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PERCEPTION OF POSTGRADUATE STUDENTS ON PROQUEST PUBLISHING OF THESES AND DISSERTATIONS IN KWARA STATE UNIVERSITY, MALETE

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Abstract:

Purpose: *This paper investigated the perception of the postgraduate students on the Kwara State University theses and dissertations published by ProQuest Online Database.*

Design/Methodology/Approach: *The methodology used consists of survey research design using quantitative method through questionnaire administration. The population of the study is two hundred and fifty (250) consisting of all postgraduate students in the existing six colleges in the University (College of Agric and Veterinary Sciences, College of Education, College of Humanities, Management and Social Science, College of Information and Communication Science, College of Pure and Applied Sciences, and College of Engineering Technology).Due to the limited number of the study population, total enumeration was used to gather data from the respondents. Responses were analyzed using the descriptive statistical methods.*

Findings: *The results revealed that the College of Humanities and Social Sciences had more postgraduate students of 22.4% than the remaining five colleges. MS.c. students were more in number (175), representing 70% of the overall respondents, while the least number was found in the other post graduate programmes, such as: postgraduate diplomas and certificates. It was also discovered that most postgraduate students were happy to publish the outcomes of their research findings in ProQuest outlet. This was because of the benefits of global visibility, awareness, impact of the outcomes of their research findings as facilitated by ProQuest. They also attested to the quality and originality of ProQuest publishing. The study revealed that ProQuest publications were accepted for promotion exercise in their places of work, regardless of other outlets that respondents were familiar with, such as, Scopus,and Emerald.*

Implication: *It is suggested that for ProQuest publishing of postgraduate publications, especially theses and dissertations to flourish, there is the need to improve on the publishing completion time from eight weeks to between four and five weeks. This will increase the revenue base of the University. The University name should also be prominently configured in the search engine optimization (SEO) alongside with ProQuest for better visibility, among others.*

Originality/Value: *It was recommended that ProQuest publishing should be encouraged beyond theses and dissertations, but other research breakthroughs recorded by the university in order to improve on the university web ranking and visibility.*

Keywords: Postgraduate Students, ProQuest Publishing, Theses, Dissertations, Kwara State University

Paper type: *Empirical research*

Introduction

In February, 2019 the former Vice-Chancellor, Kwara State University (KWASU), Professor Abdul Rasheed NaAllah, directed that all postgraduate students must publish their research works immediately after the oral final defense/examination on ProQuest Database and the publication will serve as prerequisite for approval of results at the University Senate. Students will pay the copyright fee of fifty-five dollars ($55) for traditional and online publication and also pay between $43 to $73 dollars for bound copy depending on the choice of the researcher, but presently the database has stopped the copyright payment. All postgraduate research works deposited to ProQuest for publication is synchronized and accessible online. The publication takes eight weeks or more before it is published which is accessible on Google, yahoo and also from the University Library portal.

KWASU has published over two hundred (200) master dissertations and fifty (50) Ph.D. theses across the six existing Colleges in the University on ProQuest database. ProQuest database is uncovering new information from rarely seen original documents which drives historical scholars—but accessing and working with those sources can be time-consuming and expensive. Since microfilming the early book archives of the British Museum in 1938, ProQuest has played a pivotal role in preserving and unlocking primary sources for scholarly use. Presently, the publication as increased the research output of the University. It has partnered with an extraordinary range of organizations to provide access to global collections with significant research value. Through an innovative partnership, ProQuest and the Center for Research Libraries (CRL), a consortium of North American universities, colleges, and independent research libraries, have offered full-color, digital access to a broad range of American periodicals.

ProQuest database publishes theses and dissertations of postgraduate works in its database for online accessibility and use. Database is an organized collection of data or information that is stored in records in an electronic format. Some database focus on specific information, example is that of the ProQuest database which is the centre of this study. We have the Belgium patents full text, British Library Inside Conferences and ProQuest Dissertations and Theses Professional.

THEO BOTHMAN.et.al (2014), opined that some databases cover variety of types of information sources e.g articles, books, conference papers, dissertations and theses reports, all in one database. Other databases cover one main discipline, for example Education, Library and Information Science or Chemistry. There are also multi-disciplinary databases such as Science Direct and ISI Web of Science. Electronic information resources are very useful in the University community both in developed and developing nations of the world. The University of Kansas Information service (2005) defined electronic information resources to include hardware and software intended for storage, transmission and use of information as well as the digital content files that may be stored, transmitted or used either hardware or software. These include emails, voice system, local databases and external accessed database. KU, Lun-Wei, Li Wan Lu and Change (2013) referred to electronic resources like e-books-journals and databases as those materials that require computer and internet access, wether through micro computer, main frame or other type of computers.

More than a century, historical contextualization of ProQuest reveals that, R. R. Bowker (1872) launches Publishers Weekly. Four years later, Melville Dewey and R.R. Bowker collaborated to publish volume 1 of Library Journal. The R.R. Bowker (1932) Company publishes periodical directory: A Classified Guide to a Selected List of Current Foreign and Domestic Periodicals by Carolyn Ulrich. It has 323 pages and captured information of about 6,000 titles. Presently, Ulrichs web capture details for more than 300,000 titles. In 1987 Cambridge Scientific Abstracts gets an early license to experiment with CD-ROM technology and partners with the National Library of Medicine to create Medline on disc, ushering in a new era in information accessibility. 1996 was the first Internet accessible instance of UMI launches, it is called ProQuest Direct.

University of Washington Librarian Peter McCracken teams with his brothers Steve and Mike to develop technological solutions to relieve the headaches of librarians and library patrons in navigating electronic resources. They call their business “Serials Solutions.” 2001 Bowker joins Cambridge Information Group, home of Cambridge Scientific Abstracts. After dabbling with the name “Bell & Howell Information and Learning” for two years, UMI adopts the name ProQuest Information and Learning. In 2004, ProQuest Historical Newspapers was inaugurated with the innovative digitization of The New York Times archive and Serials Solutions joined ProQuest Information and Learning. In 2007, Cambridge Information Group merged Cambridge Scientific Abstracts with ProQuest Information and Learning to form a single company called

ProQuest. Bowker, and became an affiliated business. In 2008, Dialog joins ProQuest, answering the demand from libraries for a single search box as a gateway to their collections. Hence, ProQuest announced new Software-as-a-Service, web-scale collection management solution that streamlined management of library collections and support the entire resource life cycle for libraries. OCLC and ProQuest collaborated to automate the process of keeping e-book holdings from elibrary and EBL – Ebook Library up to date in WorldCat and library catalogs, streamlining librarian workflows and improving user experiences. ProQuest and Fairchild Fashion Media (FFM) team supported research into the business of fashion by creating the first-ever digital archive of one of the industry's most revered titles - Women's Wear Daily (WWD). ProQuest launched Trench Journals, a landmark database offering unparalleled access to rare and unique source on the common experiences of First World War servicemen and women. The completely rebuilt Dialog information service made its official debut at the Special Libraries Association Conference as ProQuest Dialog, the service reinvented a classic resource making its rich, unique content – about a billion documents accessible for the first time to searchers of all skill levels. ProQuest acquired Pi2 Solutions, an industry leader in product literature databases, workflow tools and related outsourcing services for global pharmaceutical companies. In 2014, ProQuest digitized the papers of the Student Nonviolent Coordinating Committee (SNCC) and Congress of Racial Equality (CORE), making their organizational records and their leaders' personal papers accessible to researchers through the renowned History Vault collection Black Freedom Struggle in the 20th Century.

Research objectives

These objectives guided the study, to:

i. determine the availability of postgraduate students according to their colleges;
ii. identify the publishing pattern of postgraduate students in Kwara State University;
iii. establish the perception of postgraduate students on ProQuest publishing;
iv. determine the benefits involved in ProQuest publishing; and
v. identify the challenges involved in ProQuest publishing.

Literature review

Publishing in scholarly databases is more pronounced in the developed countries than developing countries of the world simply because of poor ICT facilities and the huge cost of resources (Ahmed, 2013). It was also discovered that the adoption of scholarly databases in Nigeria is still relatively low (Aina (2014); Ojo and Akande (2005); Ogunyade and Oyibo (2003). Factors still limiting acceptance include awareness, information retrieval skills, and infrastructural challenges amongst others. However, the adoption of journals is higher than the adoption of books as opined by Ebrary (2007). This finding is corroborated by Bashorun & Isah (2011), in a study on perception of online databases in Nigeria. The results of the findings revealed a low usage of e-books compared to e-journals. However, scholarly databases has also been seen to be dependent on the program of study as Kidd (2002) also argued that faculty and other professionals in the field of science, math and medicine were early adopters of electronic journals and other digital library resources, which remain the heaviest and most enthusiastic users. This finding was corroborated by Ataken et al (2008) in their study of student perception of scholarly databases; results showed that usage of scholarly databases was dependent on the discipline of study. It further states that students in humanities perceive scholarly databases less important than students of other disciplines. Bar-ilan, Peritz and Wolman (2003) state that age influences the adoption of scholarly databases. This finding is similar to Bukenya and Nyumba who reveal that gender plays a significant role in the acceptance of scholarly databases as men are heavier users of these resources. Also, students have continued to show preference for general search engines instead of scholarly databases. A study by He et al (2012) showed that students perceive online search engines as more important than scholarly databases in searching for an information resource, which is corroborated by

Sinh & Nhung (2012) that factors that limit the acceptance of this resources are search techniques and preferred type of materials. Also, Hartman (2001) revealed that undergraduate students in Australia found it challenging retrieving information from scholarly databases which limited its use.

Williams(1975) postulated that there several directories of databases and search services that can be consulted to obtain information regarding the content and characteristics of databases and services available to the general public for online searching. Among these are ProQuest database, the Directory of online Information Resources, the DataPro Directory of online services, computer readable database, and so on. The findings further explained that application of online systems to information retrieval were demonstrated and experimented in the 1950s and 1960s, it was not until the early 1970s that the availability and cost of appropriate technologies i.e., computer time sharing, remote terminal equipment, and communications capability, made large scale information retrieval feasible. The distinction between search services producer and database producers should be noted. Although, sometimes a database producer is also a search services producer (as with Lexis and Weslaw, the National Library of Medicine, and OCLC Inc.) the majority of search services producer do not produce most of the databases to which they provide access.

Stephen P. Harter (1986) in his own idea on proliferation of systems and database discovered that a major trend in online information services is the extraordinary growth in the number of search services and databases. The findings further emphasized that there was not adequate awareness of availability of databases and how to search them. The Librarians and information specialists as professionals were able to address complex information needs of the researcher on how to retrieve information on the databases. ProQuest is a composite of companies, each begun by an innovator who was inspired to resolve a challenge for libraries or researchers. As a hub of entrepreneurship, ProQuest's collective history charts the evolution of the information industry, from the very beginnings of the library profession through the relentless shift from print to electronic resources.

ProQuest and The Economist Intelligence Unit (EIU) collaborated to create the first online archive of the EIU's global economic analyses – a single source for unbiased, comprehensive reports and statistical data on approximately 200 countries. In 2015 ProQuest and Rutgers University team to make the University's acclaimed Thomas A. Edison Papers more accessible to scholars and students around the world. ProQuest becomes the first vendor to be accepted as a partner in the Library of Congress' Electronic Cataloging in Publication (ECIP) Cataloging Partnership and BIBCO Programs. Through its affiliate Bowker, ProQuest acquires SIPX, creator of a digital course materials solution that addresses copyright and costs concerns for universities. ProQuest completes the acquisition of Coutts Information Services and MyiLibrary from Ingram Content Group, setting the stage to streamline print and "e" book workflows. Library technology leader Ex Libris joins ProQuest. Together, ProQuest and Ex Libris commit to improve current products such as Alma, Aleph, bX, Intota, Primo, Rosetta, SFX, SIPX, Summon, 360 Link, Voyager, Leganto reading-list solution and campus M-mobile solution as well as innovation of all new solutions.

ProQuest platform exceeds 1 billion searchable items with content spanning 6 centuries and comprising video, historic and current newspapers and magazines, scholarly journals, diaries and personal notebooks, dissertations, declassified government documents and much more. In 2016 and 2017, ProQuest partnered with USC Shoah Foundation to become the exclusive distributor of the acclaimed Visual History Archive to college and university libraries around the world. The launch of ProQuest E-book Central enables libraries to significantly improve users' research outcomes and boost the productivity of their staff. Alexander Street, a leading provider of streaming videos and music as well as award-winning primary source collections, joins ProQuest as a new business unit. ExLibris, a ProQuest company, became the first global

library vendor to establish a data center in China.In 2017, ProQuest and CALIS expanded their long-standing collaboration to enable global access to more than 270,000 dissertation abstracts from China's premier universities. ProQuest collaborated with PatSeer to offer customers Grid logics' web-based platform, where they can search full-text patent authorities and manipulate results with powerful analytics and visualization tools. ProQuest connects text and video by connecting the ProQuest platform and Academic Video Online, offering a more powerful user experience and better contextual and serendipitous discovery.

Award and Recognition of ProQuest

ProQuest has been ranked by Forbes as one of America's best mid-size employers. The ranking is the result of an independent survey of American workers on their feelings about the company and others in the industry. ProQuest's century-long track record of innovations has advanced the work of researchers and accelerated the global flow of knowledge. In 2014 ProQuest got the best reference history vault papers. Also, in 2013 ProQuest Statistical Abstract of the United States was the best database of the year 2013 which runs up to year2014.

Type of Publishing in ProQuest

Traditional Publishing Agreement: This agreement is between the author and ProQuest LLC, through its ProQuest Dissertation Publishing business. Under this agreement, author grants ProQuest certain rights to preserve, archive and publish the dissertation or thesis, abstract, and index terms (the Work) provided by Author to ProQuest. There is no publishing fee charged for dissertations and theses submitted through the ProQuest ETD Administrator. Author's institution may assess additional fees. ProQuest will pay royalties of 10% of its net revenue from sales of the work, conditioned on author maintaining a current address on record with ProQuest. royalties will be paid when accrued earned royalties reach $25.00 USD. If, after 25 years, earned royalties do not accrue to at least $25.00 USD, ProQuest's royalty payment obligation will cease.

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Methodology

A survey research design was adopted for this study, while positivism research paradigm was deployed, using the quantitative research method through questionnaire administration as instrument for data gathering. The population of the study is two hundred and fifty (250) which consists of all the postgraduate students in the six (6) colleges in the Kwara State University, Malete (College of Agric and Veterinary Sciences, College of Education, College of Humanity, Management and Social Science, College of Information and Communication Science, College of Pure and Applied Sciences, and College of Engineering Technology). Total enumeration was deployed to select all the two hundred and fifty (250) postgraduate students, due to the limited number of the entire population of the study. The data collected via questionnaire were descriptively analyzed using the Scientific Package for Social Sciences (SPSS). Findings were discussed to address all the set objectives.

Discussion of findings

The findings are discussed in the following sections. Demographic data captured the demographic characteristics of the respondents in terms of colleges and programmes. The second part of the analysis was the presentation and discussion of findings from respondents on their perception, challenges, as well as, the benefits of ProQuest publishing.

Demographic characteristics of respondents by colleges

Table 1: Distribution of Respondents by Colleges

s/No	Options	Frequency (N)	Percent (%)
1	College of Agric and Veterinary Sciences	47	18.8
2	College of Education	35	14.0
3	College of Humanities, Management and Social Sciences	56	22.4
4	College of Information and Communication Sciences	36	14.4
5	College of Pure and Applied Sciences	41	16.4
6	College of Engineering Technology	35	14.0
	Total	250	100

Table 1 reveals that out of the 250 respondents that participated in the survey, 41 representing 16.4% of the respondents were drawn from College of Pure and Applied Science, 35 representing 14.0% of the respondents were from College of Engineering Technology, 35 representing 14.0% of the respondents were from College of Education, 56 representing 22.4% were from College of Humanities and Social Science, while 47 representing 18.8% were from College of Agriculture, 36 representing 14.4% were from College of Agriculture and Information and Communication Technology. This implies that College of Humanities and Social Sciences had more post graduate students than all the remaining five colleges. Other colleges should improve on their postgraduate admission enrolments as well as facilities to meet up with the requirements for increased enrolment.

Table 2: Distribution of Respondents by Programmes

s/No	Options	Frequency (N)	Percent (%)
1	MSc.	175	70.0
2	MA	19	7.6
3	Ph.D.	42	16.8
4	Others	14	5.6
	Total	250	100.0

Table 2 reveals that out of the 250 respondents that participated in the survey, 175 representing 70.0% of the respondents were MSc students, 19 representing 7.6% of the respondents were MA students,42 representing 16.8% of the respondents were PhD students, 14 representing 5.6% were other postgraduate students. This shows that there were more M.Sc. students as part of the overall components of post graduate students' population in KWASU.

Table 3: Journal Article Publication- Do you ever publish an article in a journal?

s/No	Options	Frequency (N)	Percent (%)
1	Yes	105	42.0
2	No	145	58.0
	Total	250	100.0

Table 3 above shows that majority of the post graduate students never published an article in any journal before starting their programmes. 145 of the respondents representing 58.0% of the survey had not published an article in a journal while 105 representing 42.0% had published article in a journal. This percentage clearly showed that less postgraduate's students in this survey had published an article in a journal.

Table 4: If yes, what publishing outlet do you ever published?

s/No	Options	Frequency (N)	Percent (%)
1	Scopus	16	6.4
2	Emerald	12	4.8
3	ProQuest	55	22.0
4	Others	22	8.8
5	Never published	145	58.0
	Total	250	100.0

As shown in table 4 above, more than half of the respondents 145 (58%) never published in any publishing outlet before, while, 55 (22%) of the respondents used ProQuest as their outlets for publishing their research findings. This is an indication that ProQuest is still a preferred publishing outlet among the respondents. Although, insignificant number of the respondents published in Scopus and Emerald, ProQuest still remain the most patronized.

Table 5: Have you ever published any article in KWASU floated journals?

s/No	Options	Frequency (N)	Percent (%)
1	Yes	-	-
2	No	250	100.0
	Total	250	100.0

Results presented in table 5, indicated that, none of the respondents ever published in any of the academic journals floated by the Kwara State University, Malete. This finding is worrisome, as the question of lack of awareness, standard or quality could be responsible for this development.

Table 6: Perception on ProQuest Publishing- What is your perception on the theses and dissertations published in ProQuest database at KWASU?

s/No	Options	Frequency (N)	Percent (%)
1	Interesting	66	26.4
2	Absolutely good	83	33.2
3	Not happy with it	48	19.2
4	Indifferent	53	21.2
	Total	250	100.0

The responses in table 6 shows that 83 (33.2%) of the respondents had very good perception about ProQuest publishing by responding "Absolutely good", while 66 (26.4) respondents also find the outlet interesting. This is an indication that over fifty percent (59.6%) had very good perception about ProQuest publishing.

Table 7: Benefits of publishing with ProQuest

s/No	Options	Frequency (N)	Percent (%)
1	It has been used for promotion in my place of work	32	12.8
2	My school does not recognize it	25	10.0
3	It has earned me recognition	35	14.0
4	It enhances university's global visibility and web ranking	41	16.4
5	ProQuest publishing should beencouraged for other publications beyond post graduate theses and dissertations.	91	36.4
6	Not sure	26	6.4
	Total	250	100.0

Table 7 indicated that 91 (36.4%) of the respondents recommended ProQuest database publishing outlet to publish other publications in the university apart from the postgraduate theses and dissertations. This position was largely premised on the benefits accrued to ProQuest publishing based on their experiences, such as, promotion, high recognition, global visibility and web ranking, among others. Very few respondents, 6.4% were not sure about the benefits derived from publishing in ProQuest outlet.

Table 8: Challenges/Timely completion of ProQuest publishing- How long do you think publishing with ProQuest could take?

s/No	Options	Frequency (N)	Percent (%)
1	Long period	55	23.0
2	Longer than other outlets	58	24.3
3	Moderate	60	25.1
4	Very long period	66	27.6
5	Not Sure	11	4.4
	Total	250	100.0

Table 8 presents the challenges associated with ProQuest publishing in terms of timely completion of the publication. Majority of the respondents agreed that, completion time of publishing with ProQuest is usually very long, which sometimes exceed eight weeks. It was also submitted that; some other publishing outlets do not take up to that period before the manuscripts are published. Although, the originality and other ethical processes could be responsible for this long delay, it seems the situation could be improved upon since the theses/dissertations were already supervised by senior academics before they were submitted for publication with ProQuest. Only 4.4% of the entire respondents were not sure whether the delay in publication is a challenge.

Table 9: Access to ProQuest published works- How do you access your published work?

/No	Options	Frequency (N)	Percent (%)
1	On Google	66	26.4
2	On Yahoo	38	15.2
3	KWASU Library Site	44	17.6
4	On KWASU ProQuest site	50	20.0
5	On my personal email	52	20.8
	Total	228	100.0

Table 10 indicated access gateways used by the respondents to the published work by ProQuest. Findings discovered that, respondents used Google mostly, followed by personal email, and the KWASU ProQuest and Library Sites came third and fourth respectively. This clearly indicated that, respondents do not use the university gateways as they do for google to access the published ProQuest publications. This will disadvantage the ranking and web presence of the university, while the advantage will be credited to google.

Table 10: Do you know any institution in Nigeria adopting ProQuest Database to publish its theses and Dissertations?

s/No	Options	Frequency (N)	Percent (%)
1	Yes	120	48.0
2	No	130	52.0
	Total	250	100.0

Table 10 sought to discover other institutions in Nigeria that promote ProQuest publishing for their theses and dissertations of post graduate students. Respondents indicated that, other institutions too in Nigeria do patronize ProQuest publishing. Although, the respondents that indicated that, they were not aware of other institutions using ProQuest publishing outfit were 4% more that those who agreed that they were aware of other institutions using ProQuest. This indicated that, even though, KWASU is one of the first institutions to adopt ProQuest for publishing theses and dissertations of her postgraduate students, other institutions too also use ProQuest.

Conclusion

Kwara State University Malete is one of the University in Nigeria that first adopted ProQuest publication for the theses and dissertations of her postgraduate students. The University made it compulsory for any graduating postgraduate students as part of the prerequisites for graduation. The study investigated the perception of postgraduate students on this policy and scientifically gauged their positions on the initiative. This was to determine the viability of the policy in the best interest of the postgraduate students and the university in general. Presently,

ProQuest database has published over 180 theses and dissertations of the university (Preliminary study, 2020) across the six colleges. It was established that the database has publicized the university in research output across the globe. Although, many of the respondents never published the outcomes of their research findings in any journal outlet before yet they find ProQuest database as one of the reliable, reputable, and qualitative outlets for publication. This also was an opportunity for most of the respondents to publish online and had their publications globally accessed and publicized. This research work is paramount for both the students and the university management because it serves as one of the appraisal parameters on the policy which addressed how the challenges encountered could be tackled and improvement on the positive areas.

Recommendations

1. The University authority should encourage and continue the practice of ProQuest publishing.
2. It is advocated that other publications and research breakthroughs by the University be published using ProQuest gateway for enhanced global visibility and improved web ranking.
3. Academic journals published by KWASU should be reviewed for international standard qualities and acceptability, which could be responsible for why post graduate students are not publishing in them.
4. Although, the reason for delay in ProQuest publishing as attested from the findings could be the process of affirmation of originality, thoroughness, conformity to template, and probably language editing. However, efforts should be geared towards quicker and faster publishing period since the theses/dissertations were already supervised by senior academics.
5. Post graduate students are encouraged to patronize the KWASU/LIBRARY or ProQuest web sites more frequently, instead of the google site as discovered from the findings. This will go a long way in increasing the University number of hits, and thereby enhancing the web ranking.

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