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## **Prevalence of Library Anxiety among Undergraduate Students in Lead City University, Ibadan, Oyo State, Nigeria**

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### **Abstract**

*Library anxiety is a significant phenomenon among research anxiety constructs that influence academic success. The phenomenon has received attention among scholars in the developed world. The study investigates the prevalence of library anxiety among undergraduate students of Lead City University, Nigeria. The study uses the descriptive survey research method for population of 3,285 undergraduate students of the university, and proportional sampling techniques of 10 percentage are randomly selected from each faculty. The standardise measuring instrument: AQAK Library Anxiety is used. The study shows that (26.9%) of undergraduate students experience mild anxiety, while 21.7% experiences severe library anxiety and 17.2% experience low*

*anxiety. The study further reveals that 21.3% experienced moderate anxiety and only 12.9% of the undergraduate students experience no anxiety. The study also reveals the factors responsible for library anxiety among the undergraduate students include library environment settings (3.20), inadequate user education (3.03), attitude of library staff (3.00), arrangement and awareness of library resources (2.81) and inadequate user knowledge (2.82). The study recommends improved user education programmes, creating awareness about library services and resources and library staff should improve on their relationship with the library users.*

**Keywords:** Library Anxiety, Information Anxiety, Undergraduate students, User Education, Library Use, Lead City University

### **Introduction**

Researchers in the field of library and information science have always sought to understand the reasons behind the reluctance of some students to use the library. They have always attempted to understand the hindrances library users face in their attempt to make use of the library, in particular, the academic library. Many years of in-depth research have confirmed that many users, irrespective of their cultural or educational background often found the library intimidating. Mellon conceived feeling as library anxiety that means the negative and overwhelming feelings many students experience when needing to use the library for an information need (Mellon, 2015).

Chima, Nwajei and Akpom (2015) also described library anxiety as the feeling of being overwhelmed, intimidated, nervous, uncertain, or confused when using or contemplating use of the library and its resources to satisfy an information need. According to Abdul Rashid and Abdul Karim (2016), anxiety manifest as a feeling of uneasiness, worry, nervousness and apprehension experienced when people face challenges. Library anxiety is library user's feeling of discomfort, uneasiness, uncertainty, fear and nervousness when he or she is confronted with using the library in

order to complete course related assignments. In academic libraries, library anxiety occurs when students are not sure of how to use the library resources and services. It is a state-based anxiety that can cause misconceptions or misapplication of library resources, procrastination, and avoidance of library related tasks.

Most undergraduate students in developing countries attended elementary and secondary schools with non-existent of school library. Thus, their encounter with an academic library of massive information resources, especially print resources, prompted anxiety. This and other factors such as lack of library user education create a state of panic in students when they make use of the academic library.

However, the concept of library anxiety has not received significant attention in Nigeria as compare its extensive researches and discussion in developed countries. This study therefore examines the prevalence of library anxiety among undergraduates in a Nigeria private university: Lead City University, Ibadan Nigeria. The outcome of this study will enable library management and librarians to discover the causes of library anxiety and take action to curb the phenomena and the use of library by undergraduate students will increase and positively influence their academic performance.

### **Literature Review**

The first researcher to make use of the phrase 'library anxiety' was Constance Mellon, an American librarian who made the discovery in a qualitative study that students were using the word 'anxiety' in describing how they feel about the library. The concept soon became popular that researchers considered it imperative to conduct empirical studies on its causes and effects. Bostick therefore developed the first standardised scale called the library anxiety scale (LAS) in 1992 (Bostick, 1992). The first empirical studies on the phenomenon of library anxiety among college students in the United States were published by Jiao, Onwuegbuzie and Lichtenstein.

Since the first empirical study conducted by Jiao, Onwuegbuzie and Lichtenstein (1996), other researchers have also expanded the study to include student from virtually all continents in the world to reinforce the fact that the phenomenon is present across cultures.

Shelmerdine (2016) described library anxiety as a 'situation-based' anxiety. This means that the individual only suffers the anxiety in a specific situation; while attempting to use the library. In a study of post-graduate students, who were surveyed using the Library Anxiety Scale and the State-Trait Anxiety Inventory, it was found that there was no correlation found between general anxiety and library anxiety—someone who experiences library anxiety does not necessarily suffer from general anxiety (Shelmerdine, 2016). Therefore, a usually confident and relaxed student can suddenly transform into a tentative and uncertain library user who may attempt to cover his perceived ignorance with silence or face saving bravado. They are more likely to pretend to know everything rather than ask the library staff for help to (Abdul Rashid and Abdul Karim, 2016).

Amanbo, Dajat and Bibot (2018) submitted that the phenomenon is very common amongst students in academic libraries. It prevents students from accessing and using the information they need. Jan, Anwar and Warraich (2016) also reported that some of the students might be fearful, uneasy and anxious while using the library resources and services. Such negative feelings can hinder their ability to exploit library resources fully. Such students often stay away from the library or refrain from asking questions concerning where to find certain information resources or how to use library facilities and other services. Platt and Platt (2013) reported that the symptoms of library anxiety are similar to those of general anxiety and may include an increase in heart rate, respiration rate, blood pressure, apprehension, and frustration. The negative self-talk, shaking, sweating palms and nausea are common to many other anxieties, but it is perhaps the behavioural aspects of library anxieties which most impact students.

### **Factors Responsible for Library Anxiety**

Bostick (1992) identified five constructs that cause library anxiety. They are; mechanical barriers, affective barriers, comfort with the library, barriers with staff and knowledge of the library. Anwar et al.,(2012) added that the manifestation of library anxiety could be caused by factors such as library staff, library environment, knowledge of the library, library resources, user education, affective barriers, mechanical barriers, technology, etc. Students may be anxious across all or some of these factors. For example, Abusin and Zainab (2017) investigated library anxiety among 125 international students using Bostick's LAS. They found that mechanical barriers, affective barriers, comfort with the library, barriers with staff and knowledge of the library, in that order of significance, are responsible for library anxiety among the students. However, Lu and Adkins (2012) found mechanical barriers as the smallest source of library anxiety, while affective barriers and staff barriers were the greatest sources of library anxiety. They found no significant differences on gender and academic disciplines concerning the level of library anxiety. Ashrafi-Rizi et al. (2014) investigated the causes of library anxiety among Iranian medical students and discovered that the greatest source of library anxiety was barriers with staff and the smallest was comfort in the library. This shows that students are often afraid to seek assistance from librarians when they experience difficulties in using the library (Frazer and Bartlett, 2018).

Erfanmanesh (2011) applied Van Kampen's 2004 multidimensional library anxiety scale (MLAS) on 123 Iranian graduate students and found that 61 percentage of them experienced an average level of library anxiety, 21 percentage experienced below average level, and 18 percentage experienced more than average level of library anxiety. Students in their third semester showed lower library anxiety than those in their first and second semesters. This indicates that as students become acquainted with the library, their confidence and knowledge of library use increases. Rehman (2014) used the AQAK library anxiety scale on undergraduate students of the University of the Punjab and

found that most of the respondents experienced a mild level of library anxiety and that gender had no significant relationship with library anxiety.

### **Level of Library Anxiety among Undergraduate Students**

Studies undertaken in the United States and many other countries have found library anxiety to be pervasive among college students (McPherson, 2015). According to Swigon (2011), approximately 40% of surveyed library users reported feelings of anxiety whenever they have to use the library. It observed that students suffering from library anxiety have a greater propensity to avoid using an academic library and were thus more prone to avoid or delay starting or completing assignments that involved the library. These feelings tend to reduce the time students spend in the library and alternatively increase photocopying expenditure; overlook maps and signs; misinterpret directions and cues when attempting to locate periodicals and books and refrain from seeking much needed help (McPherson, 2015).

The level of library anxiety experienced by library users is determined by both personal and institutional factors. Personal factors relate to various inhibitions regarding the library which may prevent students from making optimal use of this facility for their studies (Chutia and Sarmah, 2019). These include inadequate and/or lack of knowledge and skills of library resources, absence of previous library experience, ignorance of the capability and extent of the library information retrieval systems, lack of self-confidence in conducting research, inadequate knowledge of the subject matter, lack of appropriate information literacy skills and their general confusion with the various aspects of the information search process (Hosseini, Khosravi, and Jahromi, 2014; Swignon, 2011). Studies by Frazer and Bartlett (2018) and Shelmerdine (2018) have provided clear examples which included difficulties differentiating between a subject and a keyword search and narrowing or broadening a search using Boolean logic. Students also developed anxiety as a result of the subject terminologies and the fact that

some articles only carry an abstract and not the full text. Nwokedi and Dachalson's (2007) study on the level of anxiety amongst medical students at the University of Jos, Nigeria also found that majority of the students were inept in using the catalogue and journal indexes.

Institutional factors responsible for library anxiety include the physical and environmental aspects of the library service. These include: the size of the library and collection, the layout and organization of floors and the collection, the noise level, poor ventilation, lighting and air conditioning, signage and computer facilities (Biglu, Ghavami, and Dadashpour 2016). According to Merc (2016), the relationship between size and layout of libraries was first made prominent by Mellon who found that students were intimidated by the large size of the academic library compared to their school or public libraries. Anjaline and Saravanan (2018) found in their study that students reported feeling lost, disoriented and unable to locate the materials because of the size of the library. This resulted in frustration, anxiety and even withdrawal from the library. Other institutional factors that may trigger library anxiety include: the arrangement of materials on the shelves (McPherson, 2015); library jargon; and the perceptions among students that librarians are threatening, frightening, unapproachable and inaccessible when they are seeking personal assistance from them (Nwokedi, 2015).

Various studies have indicated that cultural differences have impact on the cause and level of library anxiety among students. While testing the suitability of Bostick's LAS for Middle-Eastern students, Anwar, Al-Qallaf, Al-Kandari and Al-Ansari (2012) utilized its modified version on Kuwaiti Biological Sciences students. They found that male students were more anxious than females in approaching the library staff and concluded that Bostick's LAS, originally developed using American students, was not suitable for other culturally different populations and suggested the development of a new scale (Jan, Anwar and Warraich, 2016).

### **Research Method**

The study adopted descriptive survey research method. And standardise instrument for data collection was the AQAK Library Anxiety Scale developed by Al-Qallaf, Al-Kandari and Al-Ansari (2012). Jan (2016) submitted that the AQAK scale is the most relevant instrument to measure library anxiety in the modern library environment suffused with digital resources and online access to information. The scale comprises 40 statements clustered into five factors which are: (1) Library resources, (2) Library staff, (3) User knowledge, (4) Library environment, and (5) User education. The instrument measured library anxiety using a five-point Likert scale, i.e.; with values ranging from 1 = strongly disagree to 5 = strongly agree. As reported by Jan (2016), the AQAK Library Anxiety Scale has a Cronbach's alpha value of 0.90 so it is 90 percent reliable. The population of the study are all 3,285 undergraduate students across the faculties, proportional sampling technique of 10 percent (328) of the population was used as sampling size. However, 328 copies of questionnaire were distributed, but 272 copies were returned and valid for analysis.

**Presentation and Analysis**  
**Demographic characteristics of respondents**

**Table I:** Frequency distribution of gender, level of study and faculty of respondents.

<b>Demographics</b>	<b>Frequency</b>	<b>Percent</b>
<b>Sex</b>		
Female	107	39
Male	165	61
<b>Total</b>	<b>272</b>	<b>100.0</b>
<b>Level:</b>		
100	46	6.5
200	77	12.9
300	61	22.6
400	45	48.4
500	43	9.7
<b>Total</b>	<b>272</b>	<b>100.0</b>
<b>FACULTY</b>		
	Frequency	Percent
Environmental and Management Sciences	99	36
Arts and Education	46	17
Basic and Applied Sciences	79	29
Law	48	18
<b>Total</b>	<b>272</b>	<b>100.0</b>

Table I presents the demographic distribution of the respondents. Out of the 93 respondents, 56 (60.2%) were female while the remaining 37 (39.8%) were male. Meanwhile, distribution according to level of study shows that 100 level students were 6 (6.5%), 200 level students were 12 (12.9%), 300 level students were 21 (22.6%), 400 level students were 45 (48.4%) and 500 level

students were 9 (9.7). This shows that 400 level students were in the majority, while 100 level students constitute the least percentage of the total respondents. 29 (31.2%) of the respondents were from the faculty of Environmental, Management and Social Sciences, 36 (38.7%) were from Arts and Education, 19 (20.4%) were from faculty of Basic and Applied Sciences, while the faculty of Law has only 9 respondents which is just 9.7%.

### Research Questions (RQ)

**RQ1:** What is the level of library anxiety among the undergraduate students in Lead City University, Ibadan?

**Table 2: Proposed levels and frequency of the respondents' library anxiety score**

Levels of LA	Ranges of mean scores	Frequency	(%)
No anxiety	0.00-2.11	35	12.9
Low anxiety	2.12-2.52	47	17.2
Mild anxiety	2.53-3.35	73	26.9
Moderate anxiety	3.36-3.76	58	21.3
Severe anxiety	3.77-5.00	59	21.7
<b>Total</b>	-	<b>272</b>	<b>100</b>

Mean = 2.96; SD = 0.74

Descriptive statistics of the total library anxiety scores are presented in Table 2. This study adopted the five levels of library anxiety proposed and used by Anwar et al. (2012) in their research. From the Table 4.3, it can be seen clearly that a majority of the respondents (73; 26.9%) experienced mild anxiety on the AQAK Library Anxiety Scale. 59 (21.7%) of the respondents experienced Severe Library anxiety, 47(17.2%) experienced Low anxiety, while 58(21.3%) experienced Moderate anxiety. Only 35(12.9%) experienced no anxiety. This finding is similar to the study of

Pakistani students where 84.69 percent of undergraduates appeared to have more than low library anxiety.

The overall mean library anxiety score for the 272 respondents was 2.96 with a standard deviation of 0.74. This finding is comparable to the findings of previous literature. Jan, Anwar and Warraich (2016) also recorded a mean score of 2.94 and standard deviation of 0.41.

**RQ2:** What are the factors contributing to library anxiety among undergraduate students in Lead City University, Ibadan?

**Table 3:** Descriptive statistics for the sub-factors of library anxiety.

	User Knowledge	Library Environment	User Education	Library Resources	Library Staff
Mean	2.80	3.20	3.03	2.82	3.00
Median	2.60	3.14	3.00	2.80	2.91
Std. Dev	1.071	.740	1.181	1.009	.749
Minimum	1.00	1.14	1.00	1.00	1.00
Maximum	5.00	5.00	5.00	5.00	5.00

Table 3 provides descriptive statistics for the sub-factors of library anxiety: information resources, user knowledge, library environment, library staff and user education. With a mean of 3.20, respondents reported that library environment is the highest factor contributing to library anxiety. This is followed by user education with a mean score of 3.03 and library staff with a mean score of 3.00. Library resource has a mean score of 2.81, while the lowest score was for user knowledge with a mean of 2.82. This result means library environment was the largest and user knowledge was the smallest factor contributing to library anxiety among the respondents. This finding is in variance with that of Jan (2016) who found user education to be the most significant factor causing library anxiety and library environment the least significant among Pakistani students. Similarly, Ashrafi-rizi et al. (2014) reported that relationship with library staff, rather than comfort with the library is

the greatest source of library anxiety. This further buttressed the need for situation specific studies into the causes of library anxiety. However, it must be pointed out that factors such as Library Staff and User Education are also highly significant sources of library anxiety in this study which is consistent with related studies.

### **Conclusions**

Based on the findings of the study, it is concluded that undergraduate students of Lead City University experienced library anxiety with the implication that this will affect their use of the university library. Worthy of note is the fact that unfriendly library environment, lack of proper instruction on the use of the library are significant sources of library anxiety among the students.

It is also obvious that the students often found it difficult to approach the library staff for help in using the library resources, even when they lack the skills to use the resources effectively. This often leaves them frustrated and more reluctant to make use of the relevant resources in the library.

### **Recommendations**

Based on the findings and conclusions reached in this study, the following recommendations are considered appropriate;

- i. It is imperative to redesign user education programmes in order to let students understand that digital resources are integral part of library collections and to equip the students with necessary skills needed to make efficient use of the available digital resources.
- ii. The library should intensify its awareness programmes to educate potential library users about the available digital resources in the library and the benefits to be derived by students who make proper use of these resources.
- iii. All opportunities should be exploited to ensure that library user are put at ease when they visit the library in order to eliminate all form of anxiety which may hinder the effective use of digital resources.

- iv. The library building should be made conducive and comfortable for the users through the provision of amenities such as air conditioners, proper lighting, comfortable furniture as well as the maintenance of order among library users.

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