students of the University of Ilorin on open access electronic thesis and dissertations
2. Determine the perception of ETDs among the University of Ilorin undergraduate students.
3. Identify the reasons for utilizing open electronic thesis and dissertations by the undergraduate students.

4. Determine the frequency of ETDs utilization by the undergraduate students of University of Ilorin.
5. Identify the benefits of ETDs to the undergraduate students of the University of Ilorin.
6. Identify the difficulties encountered by undergraduate students of University of Ilorin in using electronic thesis and dissertations.

Literature Review

Electronic theses and dissertations, or ETDs, can be defined as theses and dissertations submitted, archived, or accessed in electronic formats (NDLTD, 1997). These can be as simple as traditional word-processed or typewritten and then scanned documents (Fox, Eaton, McMillan, Kipp, Mather, Mc Gonigle, Schweiker & DeVane, 1997), which are then made available in Print Document Format (PDF), as well as increasingly in multimedia formats. Theses and dissertations by master's and doctoral students are final papers that are published electronically. ETDs are different from print format as to production, storage, and dissemination of those works (NLTLD, 1997). ETDs comprise a new generation of scientific documents which consist of audio-visual materials and are originally produced,

organized, and presented to the user in the electronic format. In other words, ETDs are exclusively produced, organized, and managed by the application of the capabilities of ICT (Weisser and Walker, 1997; Fineman, 2003; Vijayakumar, Murthy and Khan, 2006).

The Online Dictionary of Information and Library Sciences defines ETDs as theses and dissertations presented digitally rather than on paper. In this dictionary, ETDs are differentiated from TDs, which are presented on paper and usually converted to machine-read format after being scanned (Reitz, 2004). ETDs are digital-born and their submission, access, and archiving is in electronic form from the outset (Weisser and Walker, 1997). Reduced costs, amount of paper, library space, and working hours in libraries, as well as raised standards of scientific research, enhanced provision of academic studies, faster access to information content of sources, the possibility of linking the theses/dissertations with the author's homepage or CV, and accelerated communication among researchers are considered as the main advantages and outcomes of these electronic resources (Yu Zhenglu & Yuntao, 2006,

Vijayakumar, Murthy & Khan, 2006). Although most of these documents are presented only as texts, electronic media can be integrated to introduce additional features of multimedia, animation, and instructiveness in ETDs (Chatraverty, 2001). Electronic documents can, therefore, be provided without current limitations and can provide the author with the possibility of exploiting multimedia instruments in ETDs to dynamically present huge amounts of data, a possibility not previously available in print (Andrew, 2004).

The thesis or dissertation for most masters or doctoral students is the first major scholarly work they produce. In order to make these works more readily available to other scholars, as well as to save money and space/ storage space, many universities and libraries are now making digitized (or electronic) versions of print work available. Some universities or colleges are even “grand fathering” in, for students who produced work prior to the new storage and access media (ETDs), the ability to have their print format scanned and made available on-line for improved access to their previously completed work. Students are using technology in their work in the form of added multimedia enhancement

(Virginia Tech Graduate School's Electronic Dissertation Manual, 1999). The advantage of ETDs also lies in the exposure of their thesis or dissertation for students looking for jobs in the job market as example of their research ability.

Electronic Theses and Dissertations Initiative in Africa

The number of electronic theses and dissertations (ETDs) initiative in Africa is increasing albeit slowly. The majority of initiatives in this arena started in South Africa. In the past three years, there have been initiatives from other countries but the participation of eleven institutions in the DATAD initiative has prepared South Africa to embark on more extensive ETD projects. These institutions are now better prepared to share their information resources through improved management and provision of access to their collections of theses and dissertations. The institutions have established management teams comprising university decision-makers, officers responsible for the administration of postgraduate studies, information technologists and librarians. For example, Makerere University has held several workshops on the subject of Electronic Resources Library Management. The

MakLIBIS project, within the wider library automation project, undertakes digitization of library materials and establishment of full text databases. The University of Zimbabwe, through DATAD lobbied for the introduction of a policy that makes it a requirement to submit theses both in print and electronic media. The Council for the Development of Social Science Research in Africa (CODESRIA), through its Small Grants Program for Theses Writing has accumulated close to a thousand theses. CODESRIA is now planning to digitize its collection and make it available on the Web and CD-ROM.

In South Africa, development in the ETD arena started in 1996 when Rhodes University (RU) undertook an investigation into the holding of electronic copies of theses and dissertations. The Senate of the University in April 1997 approved mixed submission of both print and digital copies of student theses and dissertations. With the support of Virginia Polytechnic Institute and State University (Virginia Tech), which donated free software to Rhodes, the University mounted its first digital thesis on the World Wide Web in 1998. The university consequently became the first institution in Africa to do so. Since then, the

number of theses and dissertations available at RU's electronic archive has steadily increased. Among the 37 universities and polytechnics in the country, Rhodes University and the University of Pretoria are the only two institutions that make the abstracts, and in some cases full text, of their thesis and dissertations available on the Internet.

The slow pace of development in the ETD arena in South Africa and other African countries may be attributed largely to lack of expertise and budget constraints to buy necessary equipment (Ubogu, 2002). There seems to be a general awareness among many universities in Africa on the need to digitize thesis and dissertations information. Some universities are now apparently requesting students to submit digital copies of their thesis and dissertations. This is a welcome development that will lead to the addition of TDs produced in Africa to the global knowledge pool. Many institutions have adopted the technologies used by the Virginia Polytechnic Institute and State University (Virginia Tech) to implement their ETD database. The software is available free of charge to members of the Networked Digital Library of Theses and Dissertations (NDLTD).

Challenges of Using Electronic Theses and Dissertations

The literature has revealed that there are challenges associated with ETDs. Similar to this, Salmi (2008) stated that university libraries of the Arab Gulf States have the infrastructure for ETD programs, although there are technological, administrative, and legal barriers. The mode of ETDs production, submission and use in addition to the technology developmental level in the university, necessitated the Library management to consider some pertinent issues so as to justify its proposal and ensure a successful ETDs project implementation. Anunobi et al, (2011) identified technology, production and submission, policy, legal and staff issues. These are explained further as follows:

Technology: Technology consideration includes hardware, software and network requirements for the ETDs initiative. Hardware requirements include servers, workstations, storage media, printers, digital camera, scanners as well as CD/ DVD writers (Barua, 2006). Software applications like the use of Extensible Markup Language (XML), Standard Generalized Markup Language (SGML),

and other database platforms like Procite, Dspace, Greenstone could be adopted later (Barua, 2006). Basic computer knowledge by students and faculty is recognized as a challenge.

Production and Submission: It was agreed by the Library management that submission of ETDs could commence with the adoption of little electronic enhancement as print text stored electronically on external storage. The online production and submission which incorporates links to materials on the World Wide Web or multimedia elements as well as full blown innovative hypermedia documents could be adopted as the project advances (Katz, 2004). This idea is supposed to facilitate University management acceptance of the project and will encourage adoption by students and faculty.

Policy: The University policy on responsibilities, decision making, philosophy and technical procedures involved in the production, submission and use of TDs need to be reviewed. The proposal was to substitute students' submission of four print copies with one print copy and four electronic (CD-ROM) copies. The print and one electronic copy

would be submitted to the library to ensure print archiving. Online submission and other enhanced technology should be adopted as soon as the University intranet is up. The Library ICT unit could help faculty and students to ensure standardized electronic production.

Legal: The issue of Intellectual property right was the most critical. The University should always been silent on copyright ownership of TDs. It is taken for granted that the copyright is owned by the University as part of the requirement for the award of degree to its students. However, the ETDs will present a different challenge.

Personnel: It was proposed that staffs that are knowledgeable in handling of TDs in the library, who are also skilled in ICT, will be involved. Consideration was also given to staff of the University ICT Directorate who will provide hardware and software support. The School of Postgraduate Studies (PGS) will always be there as a go-between the faculty, the students and the library (Bandara, 2002).

Coates (2014) examine two research questions: first, how do users in different locations find Auburn University Electronic Theses and Dissertations (ETDs)? Second,

do users in different locations interact differently with the collection and, if so, how? Google Analytics data for user visits, landing pages, and page views were separated into groups based on user location. Visits data were also correlated with source (referring web site), and landing pages and page views were grouped by type. The study found that most local users came to the repository via Auburn University web pages. This group usually landed on the collection home page and used internal navigation pages to find what they needed. Submission page views showed that most ETD depositors were local. Most out-of-state users came to the repository via web search engines. This group usually landed directly on bibliographic information pages for individual ETDs. They used internal navigation pages less frequently than local users. Users located within the state but outside of the local area interacted with the collection in a way that was intermediate between these two groups. The highlighted practical implication is that institutions interested in improving repository access for depositors will probably find it helpful to focus on in-state usage reports, while institutions seeking to improve access for end-users should exclude in-state users from their assessments.

In interviews with researchers, Ismail and Kareem (2011) found that students preferred ETDs over other types of institutional repository content due to the breadth and depth of the research found in them. Students also considered these documents more trustworthy than other types of repository materials (preprints, conference presentations, etc.). Graduate students in the study also used ETDs as format guides for their own theses and dissertations.

Alemneh and Phillips (2011) used Google Analytics to study the usage patterns for the University of North Texas (UNT) ETDs collection. During the study period (September 1, 2009-March 22, 2011), local users from Denton, Texas, viewed 9.51 pages per visit (3.6 percent of total visits), as compared to 6.00 pages per visit (11.6 percent of total visits) for all Texas users, 4.05 pages per visit (68.9 percent of total visits) for all USA users, and 3.99 pages per visit for all users world-wide. Over 62 percent of visitors were directed to the collection by web search engines. Wikipedia referred 7.7 percent of collection visitors, and the social networking sites Facebook, Twitter, and Reddit, 1.9 percent. Referring sources with “unt” in their URLs accounted

for 3.5 percent of user visits (Alemneh and Phillips, 2011).

Park, et al. (2007) conducted a survey on ETDs in 26 university libraries in Korea and found that the National Library of the country is leading the development. Alhaji (2007) evaluated the status of ETDs in Nigerian university libraries and found that although there are automated services in those universities, theses and similar materials have not been digitized, due to lack of funds, facilities, and skilled staff, and the constant failure of the electricity supply.

Fabrizia (2007) in a study on ETDs conducted at the University of Parma found that most supervisors and students were positive about electronic theses deposit and about open access via the university's IR. Amongst the students, those whose supervisor was positive about ETDs were particularly enthusiastic. Their reported concerns include prior publication and plagiarism. Students in the humanities were most likely to favor an embargo, whilst science students tended to prefer rapid dissemination. The study concluded that the best way to ensure consistency in the handling of ETDs was mandated deposit

with centrally determined policies to allay concerns and deal with exceptions.

Vijayakumar, Murthy and Khan (2007) surveyed academic librarians, Ph.D. supervisors and graduate students in a number of Indian universities to assess their attitudes towards ETD services. The academic librarians identified copyright, lack of funding/infrastructure, plagiarism and lack of administrative support as the main concerns with ETDs. They cited improved research visibility, reduced duplication, enhancement of expertise in digital archiving, the promotion of electronic publishing and an increased role for libraries as the benefits of ETD developments. In addition, 85% of supervisors surveyed supported the concept of electronic submission and 89% supported online access to ETDs, with 64% of the latter supporting global access (Vijayakumar *et al*, p419). Of those who expressed concerns, plagiarism and copyright were the most significant. The attitudes amongst students were similar, with 86% in favor of electronic submission, 83% in favor of online access, 66% favored global access. Adding the remaining 34% to the 28% of total respondents who opposed electronic access, 44% were opposed to global online access to

their theses. Prior publication, copyright and plagiarism were the main concerns for this group, with a majority wishing to publish journal articles based on their research.

Evans (2006) conducted a survey of South African graduate students and identified perceived benefits and drawbacks to ETDs. The benefits of ETDs reported by the study are minimized duplication of research effort, improved access and visibility, speedier dissemination and reduced costs to universities. The concerns identified by the study are preservation, plagiarism, impact on potential publication or patents and the need for technological expertise and funding to implement ETD projects. In his survey, 85% of respondents felt that electronic dissemination had the potential to improve the 'expression of graduate education', via the potential for improved graphics, multimedia and integration with external resources. A total of 65% reported having no reservations about putting their research online, with 13% having concerns, and 19% reporting that they would have reservations 'in some cases' (Evans, p.57).

Pickton and McKnight (2006) found that access to complete theses was one of the most attractive offerings of repositories to

student's as researchers and authors. They found that 80% of students were in favor of making their thesis available online, with a small number 'adamantly opposed' mostly as a result of fears about plagiarism. Interestingly, 95% desired access to full-text, open access theses for their research. One of the perceived benefits of open access ETDs for students was the opportunity for recognition and feedback within their field.

Berendt *et al.* (2002) surveyed users of the Humboldt University ETD publication service. They found that at least 50% of their respondents had not made any decision about placing their work online and that 44% had not been aware of the possibility. Very few heard about the service from their supervisor or from the examination office, and 28% wished they had known about the service earlier. Of those who did not wish to place their work online, most cited the perceived 'informality' of such dissemination as a reason, although print publishing ambitions and copyright worries (both third party and their own IP) were the other main concerns. Twice as many wished to publish online as were opposed, citing increased breadth and speed of dissemination and reduced costs as the main reasons. The conclusion was that "The

expressed attitudes indicate that digital publication is broadly accepted. It was expected that adequate promotion of the service will have a good chance of success, since every sixth respondent is already strongly in favor of digital publishing, and half are still in the decision process" (Berendt, p.160). The recommendations based on the survey were: keeping students informed at the earliest opportunity about the service, keep regular contact with the students and supervisors wherever possible and lower barriers to uptake by offering assistance in preparing/converting files for upload.

Goldsmith (2002) conducted a survey of graduate supervisors at Louisiana State University and found that most faculty supervisors had a positive view of electronic theses, with a majority agreeing that the advantages of ETDs outweigh their disadvantages and that ETDs will increase the access of faculty and graduate research students to important research literature. A majority felt that access to ETDs should be unrestricted (legal issues, presumably, notwithstanding), but most did not want to be involved in advocating deposit, feeling that workshops and web pages were the best forum for spreading the word. Faculty

perceived the benefits of web delivery as speed and breadth of dissemination and the richer possibilities of digital formats as compared to traditional print. They were concerned about IPR, publication possibilities and preservation.

Zhang, et al. (2001) in their study of the Korean Institute of Technology Information (KISTI), found a significant increase in the use of ETDs, adding that that most users appear to be domestic users along with users from many other countries. Greig (2005) found that many UK university libraries are introducing electronic theses and described strategies and challenges in implementation. Copeland, et al. (2005) looked at the Networked Digital Libraries of Theses and Dissertations (NDLTD), DSpace, and EPrints, along with infrastructure for ETDs in the UK. Lippincott (2006) explores ETD programs, submission software, formats, costs, access, and preservation, among other issues.

As observed from the literature, limited studies have been conducted on electronic thesis and dissertation in the African context. The University of Ilorin Nigeria joined the trend of uploading thesis and dissertation on her website. However, it is

important to find out the perception of the undergraduate students on electronic thesis and dissertation as this is assumed will influence and determine their use of ETDs whether for research, assignments and or acquisition of knowledge.

Methodology

This study adopted a survey research design. According to Creswell (2014), survey research is a systematic and comprehensive collection of information about the opinion, attitudes, feelings, belief and behaviors of people. The social survey design has been found to be the most appropriate for this study as it allows for use of questionnaire as a data collection instrument. The total number of the undergraduate students stands at 33,000 in all the fifteen faculties that made up the university. The faculties in the institution are as follows: Faculty of Agriculture, Faculty of Arts, Faculty of Basic Medical Sciences, Faculty of Social Sciences, Faculty of Management Sciences, Faculty of Clinical Sciences, Faculty of Communication and Information Sciences, Faculty of Education, Faculty of Engineering and Technology, Faculty of Law, Faculty of Pharmaceutical Sciences, Faculty of Life Science, Faculty of Veterinary, Faculty of Physical Sciences and

Faculty of Environment. Stratified random sampling technique was adopted for this study. This sampling technique was adopted because the population comprises of homogeneous groups known as strata. Each stratum is represented by a faculty in the university, bringing it to a total of 15 strata. Sample was drawn from each stratum by using the simple random sampling technique. This simple random sampling technique was used because it gives every respondent in the study the equal chance of being selected. Twenty five (25) respondents were selected randomly from each of the fifteen faculties in the university making a total number of three hundred and seventy-five (375) respondents. This is in line with the position by Israel (2003) which posits that if the population is 25, 000 and if plus or minus 5.0% is taken for precision at 95% confidence, the sample should be 378. This justifies the 375 respondents used as sample in this study. The instrument that was used for data collection in this study is questionnaire designed by the researcher

titled 'Use and Perception of Electronic Thesis and Dissertations'. In order to ensure content and construct validity mechanism, the instrument (the questionnaire) used for data collection in this study was given to two specialists for scrutiny and expertise judgment with the view of checking the appropriateness of language to enable it measure what it supposed to measure before administering the instruments to the respondents. The suggestions by the experts lead to the modification of some items in the questionnaire before the final administration. To achieve the reliability of the questionnaire, a split half method was adopted. This involves administering the questionnaire to a set of 30 undergraduate students from another university. The results obtained were divided into two equal half, and then subjected to Pearson Product Moment Correlation analysis. The correlation co-efficient returned an $r= 0.78$. This justifies the reliability of the questionnaire.

Data Presentation and Analysis Demographic Information of Students

Table 1: Demographic information of the students

| Demographics | Frequency | Percentage % |
|-------------------------------------|------------------|---------------------|
| Gender | | |
| Male | 107 | 30.6 |
| Female | 243 | 69.4 |
| Total | 350 | 100 |
| Year of study | | |
| 100 | 121 | 34.6 |
| 200 | 77 | 22.0 |
| 300 | 45 | 12.9 |
| 400 | 61 | 17.4 |
| 500 | 42 | 12.0 |
| 600 | 4 | 1.1 |
| Total | 350 | 100 |
| Age | | |
| 15-20 | 182 | 52.0 |
| 21-25 | 158 | 45.1 |
| 26-30 | 7 | 2.0 |
| 31-35 | - | - |
| 36-40 | 2 | .6 |
| 41 above | 1 | .3 |
| Total | 350 | 100 |
| Faculties | | |
| Agric. Science | 25 | 7.1 |
| Arts | 25 | 7.1 |
| Basic Medical Science | 23 | 6.6 |
| Clinical Sciences | 25 | 7.1 |
| Communication& Information Sciences | 23 | 6.6 |
| Education | 25 | 7.1 |
| Engineering and Technology | 21 | 6.0 |
| Environment | 25 | 7.1 |
| Law | 25 | 7.1 |
| Life Sciences | 25 | 7.1 |
| Management Sciences | 18 | 5.1 |
| Pharmaceutical Sciences | 25 | 7.1 |
| Physical Sciences | 18 | 5.1 |
| Social Sciences | 25 | 7.1 |
| Veterinary | 22 | 6.3 |
| Total | 350 | 100 |

Table 1 shows that out of the 350 respondents, 107 (30.6%) were male, 243

(69.4%) were female. This simply means that the majority of the respondents are

female. This is followed by the year of study of respondents which shows that 121(34.6%) respondents were in 100level, 77(22.0%) respondents were in 200level, 45(12.9%) respondents were in 300level, 61(17.4%) respondents were in 400level, 42(12.0%) respondents were in 500level, 4(1.1) were in 600level out of 350 respondents. This shows that the majority of respondents, 121(34.6%) were in 100level. On the age distribution of the respondents, the table also indicates that 182(52%) respondents fall between the ages of 15-20 years, this is followed by the respondents between the ages of 21-25 years with 158(45.1%). Next to it is the respondents were between the ranges of 26-30years with 7(2.0%), while the respondents in the age group 31-35years amounted to 0(0%) which shows that they does not took part in the

study and it is followed by the respondents between the ages of 36-40years with 2(.6%) and the respondents between the ages of 40years and above with 1(.3%). This shows that majority of respondents are between the ages 15-20years. The table also reveals that the highest number of respondents was from the faculty of Agriculture, Arts, Clinical Sciences, Education, Environmental Sciences, law, Life Sciences, Pharmaceutical Sciences, and Social Sciences. Next to them is faculty of Basic Medical Sciences with 23(6.6%) whereas the faculty of Communication and Information Sciences with 23(6.6%) while faculty of veterinary has 22(6.3%) and the faculty of management has the lowest percentage of 18(5.1%). Summarily, 15 faculties out of the 15 faculties that made up the university participated in the studies.

Indicate the level of your awareness of ETDs at the University of Ilorin

Table 2: Level of awareness of open access electronic thesis and dissertations

| S/N | ITEMS | Highly Aware | Aware | Not Sure |
|-----|---|---------------|----------------|----------------|
| 1. | Extent of your awareness of ETDs? | 46 (13.1%) | 142 (40.6%) | 162 (46.3%) |
| 2. | Availability of ETDs at the University of Ilorin? | 37 (10.6%) | 138 (39.4%) | 175 (50.0%) |
| 3. | That you can download ETDs at University of Ilorin website? | 29 (8.3%) | 98 (28.0%) | 223 (63.7%) |
| 4. | That ETDs are free of charge on the University of Ilorin website? | 30 (8.6%) | 78 (22.3%) | 242 (69.1%) |
| 5. | That ETDs can be used by the undergraduate students of University of Ilorin | 53 (15.1%) | 118 (33.7%) | 223 (51.1%) |

Table 2 reveals that out of 350(100%) students that were sampled, 46(13.1) respondents are highly aware, 142(40.6%) respondents are aware while 162(46.3%) are unaware of the existence of open access electronic thesis and dissertations at the University of Ilorin website. This shows that majority of respondents are not aware of what open access electronic thesis and dissertations means. In the same vein, the result also shows that 37(13.1%) respondents are highly aware, 138(40.6%) respondents are aware while 175(46.3%) respondents are not aware of availability of open access electronic thesis and dissertations at University of Ilorin. This simply means that majority of undergraduate at the University of Ilorin are not aware of availability of open access electronic thesis and dissertations.

The table also reveals the awareness of the undergraduate students in downloading open access electronic thesis and dissertations and the result reveals that 29(8.3%) respondents are highly aware, 98(28.0%) respondents are aware while 223(63.7%) are not aware. This shows that the majority of respondents are not aware that an open access electronic thesis and dissertations can be downloaded on the school website. In addition, the table reveals that 30(8.6%) respondents were highly aware that open access electronic thesis and dissertations can be downloaded for free of charge on the school website, 78(22.3%) respondents are aware while 242(69.1%) respondents are not aware. This shows that majority of respondents are not aware that open access electronic thesis and

dissertations can be downloaded free of charge. The table also shows 53(15.1%) respondents are highly aware that open access electronic thesis and dissertations can be used by the undergraduate students of University of Ilorin, 118(33.7%)

respondents are aware while 22(51.1%) respondents are not aware. This shows that majority of respondents are not aware that open access electronic thesis and dissertations can be used by the undergraduate students.

What is the perception of the university of Ilorin undergraduate students on electronic thesis and dissertations?

Table 3: Undergraduate student’s perception of open access electronic thesis and dissertations

| S/N | PERCEPTION OF ETDS | TRUE | FALSE | NOT SURE |
|-----|--|----------------|----------------|----------------|
| 1. | ETDs are master’s and doctoral students’ final research report that are published electronically | 153 (43.7%) | 19 (5.4%) | 178 (50.9%) |
| 2. | ETDs are useful for research work | 240 (68.6%) | 27 (7.7%) | 83 (23.7%) |
| 3. | ETDs has worldwide unrestricted access | 121 (34.6%) | 39 (11.1%) | 190 (54.3%) |
| 4. | ETDs cannot be accessible without internet | 138 (39.4%) | 65 (18.6%) | 147 (42.0%) |
| 5. | My knowledge of ETDS is adequate | 89 (25.4%) | 117 (33.4%) | 144 (41.1%) |

Table 3 confirms that out of 350(100.0%) respondents, 153(43.7%) respondents support that ETDs are master’s and doctoral students’ final papers that are published electronically, 19(5.4%) respondents disagree while 178(50.9%) were not sure. This shows that the majority of respondents are not aware that ETDs are master’s and doctoral students’ final papers that are published electronically. On the other hand, 240(68.6%) respondents believe that ETDs are useful for research work, 27(7.7%)

respondents disagreed while 83(23.7%) respondents were not sure. These shows that majority of the respondents believed that ETDs are useful for research work. On the other hand, 121(34.6%) respondents believed that ETDs has worldwide unrestricted access, 39(11.1%) respondents disagreed while 190(54.3%) respondents were not sure. This shows that majority of the respondents are not sure if open access electronic thesis and dissertations has worldwide unrestricted access. In the same

vein, 138(39.4%) respondents believe that ETDs cannot be accessible without internet, 65(18.6%) respondents disagreed while 147(42.0%) respondents were not sure if ETDs can be accessible without internet. This shows that majority of the respondents were not sure if ETDs can be used without internet. The table also indicated that 89(25.4%) respondents believe that their

knowledge of ETDs is adequate, 117(33.4%) respondents disagreed while 144(41.1%) respondents were not sure. This shows that majority of the respondents have the perception that ETDs are useful for research work but are not sure that it cover both the masters dissertations and doctoral thesis.

What are the reasons for utilizing open access electronic thesis and dissertations?

Table 4: Undergraduate reasons for utilizing open access electronic thesis and dissertations

| S/N | Usefulness of ETDs | SA | A | SD | D |
|-----|--------------------------------|---------------|----------------|---------------|----------------|
| 1. | I use ETDs for research work | 67 (19.1%) | 136 (38.9%) | 40 (11.4%) | 107 (30.9%) |
| 2. | I use ETDs for assignment | 60 (17.1%) | 113 (32.3%) | 55 (15.7%) | 122 (34.9%) |
| 3. | I use ETDs for leisure reading | 39 (11.1%) | 101 (28.9%) | 82 (23.4%) | 128 (36.6%) |
| 4. | I use ETDs to gain knowledge | 84 (24.0%) | 119 (34.0%) | 46 (13.1%) | 101 (28.9%) |

Note: Strongly Agree=SA, Agree=A, SD=Strongly Disagree, D=Disagree

Table 4 shows the reasons for the utilization of ETDs by the undergraduate students of University of Ilorin. Out of 350(100%) respondents, 67(19.1%) respondents strongly agree that they use ETDs for research work, 136 (38.9%) respondents agree, 40(11.4%) respondents strongly disagree while 107(30.9%) respondents disagreed. This shows that majority of the respondents agrees that they use ETDs for research work. It also confirms that 60(17.1%) respondents

strongly agreed that they use ETDs for assignment, 113(32.3%) respondents agreed, 55(15.7%) respondents strongly disagreed while 122(34.9%) respondents disagreed. This shows that majority of the respondents disagree that they use ETDs for assignments. The table also reveals that 39(11.1%) respondents are strongly agreed that they use ETDs for leisure reading, 101 (28.9%) respondents agree, 82(23.4%) respondents strongly disagree while 128(36.6%) respondents disagreed.

This shows that majority of the respondents disagreed that they use ETDs for leisure reading. In the same vein, 84(24.0%) respondents strongly agree that

they use ETDs for gaining knowledge, 119(34.0%) respondents agree, 46(13.1%) respondents strongly disagreed while 101(28.9%) respondents disagreed.

What is the frequency of utilizing electronic thesis and dissertations by the undergraduate students of University of Ilorin.

Table 5: Undergraduate student’s frequency of utilizing ETDs

| S/ N | Frequency of ETDs utilization | Daily | Weekly | Monthly | Quarterly | Yearly | Never |
|------|-------------------------------|--------------|---------------|---------------|---------------|---------------|----------------|
| 1. | How often do you use ETDs | 59 (16.%) | 57 (16.3%) | 47 (13.4%) | 36 (10.0%) | 42 (12.0%) | 109 (31.1%) |

| S/N | Frequency of utilization of ETDs | One hour | Two hours | Three & above | Never |
|-----|----------------------------------|---------------|----------------|---------------|----------------|
| 2. | For how long do you use ETDs | 60 (17.1%) | 113 (32.3%) | 55 (15.7%) | 122 (34.9%) |

| S/N | Frequency of utilization of ETDs | One | Two | Three | Four | Five & above | Never |
|-----|----------------------------------|----------------|---------------|---------------|--------------|--------------|---------------|
| 3. | How many ETDs do you use per day | 118 (33.7%) | 60 (17.1%) | 14 (11.7%) | 12 (3.4%) | 17 (4.9%) | 102 (29.1) |

Table 5 shows the frequency of utilization of ETDs by the undergraduate students of University of Ilorin. Out of 350(100.0%), 59(16.9%) respondents often use it daily, 57(16.3%) respondents often use it weekly, 47(13.4%) respondents often use it monthly, 36(10.3%) respondents often use it quarterly while 109(31.1%) respondents never used ETDs before. This shows that the majority of the respondents never used ETDs before. The table also confirm that 110(31.4%) respondents use ETDs for one hour, 72(20.6%)

respondents use ETDs for two hours, 57(16.3%) respondents use ETDs more than three hours while 111(31.7%) never use an ETDs. This shows that majority of respondents never used ETDs before. In the same vein, 118(33.7) respondents use one ETDs per day, 60(17.1%) respondents use two ETDs per day, 14(11.7%) respondents use three ETDs per day, 12(3.4%) respondents use four ETDs by day while 102(29.1%) respondents use ETDs more than five times in a day. This

shows that majority of the respondents use ETDs once in a day.

What are the benefits of open access electronic thesis and dissertation to the undergraduate student of University of Ilorin?

Table 6: Benefits of Electronic Theses and Dissertations

| S/N | Benefits of ETDs | SA | A | SD | D |
|-----|---|----------------|----------------|--------------|----------------|
| 1. | ETDs saves time and efforts | 126 (36.0%) | 149 (42.6%) | 11 (3.1%) | 64 (18.3%) |
| 2. | ETDs are always available for 24hrs | 90 (25.7%) | 130 (37.1%) | 30 (8.6%) | 100 (28.6%) |
| 3. | ETDs usually contains quality information | 85 (24.3%) | 176 (50.3%) | 24 (6.9%) | 65 (18.6%) |
| 4. | ETDs are user friendly | 63 (18.0%) | 185 (52.9%) | 23 (6.6%) | 79 (22.6%) |
| 5. | The Simultaneous use by a number of researchers is possible | 77 (22.0%) | 165 (47.1%) | 26 (7.4%) | 82 (23.4%) |

Note: Strongly Agree=SA, Agree=A, SD=Strongly Disagree, D=Disagree

Table 6 shows the benefits of ETDs. The results demonstrate that 126(36.0%) respondents strongly agree that it saves time and efforts, 149(42.6%) respondents agree, 11(3.1%) respondents strongly disagree while 64(18.3%) respondents strongly disagree while 64(18.3%)

respondents disagree. This show that majority of the respondents agree that ETDs saves time and efforts. It also reveals 90(25.7%) respondents strongly agree that ETDs are usually available online for 24hours, 130(37.1%) respondents agree, 30(8.6%) respondents strongly disagree while 30(28.6%) respondents totally disagree. This shows that the majority of the respondents agreed that ETDs are always available for 24hours. The table indicates that 85(24.3%) respondents strongly agreed that ETDs contains quality

information, 176(50.3%) respondents agree, 24(6.9%) respondents strongly disagreed while 65(18.6%) respondents disagreed. This show that majority of the respondents agreed that ETDs contains quality information. On other hand, 63(18.0%) respondents strongly agreed that ETDs are user friendly, 185(52.9%) respondents agree, 23(6.6%) respondents strongly disagree while 79(22.6%) respondents disagree. This show that the majority of the respondents agreed that ETDs are user friendly. T It also reveals

that 77(22.0%) respondents strongly agree that simultaneous use by a number of researchers is possible with ETDs, 165(47.1%) respondents agree, 26(7.4) respondents strongly disagree while

82(23.4%) respondents disagree. This shows that majority of the respondent's agree that simultaneous use of ETDs by a number of researcher is possible

What difficulties are encountered by undergraduate student of University of Ilorin in using open access electronic thesis and dissertations?

Table 7: Challenges of Electronic Theses and Dissertations

| S/N | Challenges Encounter with the use of ETDs | YES | NO | NOT SURE |
|-----|--|------------|------------|------------|
| 1 | Cost of ETDs | 98(28.0%) | 63(18.0%) | 189(54.0%) |
| 2 | Lack of awareness of software and hardware for using ETDs | 147(42.0%) | 95(27.1%) | 107(30.9%) |
| 3 | Language Barrier | 96(27.4%) | 142(40.6%) | 112(32.0%) |
| 4 | Difficulties in accessing computer/internet | 133(38.0%) | 118(33.7%) | 99(28.3%) |
| 5 | Problems with printing and downloading materials | 141(40.3%) | 112(32.0%) | 97 (27.7%) |
| 6 | Discomfort of reading text on a computer screen, e.g., eye damage. | 130(37.1%) | 112(32.0%) | 108(30.9%) |
| 7 | Inadequate skills of search engine to browse materials online. | 123(35.1%) | 117(33.4%) | 110(31.4%) |

Table 7 shows the challenges of ETDs. Out of 350(100.0%) respondents, 98(28%) respondents said yes to the cost of ETDs, 63(18.0%) said no while 189(54.0%) respondents were not sure. This shows that the majority of the respondents were not sure of cost of ETDs. 147(42.0%) said yes to lack of awareness of software and hardware of using ETDs, 95(27.1%) said no while 108(30.9%) respondents were not sure. This shows that the majority of the

respondents said yes to lack of awareness of software and hardware for using ETDs. 96(27.4%) respondents said yes to language barrier, 142(40.6%) respondents said no while 112(32.0%) respondents were not sure. This shows that the majority of the respondents said no to language barrier. 133(38.0%) respondents said yes to difficulties in accessing computer/internet, 118(33.7) respondents said no while 99(28.3%) respondents said not sure. This

shows that the majority of the respondents said yes to difficulties in accessing computer/internet. 141(40.3%) respondents said yes to problems of printing and downloading materials, 112(32.0%) respondents said no while 97(27.7%) respondents were not sure. This shows that the majority of the respondents said yes to the problems with printing and downloading materials. 130(37.1%) respondents said yes to discomfort of reading text on a computer screen, 112(32.0%) respondents said no while 108(30.9%) respondents were not sure. This shows that the majority of the respondents said yes to discomfort of reading text on a computer screen. 123(35.1%) said yes to inadequate skills of search engine to browse materials online, 117(33.4%) said no while 110(31.4%) were not sure. This shows that majority of the respondents said yes to inadequate skills of search engine to browse materials online.

Discussion of Findings

Findings have shown that that majority of the respondents are not aware of open access electronic thesis and dissertations at the University of Ilorin. The finding correspond with the report by (Berendt *et al.* 2002) who indicated in their study that at least 50% of

their respondents had not made any decision about placing their work online and that 44% had not been aware of the possibility of ETD. Very few heard about the ETD service from their supervisor or from the examination office, and 28% wished they had known about the ETDs service earlier.

Findings also revealed that the majority of undergraduate students have the perception that ETDs are useful for research work but not sure that it covers both the master's dissertations and doctoral thesis. This study correlate with the finding by (Goldsmith, 2002) which found that most faculty supervisors had a positive view of electronic theses, with a majority agreeing that the advantages of ETDs outweigh their disadvantages and that ETDs will increase the access of faculty and graduate research students to important research literature. A majority felt that access to ETDs should be unrestricted (legal issues, presumably, notwithstanding), but most did not want to be involved in advocating deposit, feeling that workshops and web pages were the best forum for spreading the word. Faculty perceived the benefits of web delivery as speed and breadth of dissemination and the richer possibilities of digital formats as compared to traditional print. They were

concerned about IPR, publication possibilities and preservation.

Zhang, et al. (2001) in their study of the Korean Institute of Technology Information (KISTI), found a significant increase in the use of ETDs, adding that most users appear to be domestic users along with users from many other countries. This is in accordance with the current finding in this study that undergraduate students of University of Ilorin use the open access electronic thesis and dissertation with reasons which include ETDs usefulness for research, knowledge acquisition and assignment.

The findings reveal the benefits of open access electronic thesis and dissertations to the undergraduate students of University of Ilorin to include saving of time and efforts, 24hrs availability, quality information, user friendliness and the possibility of simultaneous use by a number of researchers. This contradicts the result by (Evans, 2006) who listed the benefits as minimized duplication of research effort, improved access and visibility, speedier dissemination and reduced costs to universities. The concerns of ETD identified by the author are: preservation, plagiarism, impact on potential publication or patents and the need for technological

expertise and funding to implement ETD projects. In his survey, 85% of respondents felt that electronic dissemination had the potential to improve the 'expression of graduate education', via the potential for improved graphics, multimedia and integration with external resources. 65% reported having no reservations about putting their research online, with 13% having concerns, and 19% reporting that they would have reservations 'in some cases'.

Challenges identified faced by the undergraduate students of University of Ilorin in using open access electronic thesis and dissertations are lack of awareness of software and hardware for reading ETDs, difficulties in accessing computer/internet, problems with printing and downloading ETD, discomfort of reading ETD on the screen and inadequate skills of using search engine to browse ETD online. This is in contrast with the report by (Alhaji, 2007) which evaluated the status of ETDs in Nigerian university libraries and found that although there are automated services in some university libraries, however; these and similar materials have not been digitized, due to lack of funds, facilities, and skilled staff, and erratic electrical supply.

Similarly, Salmi (2008) confirmation that university libraries in the Arab Gulf States have the infrastructure for ETD programs, although there are technological, administrative, and legal barriers support the result of this current study.

Conclusions

The study has examined the use and perception of open access electronic thesis and dissertations among the undergraduate students of University of Ilorin. So far, the result generally has indicated that the students are aware of open access electronic thesis and dissertations however, the awareness is limited. It also demonstrated that the students have different perception towards open access ETDs. However, the common perception is that ETDs are useful for research work. It also shows the reasons for the utilizing ETDs among the undergraduate students of university of Ilorin which are: research, assignment, to gain knowledge. The result also shows that most of the undergraduate student of University of Ilorin never used ETDs before. The result also demonstrated the benefits of ETDs to the students which are: ETDs saves time and efforts, ETDs are always available for 24hrs, ETDs usually contains quality information, ETDs are user friendly and the

Simultaneous use by a number of researchers is possible. The challenges of open access electronic thesis and dissertations to the students are: lack of awareness of software and hardware for using ETDs, Language Barrier, Difficulties in accessing computer/internet, printing and downloading problem, discomfort in reading text on computer screen and inadequate skills to use search engine to browse ETDs online.

Recommendations

Based on the findings of the study the following recommendations were made: The management of University of Ilorin should ensure that the acquisition of Information and Communication Technology skills is acknowledged as one of the key learning objectives for its students so that students will be fully equipped to cope with the information intensive world. To this end more practical courses on Information Communication Technology should be included in the curriculum. The library management should organize periodic training on the use of electronic theses and dissertations for the undergraduate students. The study has shown some extent of use of electronic resources by undergraduates in University of Ilorin. Therefore, the

University management should as a matter of importance acquire, subscribe and create access to these electronic theses and dissertations and others to better facilitate the conduct of research at the students' level.

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