

**AWARENESS AND UTILIZATION OF DATABASES SUBSCRIBED TO BY FUTO
LIBRARY AMONG FUTO ACADEMIC STAFF**

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ABSTRACT: *This paper is an attempt to study the issues of database Awareness and utilization by Academic Staff members in Federal University of Technology, Owerri with a view to study the exposure of Academics staff to the University's subscribed database resources. It also aims to bring to light the challenges that confront the users and recommend some remedial measures for its improvement. A test-retest reliability method of two weeks interval was conducted, response obtained were subjected to Pearson Product Moment Correlation method and a reliability co-efficient of 0.78 was obtained. The Random Sampling Technique together with a Questionnaire was used for data collection on 100 out of a population size of 1,003 academic staff members and only 74 responded giving a response rate of 74 percent. Descriptive and inferential Statistics including Frequencies count, charts, mean score, Relative Important index (R.I.I) and Percentages were used in reporting the findings. The study confirmed that the level of awareness of the subscribed electronic information resources or databases by the Library Management is rather low as well as that of the level of utilization. The paper records that the reasons why academic staff members of the Federal University of Technology, Owerri use databases; were mainly for research (48%) and current awareness (49%). It suggests further for an improvement in the training of the academic staff members, efficient power supply, and access to facilities with high Internet speed and subscription to more databases (e-resources) by the University Library.*

KEYWORDS: Awareness, Utilization, Database, Subscribed, Academic

INTRODUCTION

Library plays a crucial role as a doorway to information resources, a hub for creation and recreation of academic activities, the hinge of academic life, and the engine of learning that fuels the academic institution. According to Roberson (2005) defined a library as an institution that manages the intellectual products of society and processes them in such a manner that the individual can readily gain access to them. Libraries are agents of educational, social and economic development (Rachael, 2014). The principal aim of setting up libraries is to acquire, process, store, preserve and make available current and relevant print and electronic materials that will meet the need of its user at appropriate time (Pertti and Sanna, 2006). However, in this internet era, the services of libraries are no longer confined within four walls of the library block, as access to information through internet has modified the role of libraries; they are integrated into local, regional, national, and international networks. Information outburst via internet connectivity has greatly increased the amount of electronic information resources available on the web.

It is no more news but rather a common knowledge that virtually all scholarly and academic journals, electronic databases, online library catalogues, grey literature and other relevant scholarly materials in all fields of knowledge are now accessible on the internet. Several university libraries are subscribed to several databases online which are made available and

accessible to Academic Staff, and Students of the University, therefore, the awareness and utilization of e-resources by users, especially by the Academic staff members of Academic institutions generally depends on several factors such as skills of each user to locate discrete knowledge elements, power supply, and etcetera.

The FUTO Library currently subscribes to about eight databases which included some open sources and some fee-based sources. Some of the databases currently available include: Agora, Hinari, EBSCOHOST, Nigerian Virtual Library, OARE etc. all of which can be accessed through computer systems in the library and on the Library website. The service here is provided free for all Academic Staff and Students. The library has 50 Desktops, 20 Laptops, 4 printers and 2 photocopy machines, all networked

However, no study has been undertaken to know the level of awareness and utilization of these databases subscribed to by the university. Thus, the study is an attempt to evaluate databases awareness, and utilization by the academic staff members of Federal University of Technology, Owerri and to find out factors that hinder the full utilization of the databases.

LITERATURE REVIEW

Information and Communication Technologies (ICT) has drastically transformed the way for collection, processing, storage, retrieval and communication of information in libraries and information centers. Particularly, the Internet has completely transformed the traditional method of processing information from collection to communication. It has emerged as the most powerful medium for storage, retrieval and communication of information. "With an unprecedented growth in the quantum of knowledge worldwide and the easy accessibility, Internet has become an unavoidable necessity for every institution of higher learning and research".

According to Emwanta and Nwalo (2013) Electronic resources provide a number of benefits over print resources. These benefits include the fact that electronic resources are often faster to consult than print indexes especially when searching retrospectively, and they are straight forward when wishing to use combination of keywords. They open up the possibility of searching multiple files at a time. Electronic resources can be printed, searched and saved to be repeated or consulted at a later date. They are updated more often than printed resources. Commenting on the advantages of electronic resources, Dadzie (2007) cited in Egberongbe (2011) writes that electronic resources are invaluable research tools that complement the print – based resources in a traditional library setting. Their advantages, according to her include: access to information that might be restricted to the user due to geographical location or finances, access to more current information, and provision of extensive links to additional resources related contents.

Bayugo and Agbeko (2007) reported on a survey of convenient access to, and use of, electronic databases (CDROM and Online) with full-text journals and their effect on information seeking behavior of health sciences Academics at the College of Health Sciences of the University of Ghana. The survey documented academics Preferences of print and electronic resource, and the specific databases and full-text journals. The results showed that Academics were unaware of the two full-text journal databases (HINARI and PERI) available at the Library. Hence they resorted to PUBMED as their source of access to full-text articles.

In related study, Azubogu and Madu (2007) did a survey “on the use of computer and internet technology among the teaching staff of Imo State University Nigeria”, and reported a high level of use of information technology by the respondents. They gave reasons for the use of internet by teaching staff to include: ease of use, convenience, free access to the internet, access to free information on the internet among others. In another study, Ojedokun and Owolabi (2003) explored and “assessed the impact of internet competence on the use of the internet for teaching/research activities among academic staff of the University of Botswana”. The findings of the survey had shown that most academic staff in the University of Botswana are using the internet in their research/teaching activities.

Despite the fact that electronic resources have a lot of benefits, there are some hindrances and challenges to its effective use. Velmurugan (2010) found in his study that one common problem faced by the users of electronic resources is that a greater number of respondents complained of slow internet access. The slow speed results in to wastage of time required to retrieve relevant information. Others may include lack of constant power supply and access to electronic resources.

Also, a study by Olatokunbo (2012) revealed that Academics while using electronic information resources show slow internet access (29%), erratic power supply (30%) and too much of information overload (23%) were major factors that affects the utilization of e-resources.

Objectives of the Study

The general objective of this paper is to examine the awareness, and utilization of databases subscribed by FUT0 as well as factors that affects the utilization of the databases among Academic Staff of Federal University of Technology, Owerri.

The specific objectives are:

To find out the extent of awareness of the databases by Academic Staff.

To identify the extent of utilization of the databases by Academic Staff.

To ascertain the level of satisfaction or the usefulness of these databases to Academic Staff in research and teaching.

To determine the factors that affects the utilization of the databases in FUT0 Library.

METHODOLOGY

Questionnaire survey approach was adopted. Primary data were collected with the aid of a questionnaire. Questionnaires were administered to Academic Staff of the study area. The Population for the Academic Staff at FUT0 is 1003 which was obtained from the Universities' Information and Communication Technology block (ICT, 2017). According to Nwana (1981) if a population is in many hundreds, one needs a sample size of 20%. But if a population is in few thousands, one needs a sample size of 10%. Based on the foregoing recommendation, a sampling fraction of 10% was used to select a sample size out of the one thousand and three (1,003) academic staff in the University, a total of one hundred (100) representing 10% of academics were randomly sampled, using the simple random technique (SRT). 74(74%)

returned their questionnaires and 68 (68%) questionnaires were properly completed and this therefore was used as the sampling size.

Accordingly, Twelve (12) key variables were identified to have influenced the utilization of the databases by the Academic Staff. On each of the 12 variables, respondents were asked to indicate the degree at which the variables affects them while trying to utilize the database based on a five-point scale

To guarantee the reliability of the instrument, it was administered on ten participants out of the envisaged population of the study. A test-retest reliability method of two weeks interval was conducted, response obtained were subjected to Pearson Product Moment Correlation method and a reliability co-efficient of 0.78 was obtained.

Mean score was used to calculate the extent and utilization of the databases subscribed to by FUTO.

In order to empirically ascertain the factors that affects the utilization of the databases by the Academic Staff of both by itself and in combination of the other factors, the Relative Importance Index (RII) was employed. Relative Importance Index or weight is a type of relative importance analyses. RII was used for the analysis because it best fits the purpose of this study. According to Johnson and LeBreton (Johnson & Lebreton, 2004) RII aids in finding the contribution a particular variable makes to the prediction of a criterion variable both by itself and in combination with other predictor variables. In the calculation of the Relative Importance Index (RII), the formula below was used.

$$R.I.I = \frac{\sum W}{A*N}$$

Where R.I.I is the relative important index

W= weighting given to each statement by the respondents and ranges from 1 to 5

A=the higher response integer which is 5

N=Number of respondents

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION OF FINDINGS

Table 1: Gender of Respondents

Gender	Frequency	Percentage (%)
Male	41	60
Female	27	40
Total	68	100

Table 1 shows that there are more male respondents (60%) than female respondents of (40%). This suggests that there are more male academics than female across the surveyed faculties in the University.

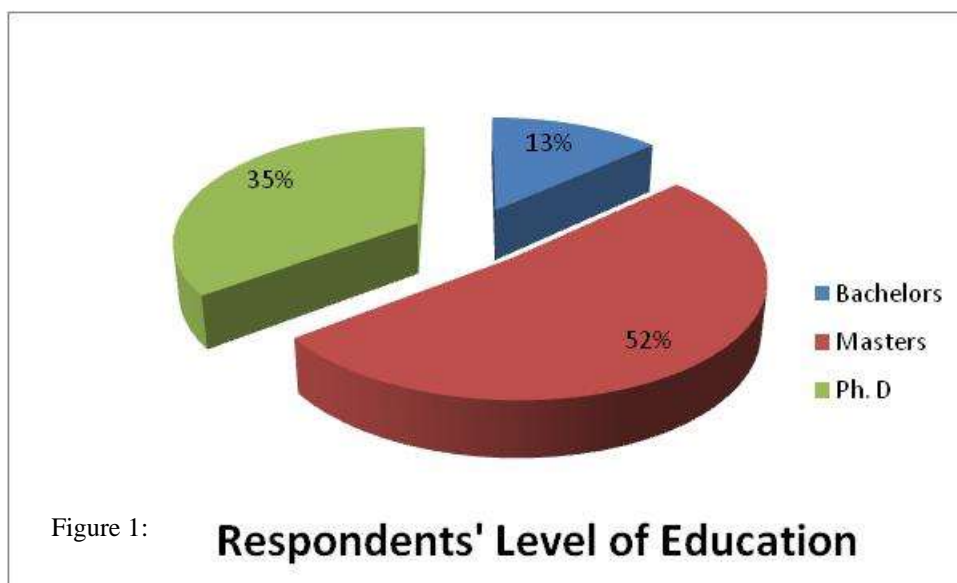


Figure 1 above shows that out of 68 respondents, 9(13%) respondents were Bachelor Degree holders; 35(52%) were Master Degree holders while 24 (35%) were holders of PhD. This shows that majority of the respondents are Masters Degree holders.

Table 2: Teaching Experience

Year	Frequency	Percentage(%)
1-5	9	13
6-10	20	29
11-15	15	23
16-20	11	16
21 and above	13	19
Total	68	100

Table 2 shows the teaching experience of Academic Staff members, 9(13%) were having 1-5 years; 20 (29 %) 6-10 years; 15 (23%) 11-15 years, 11 (16%) 16-20 years; and 13(19%) 21 years and above years of teaching experience. Therefore majority of the Academic staff has teaching experience between 6-10

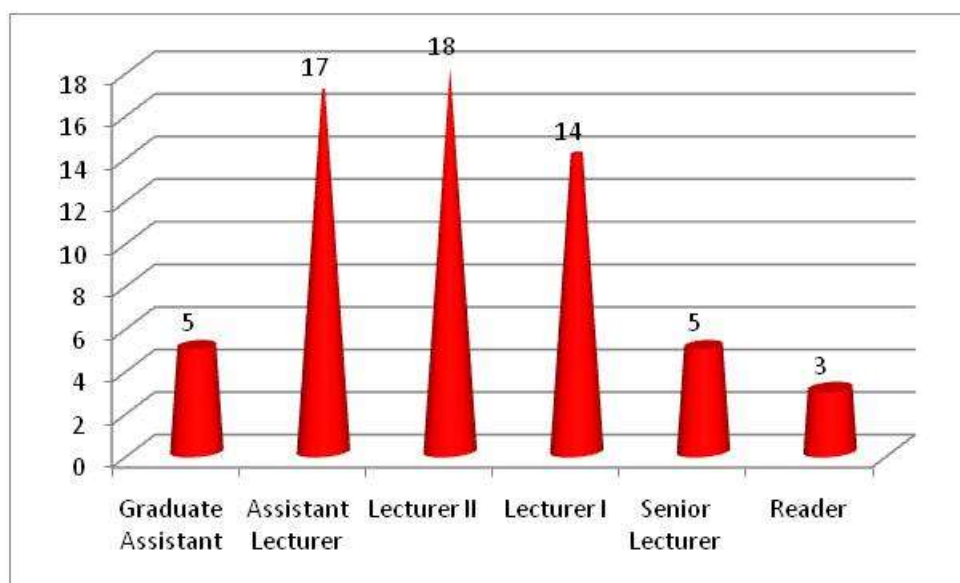


Figure 2: Academic Status of the respondents

Figure 2 shows the Academic status of the respondents, 5 of the Staff were Graduate assistant, 17 of the Staff were Assistant Lecturers, 18 of the Staff were Lecturer II, 14 of the Staff were Lecturer I, 5 of the Staff were Senior Lecturers, and 3 of the Staff were Readers. Therefore majority of the Academic Staff who participated were Lecturer II.

Table 3: Extent of awareness of the databases subscribed to in FUTO Library by the academic staff.

Databases subscribed to	HE	LE	ME	NE	TOTAL	MEAN SCORE	SD	RANK
Agora	28	8	18	12	184	2.67	±8.70	Moderate Extent
Hinari	25	7	19	16	169	2.45	±7.50	Low Extent
EBSCOHOST	18	11	15	23	153	2.22	±5.06	Low Extent
Nigerian Virtual Library	18	7	10	30	141	2.04	±10.28	Low Extent
OARE	17	12	15	24	152	2.20	±5.10	Low Extent
Proquest	13	11	15	28	133	1.93	±7.68	Low Extent
TEEAL	20	7	13	26	149	2.16	±8.27	Low Extent
Science Direct	21	10	14	15	162	2.35	±.55	Low Extent

Table 3. reveals that the level of awareness by of the databases subscribed by Academic Staff in FUTO is very low with AGORA being the only database above average (2.50).

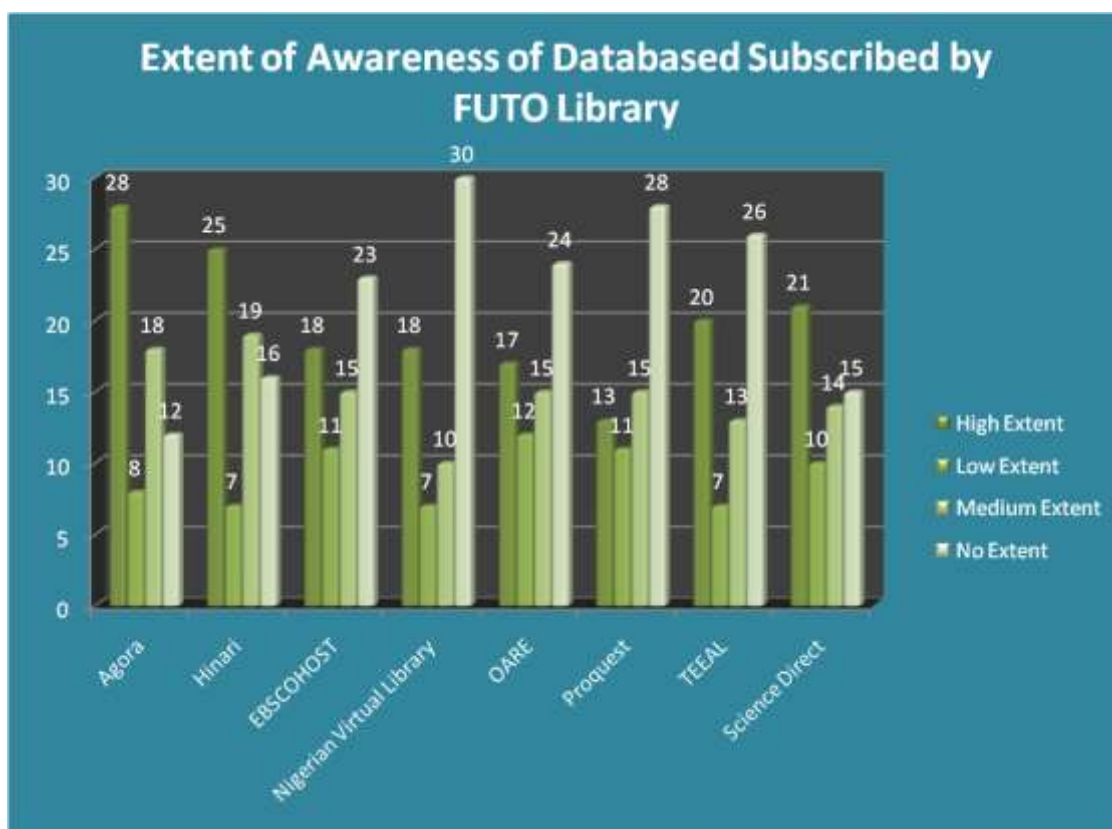


Figure 3: Chart showing the subscribed databases and the extent of their awareness by the Academic Staff.

Table 4: Level of utilization of the databases subscribed to by FUTO Library

Databases subscribed to	HU	LU	MU	NU	TOTAL	MEAN SCORE	SD	RANK
Agora	13	10	14	19	130	1.88	±3.74	Low level
Hinari	10	12	15	29	124	1.80	±8.58	Low level
EBSCOHOST	9	8	14	34	108	1.57	±12.12	Low level
Nigerian Virtual Library	8	9	16	32	107	1.55	±11.09	Low level
OARE	8	11	16	31	113	1.64	±10.21	Low level
Proquest	5	9	14	39	95	1.38	±15.28	Low level
TEEAL	8	9	17	33	107	1.55	±11.56	Low level
Science Direct	11	8	20	28	116	1.68	±9.07	Low level

Table 4 shows that the level of utilization of the databases by the Academic staff is low as their mean scores are below average (2.5).

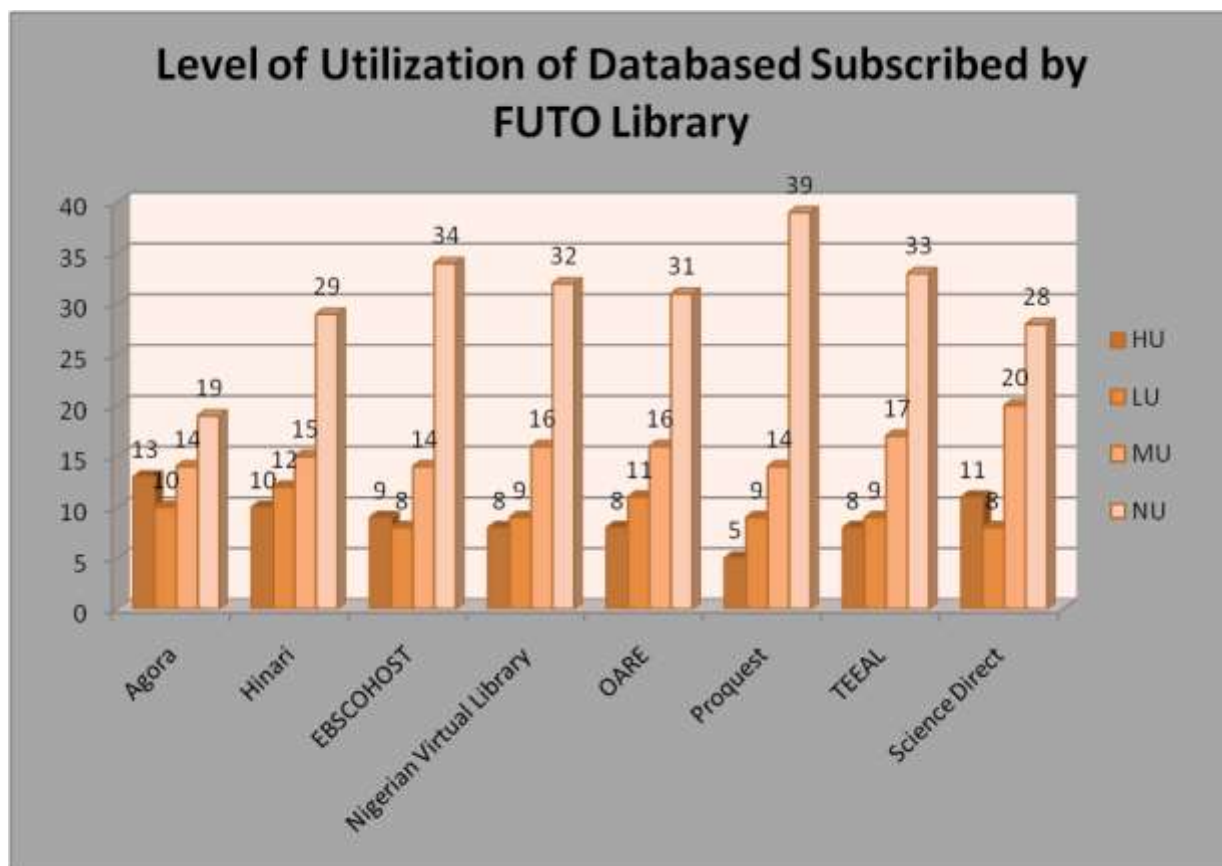


Figure 4: Chart showing the subscribed databases and the level of their utilization by the Academic Staff.

Table 5: Factors that hinder the utilization of the databases

S/ NO	ITEM	S/Agree	Agree	Un decided	Disagree	S/Disagree	W	R.I.I	Rank
1	Slow Internet Service	25	13	2	8	20	21	0.64	2
2	High Cost of printing of downloads	17	7	0	15	29	17	0.51	5
3	Insufficient computer	17	4	1	12	34	16	0.48	6
4	Lack of internet connectivity	26	9	3	8	22	21	0.63	4
5	Poor power supply	30	6	1	11	20	21	0.64	2

6	Low level in computer literacy	16	4	2	9	37	15	0.46	8
7	No open access to current up-to-date information	16	4	0	8	40	15	0.45	10
8	No access to full articles	11	7	2	14	34	15	0.44	11
9	Bottlenecks by the management	17	0	3	15	33	15	0.46	8
10	Lack of fund	19	0	5	4	40	15	0.464	7
11	Low understanding of the digital age by the management	6	0	7	15	40	12	0.36	12
12	Lack of adequate training of the staff on the use of the e-resources	33	4	1	6	24	22	0.65	1

The table above shows that lack of adequate training of the Staff is the major factor (rank 1) that hinders the utilization of databases by the Academic Staff, followed by Poor power supply and slow internet service with same rank (rank 2), then lack of internet connection (rank 4), high cost of printing(rank 5), insufficient computer (rank 6), lack of fund (rank 7), bottle necks by the management and low level of computer literacy (rank 8), no open access to current up to date information (rank 10), no access to full articles (rank 11) and low understanding of digital age by the management (rank 12)

Table 6: Usefulness or reasons for the utilization

S/NO	Usefulness or reasons for the utilization	No. of responses	Percentage (%)
1	Lecturing	28	15%
2	Research	48	25%
3	To write seminars/conference papers	22	11%
4	To update knowledge	23	12%
5	Self-enhancement	22	11%
6	Current awareness	49	26%
		192	100%

Table 6 shows that 28(15%) of the Academic Staff utilize the university databases for the reason of lecturing, 48(25%) utilize them for the reason of research, 22(11%) to write seminars and conference papers, 23(12%) utilize for reason of updating their knowledge, 22(11%) for self enhancement and 49(26%) for current awareness. Therefore the Academic Staff utilize the databases subscribed for mainly for the reasons of research 48(25%) and current awareness 49(26%).

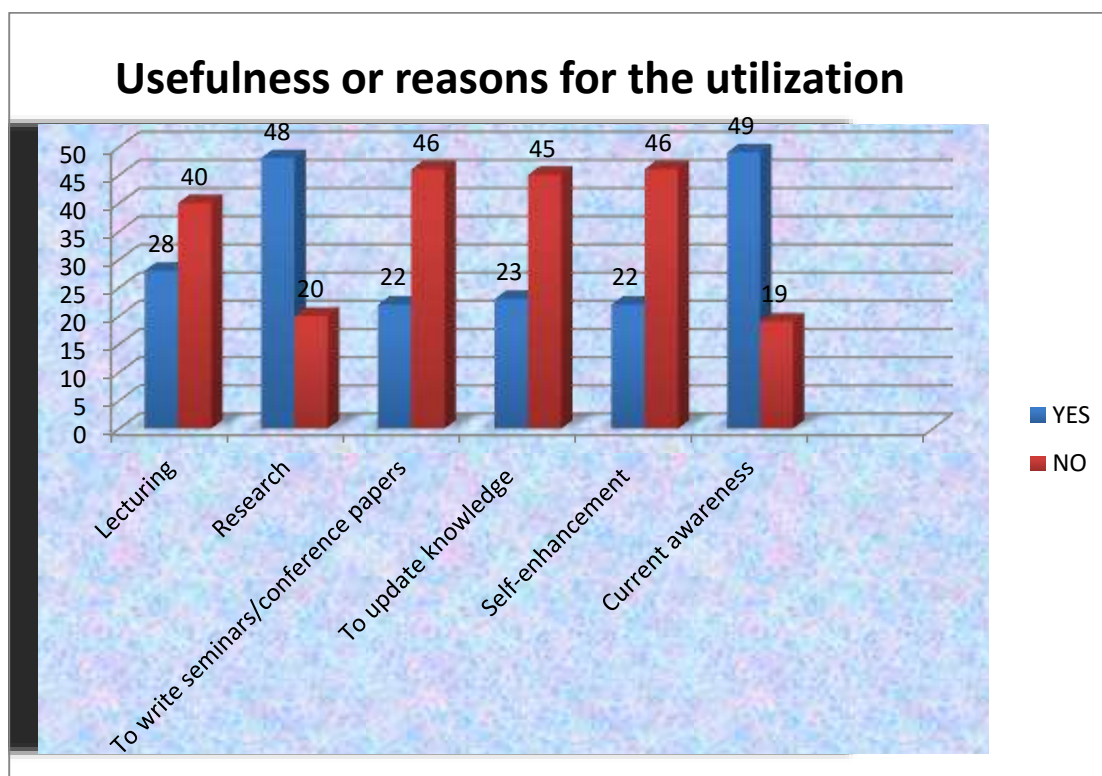


Figure 5: Chart showing the subscribed databases and the reason for their utilization by the Academic Staff.

CONCLUSION AND RECOMMENDATION

The FUTO Library though has invested a lot on databases but effectual utilization of these databases lies exclusively on awareness. Despite the increased availability of high-quality electronic content in the university library Academic staff members' attitudes seem to be very poor towards the utilization of subscribed databases

for their study and research as It was observed that a large number of academic staff members reported that level of awareness of the existence of subscribed databases in the Library is relatively low. Hence the result of its usage is not encouraging. However, it is important for the university library to improve the awareness of electronic information resources in the library to the academic community so as to increase the use of this service.

Awareness and training should be a constant effort, since the University recruits new staff on a regular basis.

The University Library should re-orientate the Academic staff members of the University on how to access the

databases subscribed to by the University. On the issue of power, although the university has alternate power supplies like solar energy system, but this cannot be said to have been very efficient enough as there is still the problem of power supply. It is also advisable that the

University Library should still subscribe to more databases. Finally, the Internet facilities of the University should also be improved to facilitate easy access to the databases of the University in order to curb the problem of slow internet service.

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