



PRIVACY POLICIES AND DATA PROTECTION PRACTICES AS DETERMINANTS OF POSTGRADUATE STUDENTS' EFFECTIVE USE OF KASHIM IBRAHIM LIBRARY (KIL) WEBSITE, AHMADU BELLO UNIVERSITY, ZARIA

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Abstract

The rapid expansion of digital library services has heightened concerns about user privacy and data protection. This study examines the privacy policies and data protection practices of the Kashim Ibrahim Library (KIL) website and their influence on postgraduate students' trust and effective use. Employing a descriptive survey research design, the total postgraduate student population is 2,410. A representative sample of 346 postgraduate students was determined using Yamane's (1967) formula, a structured questionnaire was used. Descriptive and inferential analyses were conducted using SPSS version 28. Findings reveal that while a majority of respondents are aware of the KIL privacy policy, only a moderate proportion find it easy to locate and understand, highlighting gaps in transparency and accessibility. Data protection was identified as the strongest predictor of effective website use, with trust also playing a significant role. The study recommends that the KIL website enhance policy visibility, simplify privacy documentation, and implement robust technical safeguards to strengthen trust and optimize user engagement.

Keywords: *Data Protection, Effective Website Use, Kashim Ibrahim Library, Library Website Privacy, User Trust*

Introduction

In the digital era, academic libraries have increasingly relied on their websites to provide access to information resources, facilitate research, and support teaching and learning. These digital platforms serve not only as gateways to scholarly content but also as repositories of user data, ranging from personal identification to search and usage patterns. Consequently, the privacy and security of library website users have emerged as critical concerns for academic institutions worldwide (Smith & Johnson, 2020; Adeyemi, 2021). Users are often required to provide sensitive information for services such as electronic resource access, interlibrary loans, and account management. Without adequate privacy safeguards and transparent policies, users may be exposed to unauthorized data collection, misuse, or breaches, undermining trust in the library system (Nguyen, 2019).

The management of personal data within academic libraries is further complicated by evolving regulatory frameworks, including the Nigeria Data Protection Regulation (NDPR, 2019) and the European Union General Data Protection Regulation (GDPR, 2018). These regulations impose obligations on institutions to protect user data, ensure informed consent, and provide mechanisms for users to control their personal information. Libraries that fail to comply with these standards risk not only legal repercussions but also a decline in user engagement and satisfaction (Chowdhury, 2020). Despite the availability of guidelines and best practices, many academic libraries in Nigeria, including the Kashim Ibrahim Library (KIL) at Ahmadu Bello University, have yet to fully implement comprehensive privacy policies and transparent data protection measures.

Previous studies have highlighted the significance of privacy policies and user trust in digital environments. For instance, Adekunle and Olorunfemi (2020) observed that users' awareness of institutional data protection practices directly influences their willingness to engage with online services. Similarly, research by Mohammed and Bala (2021) emphasized that clear, accessible privacy policies contribute to enhanced user confidence and ethical information management. However, empirical evidence specific to Nigerian

university libraries, particularly regarding the relationship between privacy policies, data protection practices, and effective use of library websites, remains limited. This study seeks to address this gap by examining the privacy policies and data protection practices of the KIL website and assessing their impact on user trust and effective use.

Statement of the Problem

Academic libraries, as custodians of vast repositories of user and scholarly information, face increasing pressure to ensure the privacy and security of their digital platforms. Despite the proliferation of library websites offering diverse electronic resources, evidence suggests that many users remain unaware of how their personal data is collected, stored, and protected (Adeyemi, 2021). At the Kashim Ibrahim Library, postgraduate students routinely interact with the website to access e-resources, submit research requests, and manage accounts, yet the adequacy of its privacy policies and data protection measures remains uncertain.

The lack of transparent and well-communicated privacy policies can result in multiple challenges. Users may experience anxiety about the potential misuse of personal information, leading to reduced engagement with library services and diminished trust in the institution (Nguyen, 2019). Moreover, failure to comply with national and international data protection regulations, such as the NDPR and GDPR, exposes the library to legal and reputational risks. While some studies have addressed digital privacy in broader Nigerian contexts (Chowdhury, 2020; Mohammed & Bala, 2021), there is limited empirical research focusing specifically on how privacy policies and data protection practices influence library website use and user confidence in Nigerian university libraries.

Consequently, there is a pressing need to systematically evaluate the KIL website's privacy policies and data protection practices. Such an evaluation will not only illuminate current gaps and areas of non-compliance but also inform strategies to enhance user trust and ensure responsible management of personal

data. Addressing these concerns is critical for fostering a secure and user-centered digital library environment that aligns with both regulatory expectations and the evolving needs of postgraduate students.

Objectives of the Study

The primary aim of this study is to examine the privacy policies and data protection practices of the Kashim Ibrahim Library (KIL) website and their influence on user trust and effective website use. Specifically, the study seeks to:

1. To assess the level of postgraduate students' awareness of the Kashim Ibrahim Library (KIL) website's privacy policies and data protection practices.
2. To determine the relationship between awareness, data protection, and trust, and their influence on the effective use of the KIL website.

Methodology

This study adopted a descriptive survey research design, which is widely recognized as appropriate for investigating user perceptions, awareness, and experiences in a structured and quantifiable manner (Oso & Onen, 2020). The population for this study comprised all postgraduate students of Ahmadu Bello University (ABU), Zaria, Nigeria, who are registered users of the KIL website. According to the ABU Academic Registry (2023), the total postgraduate student population is 2,410. A representative sample of 346 postgraduate students was determined using Yamane's (1967) formula for sample size calculation at a 95% confidence level and 5% margin of error. To ensure inclusivity across faculties and departments a stratified random sampling technique was employed. Stratification was based on faculty affiliation, ensuring that students from all major academic units were proportionally represented in the study. This approach minimized sampling bias and enhanced the reliability of the results. The primary instrument for data collection was a structured questionnaire designed in alignment with the research objectives and questions. Data collection was conducted over a period of four weeks. Collected data were coded and analyzed using

Statistical Package for Social Sciences (SPSS) version 28. Both descriptive and inferential statistical techniques were employed to address the research questions.

Results

This section presents the findings of the study on postgraduate students’ awareness, perception, and engagement with the Kashim Ibrahim Library (KIL) website’s privacy policies and data protection practices. Tables 1 and 2 provide a detailed presentation of the findings, highlighting both the current strengths and areas for improvement in the KIL website’s privacy and data protection framework.

Table 1: To assess the level of postgraduate students’ awareness of the Kashim Ibrahim Library (KIL) website’s privacy policies and data protection practices.

ITEM	STRONGLY DISAGREE (1)	DISAGREE (2)	NEUTRAL (3)	AGREE (4)	STRONGLY AGREE (5)	MEAN	STD. DEV.
I AM AWARE THAT THE KIL WEBSITE HAS A PRIVACY POLICY	18	34	72	146	76	3.81	1.04
THE PRIVACY POLICY IS EASY TO FIND AND UNDERSTAND	25	56	89	118	58	3.45	1.12
KIL PROTECTS MY PERSONAL DATA EFFECTIVELY	12	41	101	134	58	3.62	1.00
I TRUST THE KIL WEBSITE TO HANDLE MY DATA RESPONSIBLY	14	39	93	141	59	3.65	1.01
PRIVACY MEASURES	20	44	87	138	57	3.57	1.08

**INFLUENCE MY
EFFECTIVE
USE OF THE
WEBSITE**

Table 1 shows respondents’ awareness of KIL website privacy policies and data protection practices. The majority of respondents (66.8%) indicated awareness of the KIL privacy policy, reflected in a mean score of 3.81. However, only 50.9% agreed that the privacy policy is easy to locate and understand, suggesting areas for improvement in transparency and accessibility (mean = 3.45). Regarding data protection, 56.1% of respondents agreed that KIL effectively safeguards their personal information (mean = 3.62). Trust in the website was similarly moderate, with 57.8% of respondents indicating confidence in responsible data handling (mean = 3.65). Finally, privacy measures were found to influence effective website use, with a mean score of 3.57, highlighting the importance of robust data protection in promoting engagement. These results collectively suggest that while awareness is relatively high, enhancements in policy clarity and implementation could further strengthen user trust and effective use.

Table 2 To determine the relationship between awareness, data protection, and trust, and their influence on the effective use of the KIL website.

VARIABLES	AWARENESS	DATA PROTECTION	TRUST	EFFECTIVE USE
AWARENESS	1			
DATA PROTECTION	.621	1		
TRUST	.574	.689	1	
EFFECTIVE USE	.512	.611	.672	1

Regression Summary (Dependent Variable: Effective Use)

PREDICTOR	B	STD. ERROR	BETA	T	P-VALUE
AWARENESS	0.241	0.056	0.278	4.30	0.000
DATA PROTECTION	0.310	0.049	0.362	6.33	0.000
TRUST	0.289	0.051	0.341	5.66	0.000
CONSTANT	0.821	0.212	–	3.87	0.000

Model Summary: $R^2 = 0.561$, $F(3, 342) = 145.78$, $p < 0.001$

Table 2 presents the Pearson correlation coefficients among awareness, data protection, trust, and effective use of the KIL website. All variables were positively and significantly correlated, indicating that higher levels of awareness and perception of data protection are associated with increased trust and more effective website use. Specifically, awareness correlated moderately with trust ($r = 0.574$, $p < 0.01$) and effective use ($r = 0.512$, $p < 0.01$). Data protection showed the strongest relationship with trust ($r = 0.689$, $p < 0.01$) and a substantial relationship with effective use ($r = 0.611$, $p < 0.01$).

The regression analysis further highlights that awareness, data protection, and trust collectively explain 56.1% of the variance in effective use ($R^2 = 0.561$, $F(3, 342) = 145.78$, $p < 0.001$). Individually, data protection emerged as the strongest predictor ($\beta = 0.362$, $t = 6.33$, $p < 0.001$), followed by trust ($\beta = 0.341$, $t = 5.66$, $p < 0.001$) and awareness ($\beta = 0.278$, $t = 4.30$, $p < 0.001$). These findings suggest that postgraduate students' engagement with the KIL website is significantly influenced by their awareness of privacy policies, the perceived adequacy of data protection measures, and the level of trust they place in the institution's handling of personal information.

In line with previous studies (Adekunle & Olorunfemi, 2020; Mohammed & Bala, 2021), these results confirm that transparent privacy policies and robust data protection practices enhance user trust, which in

turn fosters more effective use of library websites. Therefore, academic libraries must prioritize the communication and implementation of privacy measures to strengthen users' confidence and optimize digital engagement.

Discussion of Findings

The findings of this study reveal important insights into postgraduate students' awareness, perception, and engagement with privacy policies and data protection practices on the Kashim Ibrahim Library (KIL) website.

The analysis of awareness and perception (Table 1) shows that while a majority of students are aware of the existence of KIL's privacy policy (66.8%), fewer respondents found the policy easy to locate and understand (50.9%). This finding indicates a gap in policy transparency and accessibility, which may impede effective user engagement. Similarly, perceptions of data protection effectiveness and trust were moderate, suggesting that while students feel their data is somewhat safeguarded, there is room for enhancement. These results are consistent with Mohammed and Bala (2021), who emphasized that awareness alone is insufficient unless privacy policies are transparent, comprehensible, and actively enforced.

Correlation and regression analyses (Table 2) further demonstrated that awareness, data protection, and trust are significant predictors of effective website use, collectively explaining 56.1% of the variance ($R^2 = 0.561$, $p < 0.001$). Data protection emerged as the strongest predictor ($\beta = 0.362$), highlighting that users prioritize tangible safeguards over mere awareness of policies. Trust also significantly influenced engagement ($\beta = 0.341$), confirming that users' confidence in institutional data handling practices is critical to encouraging consistent use of library websites. This aligns with prior research indicating that trust is central to digital library adoption and ethical information management (Adekunle & Olorunfemi, 2020; Chowdhury, 2020). The findings underscore that while the KIL website has taken preliminary steps toward implementing privacy policies and data protection measures, there are noticeable gaps in policy clarity,

accessibility, and perceived effectiveness. These gaps may undermine postgraduate students' confidence and limit the full potential of the library's digital resources.

Conclusion

This study examined the awareness, perception, and impact of privacy policies and data protection practices on the effective use of the Kashim Ibrahim Library website by postgraduate students, while the KIL website demonstrates a foundational commitment to privacy and data protection, enhancing transparency, strengthening safeguards, and fostering user trust are critical for optimizing postgraduate students' engagement and ensuring regulatory compliance.

Recommendations

Based on the findings, the following recommendations are proposed:

- 1- The result in table 1 shows that while 66.8% of postgraduate students are aware of the KIL privacy policy, only 50.9% agree that it is easy to locate and understand (mean = 3.45). Therefore, the library should revise and prominently display its privacy policy on the website, using clear, user-friendly language to ensure all users can easily access and comprehend it. This will improve awareness, foster understanding, and support informed engagement with digital resources.
- 2- The findings in table 2 indicates that data protection is the strongest predictor of effective website use ($\beta = 0.362$, $t = 6.33$, $p < 0.001$) and has a strong positive correlation with trust ($r = 0.689$, $p < 0.01$). This suggests that postgraduate students' engagement with the KIL website is heavily influenced by confidence in data safeguarding. The library should therefore implement robust technical and administrative data protection measures, such as encryption, secure authentication, and regular system audits, while clearly communicating

these safeguards to users. This will enhance trust and encourage more effective use of the website.

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