

AVAILABILITY OF SCHOLARLY WORKS AND RESEARCHERS' AWARENESS IN UNIVERSITY LIBRARIES IN NASARAWA STATE, NIGERIA

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Abstract

This study examined the availability of scholarly works and researchers' awareness of these resources in university libraries in Nasarawa State, Nigeria. Using a descriptive survey design, the study sampled 375 respondents from 14,685 registered library users across six universities through proportionate stratified and simple random sampling. Data were collected with a structured questionnaire and analyzed using frequencies, percentages, means, and standard deviations. The findings revealed that several scholarly resources were available, with e-journals, conference proceedings, government publications, and theses and dissertations showing relatively higher availability. Researchers also showed strong awareness of commonly used resources, including textbooks, journals, e-journals, and e-books, while awareness of specialized resources was moderate. The study concludes that university libraries in Nasarawa State have made notable progress in providing scholarly resources but should further improve the availability of key materials and increase awareness of specialized resources through continuous user education. It recommends increased funding for collection development and stronger awareness programmes to enhance the use of scholarly works and support quality research.

Keywords: Scholarly works, researchers' awareness, university libraries, research activities.

Introduction

University libraries exist primarily to support the teaching, learning, and research needs of their parent institutions. They acquire, organize, preserve, and provide access to

scholarly works such as journal articles, books, conference proceedings, theses, dissertations, and research reports, all of which supply researchers with the current knowledge, methodologies, and theoretical grounding required for quality research. As information and communication technologies have advanced, university libraries have expanded from purely print-based collections to a mix of print and electronic scholarly resources, giving researchers more convenient and efficient access to information.

The availability of scholarly works in a university library remains one of the strongest determinants of research productivity. Where relevant resources are readily available, researchers can review prior studies, identify gaps in knowledge, and build on existing scholarship, a link that has been shown to strengthen the research output of academic staff and postgraduate students in Nigerian university settings (Idakwo, 2022). Where availability is poor, however, the quality and depth of research activity suffer, which is precisely why university libraries are expected to build and sustain collections that match the information needs of their users.

Availability alone, however, does not guarantee use. A researcher who is unaware that a resource exists cannot be expected to consult it, no matter how relevant that resource might be, and it is this awareness that ultimately converts a library's holdings into research output. Nigerian university libraries have, in recent years, invested substantially in subscriptions, institutional repositories, and participation in national and international databases to widen access to scholarly information, yet many researchers still lean heavily on freely available internet sources rather than the scholarly resources their institutions already provide. It is within this context that the present study set out to examine the types

of scholarly works available in university libraries in Nasarawa State, Nigeria, namely Federal University Lafia, Nasarawa State University Keffi, Bingham University Karu, Mewar International University Masaka, Ave Maria University Piyanko, and Phoenix University Agwada, and the extent to which researchers in these institutions are aware of them.

The study's population comprises undergraduate and postgraduate students, academic staff, and other library users engaged in research activities across the six universities, and it examines resources such as journals, textbooks, e-books, theses, dissertations, monographs, white papers, conference proceedings, government publications, and e-journals. It is restricted to scholarly works available during the 2024/2025 academic session and considers only resources published in English; it does not examine the actual utilization of scholarly works or the impact of such utilization on research productivity, as these fall outside the present scope and are reserved for further inquiry.

Statement of the Problem

University libraries in Nasarawa State hold a range of scholarly works meant to support research, yet it is not always clear how much researchers in these institutions know about what their libraries hold. A library may possess an extensive collection of journals, theses, conference proceedings, and electronic resources, but if researchers are not sufficiently aware of these holdings, the collection contributes little to the research output it was acquired to support. The concern that motivates this study is therefore not that scholarly works are absent from these libraries, but that the relationship between

what is available and what researchers know to be available has not been clearly established for Nasarawa State.

This gap matters because a mismatch between availability and awareness can result in researchers duplicating studies that have already been done, missing relevant sources that would strengthen their work, or turning unnecessarily to unverified materials when suitable scholarly resources exist within reach in their own institution's library. Without empirical data on both the availability of scholarly works and the level of awareness among researchers, library management in Nasarawa State has little basis on which to target collection development or awareness campaigns effectively. This study was therefore designed to generate that evidence by investigating the availability of scholarly works and researchers' awareness of these resources in university libraries in Nasarawa State, Nigeria.

Research Questions

1. What types of scholarly works are available for research activities in university libraries in Nasarawa State, Nigeria?
2. What is the level of awareness about scholarly works for research activities among researchers in university libraries in Nasarawa State, Nigeria?

Review of Related Literature

Types of Scholarly Works Available for Research Activities

Scholarly works are the principal means through which knowledge is created, evaluated, disseminated, and preserved within the academic community, taking forms that range from peer-reviewed journal articles and scholarly books to conference proceedings, theses, dissertations, and technical reports, each providing researchers with theoretical foundations, empirical evidence, and methodological guidance (Ma, 2023; Du et al., 2023). Journal articles remain the most widely recognized and consulted of these outputs, spanning original research articles, review articles, and systematic reviews, with each type following established standards of peer review to ensure credibility.

Books and monographs form another important category, particularly within the humanities, education, and social sciences, offering in-depth treatment of specialized topics that continue to hold a place in scholarly communication even as electronic resources grow in dominance (Ma, 2023). Conference papers and proceedings, meanwhile, carry weight in engineering, computer science, and health-related disciplines, where they enable emerging findings to reach the research community quickly and foster collaboration that improves subsequent research (Du et al., 2023). Theses, dissertations, and other forms of grey literature complete this picture, frequently containing original findings and datasets unavailable elsewhere, and together these varied outputs constitute the collection base that university libraries are expected to acquire, organize, and make accessible to their research communities.

Level of Awareness about Scholarly Works for Research Activities

Awareness of scholarly works is what ultimately converts a library's holdings into research use, since researchers cannot draw on resources they do not know exist. It refers

to the extent to which library users are knowledgeable about the availability, accessibility, and usefulness of resources ranging from printed books and journals to electronic journals, institutional repositories, and online databases, and where this awareness is high, researchers are more likely to identify and use the relevant resources at their disposal (Ajisebutu et al., 2024; Idiedo et al., 2024).

Evidence from Nigerian universities suggests that awareness of traditional resources such as textbooks and print journals tends to run ahead of awareness of electronic scholarly resources. Many students and academic staff are comfortable with conventional library collections, yet their familiarity with electronic databases, institutional repositories, and subscription-based e-journals remains inconsistent from one institution to another, a pattern often linked to differences in information literacy, user education, and access to ICT facilities (Ideh & Ekoko, 2024; Ikenwe & Udem, 2022). Postgraduate students generally show greater awareness of electronic resources than undergraduates, given their heavier involvement in research, but even among postgraduates many still struggle to select appropriate databases or construct effective search strategies, and as a result continue to lean on general web search engines rather than the authenticated databases their libraries subscribe to (Wagwu et al., 2024).

Librarians remain central to closing this awareness gap. Through information literacy instruction, user education programmes, and training on electronic resources, librarians can move researchers from passive familiarity with the library toward active, informed use of its full collection, and libraries with well-trained staff and effective outreach consistently report higher levels of awareness among their users (Ikenwe & Udem, 2022; Ajisebutu et

al., 2024). What holds many libraries back, however, is inadequate ICT infrastructure and unstable internet connectivity, which continue to restrict researchers' ability to access subscription-based databases and other digital scholarly resources (Idiedo et al., 2024). It is against this backdrop that the present study examines both availability and awareness specifically within the university libraries of Nasarawa State.

Methodology

This study adopted a descriptive survey research design, considered appropriate for describing the availability of scholarly works and the level of awareness among researchers in university libraries in Nasarawa State, Nigeria. The population comprised 14,685 registered library users drawn from six universities in the state, namely Federal University Lafia, Nasarawa State University Keffi, Bingham University Karu, Mewar International University Masaka, Ave Maria University Piyanko, and Phoenix University Agwada, and included undergraduate students, postgraduate students, academic staff, and other registered users engaged in research activities.

A sample of 375 respondents was determined using the Krejcie and Morgan (1970) sample size determination table. A proportionate stratified random sampling technique was used to ensure adequate representation from each of the six universities, distributed as Federal University Lafia (106), Nasarawa State University Keffi (136), Bingham University Karu (83), Mewar International University Masaka (24), Ave Maria University Piyanko (21), and Phoenix University Agwada (5), after which simple random sampling was applied to select individual respondents within each institution. Data were collected

using a structured questionnaire titled Availability of Scholarly Works and Researchers' Awareness Questionnaire (ASWRAQ), designed in two main sections covering the types of scholarly works available and researchers' level of awareness of these works, and administered with the assistance of trained research assistants across the six campuses. The data obtained were analyzed using descriptive statistics, namely frequencies, percentages, mean scores, and standard deviations, with results presented in tables for ease of interpretation.

Results and Discussion of Findings

Research Question 1: What types of scholarly works are available for research activities in university libraries in Nasarawa State, Nigeria?

Table 1: Types of scholarly works available for research activities in university libraries in Nasarawa State, Nigeria

Scholarly Works	Available Freq. (%)	Not Available Freq. (%)	Mean	SD
Journals	179 (48.64)	189 (51.36)	1.49	0.5
Textbooks	175 (47.55)	193 (52.45)	1.48	0.5
E-Books	178 (48.37)	190 (51.63)	1.48	0.5
Theses and Dissertations	192 (52.17)	176 (47.83)	1.52	0.5
Monographs	178 (48.37)	190 (51.63)	1.48	0.5
White Papers	192 (52.17)	176 (47.83)	1.52	0.5
Conference Proceedings	198 (53.80)	170 (46.20)	1.54	0.5
Government Publications	195 (52.99)	173 (47.01)	1.53	0.5

E-Journals	202 (54.89)	166 (45.11)	1.55	0.5
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Table 1 shows that university libraries in Nasarawa State possess a variety of scholarly resources supporting research activities. E-journals recorded the highest availability (54.89%), followed by conference proceedings (53.80%), government publications (52.99%), and theses and dissertations (52.17%), reflecting appreciable investment in electronic and research-oriented resources that give researchers access to current findings, policy documents, and institutional knowledge needed for scholarly inquiry. Journals, textbooks, e-books, and monographs, by contrast, recorded slightly lower availability, with marginally more respondents reporting these as unavailable than available. Overall, the libraries maintain a reasonable collection of scholarly materials, though continued investment is required to close the remaining gaps across all resource categories.

Research Question 2: What is the level of awareness about scholarly works for research activities among researchers in university libraries in Nasarawa State, Nigeria?

Table 2: Level of Awareness of Scholarly Works for Research Activities in university libraries in Nasarawa State, Nigeria

Scholarly Works	VHA (%)	HA (%)	MA (%)	LA (%)	Mean	SD
Journals	42.12	35.33	16.3	6.25	3.13	0.9
Textbooks	44.84	34.78	14.95	5.43	3.19	0.88
E-Books	35.33	36.68	20.38	7.61	3	0.93
Theses and Dissertations	29.89	32.61	25.82	11.68	2.8	1
Monographs	27.17	32.07	27.17	13.59	2.73	0.99
White Papers	24.46	31.25	28.53	15.76	2.64	0.99
Conference	32.61	35.33	23.91	8.15	2.92	0.96

Proceedings						
Government Publications	32.07	33.97	24.46	9.51	2.88	0.97
E-Journals	42.12	35.33	16.3	6.25	3.13	0.9

Table 2 shows that researchers generally hold a high level of awareness of the scholarly works available to them. Textbooks recorded the highest awareness (mean = 3.19), closely followed by journals and e-journals (mean = 3.13 each), a pattern that likely reflects how frequently these resources feature in everyday teaching, learning, and research. E-books followed with a relatively high awareness level (mean = 3.00), pointing to growing familiarity with electronic resources as digital tools become more embedded in academic practice. Awareness was comparatively lower for white papers (mean = 2.64), monographs (mean = 2.73), and theses and dissertations (mean = 2.80), suggesting that although these resources are present in the libraries, many researchers remain insufficiently informed about their existence or relevance to research. This gap in awareness of specialized resources limits their visibility and, by extension, their contribution to scholarly productivity, indicating that university libraries in Nasarawa State need to intensify awareness campaigns directed specifically at these lesser known but valuable resource types.

Conclusion

This study examined the availability of scholarly works and researchers' awareness of these resources in university libraries in Nasarawa State, Nigeria. The findings show that although a variety of scholarly resources are available in the libraries, the level of availability differs across resource types, with e-journals, conference proceedings, and

government publications are relatively more available than textbooks, journals, e-books, and monographs. Researchers generally possess high awareness of commonly used resources such as textbooks, journals, and e-journals, but awareness of specialized resources, particularly white papers, monographs, and theses and dissertations, remains comparatively low. On this basis, the study concludes that while university libraries in Nasarawa State have made significant progress in providing scholarly information resources, further improvement in both the availability of key materials and researchers' awareness of specialized resources is needed to strengthen research effectiveness and maximize the value of existing library collections.

Recommendations

Based on the findings, the following recommendations are made:

1. University libraries should strengthen the acquisition and development of scholarly collections, particularly textbooks, journals, e-books, and monographs, which recorded lower levels of availability, with adequate funding provided to keep these resources regularly updated and accessible to researchers across all six universities.
2. Library management should intensify awareness creation programmes on specialized scholarly resources such as white papers, monographs, and theses and dissertations, using user education, library orientation, institutional repositories, library websites, and social media platforms to reach researchers more effectively.
3. University libraries should integrate structured information literacy and library-use instruction into departmental orientation and postgraduate induction programmes, so that

awareness of available scholarly resources is built early and reinforced throughout a researcher's academic career.

4. Library management should strengthen ICT infrastructure and internet connectivity to support the discovery and use of electronic scholarly resources, since unstable connectivity and limited digital access remain key barriers to awareness and utilization in several of the institutions studied.

5. University libraries should institute periodic user surveys and feedback mechanisms to monitor changes in awareness levels over time, allowing collection development and outreach efforts to be adjusted in line with researchers' evolving needs.

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