


Determinants of Electronic Library Resources Access in Saudi Arabia Higher Institutions

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ABSTRACT

Electronic library resources are believed to be recent development in the world of internet. However, access to electronic library resources appears to be lacking, and thus has become a major issue of concern among electronic libraries resources users, particularly the students. As a result, this study investigates the determinants of electronic library resources access in Saudi Arabia higher institutions. Specifically, it examined the relationship between two key variables and electronic library resources among the students of Imam Mohammad Ibn Saud Islamic University. Cross-sectional survey forms the research design while the population of the study covered all the students in Imam Mohammad Ibn Saud Islamic University. The sample size was determined using the formula by Tabachnick and Fidell (2001) with a sample of 128. The data collection was conducted using email procedure while the collected quantitative data was analysed using both correlation and regression analysis techniques. The findings revealed that the relationship between electronic library resources availability and electronic library resources access is statistically significant. Also, the finding shows that ease of use is statistically related to electronic library resources access among the students in higher institution. Therefore, the study concludes that electronic library resources availability significantly affects electronic library resources access among the students. Secondly, it is concluded that ease of use has a lot of impacts on the electronic library resources access among the students. The study offers several implications and suggestions for future studies.

KEYWORDS

Access, Determinants, Electronic Library Resources, Higher Institutions, Saudi Arabia

1. INTRODUCTION

Electronic library resources are believed to be recent development in the world of internet and ever-changing technological world today. This was also acknowledged by Oshilalu (2011); Mawere and Sai (2018) when they noted that e-library resource is a modern phenomenon but however, possess a great threat particularly to the users. The studies further observed that the emergence of electronic library resources is a true reflection of growth of library materials that is committed to meeting users' information needs within the shortest possible means of all type. However, access to electronic library

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resources appears to be lacking, and thus has become a major issue of concern among electronic libraries resources users particularly the students (Okogwu & Mole, 2019; Oshilalu, 2011).

The importance of electronic library resources cannot be undermined in the present knowledge economy. For example, it has become an indispensable aspect of learning in the higher institutions including research institutions such as the university. Mawere and Sai (2018) states that e-library resources are invaluable tools for studying, learning and researching. In fact, with e-library resources, students are more empowered and capacitated to not only learn more but also study at their own pace by accessing these resources. Additionally, electronic resources, such as e-journals and online databases, now have an edge over the traditional print-based media as they are most likely to contain current information, offer advanced search capabilities, greater flexibility in storage and enable access of information without time and location constraints.

Despite the importance of electronic library resources, accessing electronic library resources is observed to be a major issue of concerned particularly in many developing countries such as Saudi Arabia. For example, the recent study by Okogwu and Mole (2019) revealed that there is difficulty in accessing e-library resources among the e-library users in university libraries across the globe. The study claimed that postgraduate library users in university libraries in developing countries find it very challenging to access e-library resources. However, the study is descriptive in nature, meaning that cannot predict relationships among the variables under investigation. Therefore, there is a need for studies to determine those key factors that affect electronic library resources access among students while checking for their relationship.

Furthermore, research studies have identified a number of factors that affect electronic library resources among students. For example, Mawere and Sai (2018) advocated for availability of information in electronic format in order to facilitate easier indexing and searching thus simplifies students' lives in accessing relevant information. Also, the earlier study by C Tenopir, Hitchcock, and Pillow (2003) argued that electronic resources would be most readily adopted and possibly accessed if the sources are perceived as convenient, relevant, and time saving to their natural workflow. However, internet connectivity, struggle with information overload, irregular power supply, loss of access to the content due to cancellation of subscription, and e-resources contribute to the non-availability of e-resources relevant to my information needs are problems to e-library resources access (Oshilalu, 2011). Okogwu and Mole (2019) claimed lack of perpetual access to electronic resources and the complicated nature of e-resources ranked high among other factors that affect to use are two the library's electronic resources access. Thus, there is a need to avert the loss of access to electronic resources. However, two major variables tend to be excluded. For example, ease of use and availability are assumed to have a strong correlation with electronic library resources access. Okogwu and Mole (2019) pointed out that electronic library resources access in the developing appears to be complicated. In other words, there is no ease of use. Due to this, students find it difficult to access electronic library resources. Also, in some cases, the electronic library resources are not readily available for use by the students.

Another major weakness of the previous studies on e-library resources is that of focus. For example, while some e.g. (Mawere & Sai, 2018; Oshilalu, 2011; Carol Tenopir, 2003) of them focused on usage of e-library resources, intention to use e-library resources, behaviours and preference of e-library resources users, others talked about e-library resources services and e-resource utilization. In fact, the only study attempts to find its root to the present study was that of Okogwu and Mole (2019). However, the study only examined the difficulties of accessing e-library resources and not the relationship between e-library resources and other variables such as e-library resources availability and ease of use. Besides, the study was descriptive in nature and could not establish empirical relationship between predictor variables and e-library resources. The present study therefore bridges this gap by investigating the relationship between e-library resources availability, ease of use and e-library resources access. Specially, it examines the relationship among e-library resources availability, ease of use and e-library resources access among students in Imam Mohammad Ibn Saud Islamic University.

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