

**AVAILABILITY AND ACCESSIBILITY OF ELECTRONIC INFORMATION
RESOURCES: A PANACEA FOR EFFICIENT UTILIZATION BY
POSTGRADUATE STUDENTS IN FEDERAL UNIVERSITY LIBRARIES IN
SOUTH EAST**

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Abstract

The study investigated on accessibility and utilization of Electronic Information Resources (EIRs) by postgraduate students in federal universities libraries in South-East Nigeria. This study adopted descriptive survey research design. The population of the study consisted of 2,027 post-graduate students in the federal universities in Southeast Nigeria. The study sample size was 1000 postgraduate students drawn through the use of proportionate stratified sampling technique. Three exploration questions directed the review. Data was collected using a structured questionnaire titled “Accessibility and Utilization of Electronic Information Resources” (AUEIR). The instrument was properly validated by three (3) experts. The reliability of the instrument was obtained using Alpha that yielded co-efficient values of 0.89, 0.78, 0.74, 0.89, 0.88 and 0.79 respectively for the five clusters and an overall value of 0.83 which was considered high enough to judge that the instrument is reliable. Frequency counts and percentages were used to answer research question one while mean and standard deviation was used to answer research questions two and three. The results showed that accessibility of electronic information like CD-ROM, web, WWW, and e-mails were used generally while accessibility of electronic information like e-journals, e- books, and e- catalogues were utilized in university libraries in South East, Nigeria. The results of this study revealed that the purpose to which electronic information resources are utilized included using library’s electronic information resources to source materials for research/project writing, utilizing library’s electronic information resources to do class assignments, amongst others. The major hindrances to the utilization of electronic information resources observed by postgraduate students in federal universities in South East, Nigeria are inadequate computer terminals; constant challenge of network connection. In view of these, some recommendation s were made, for the Federal government, university authorities and library management to improve massively on the bandwidth and promote the internet connections for easy retrieval of e-resources by students and other library clientele/users.

Keywords: Availability, Accessibility, Utilization, Information Resources,
Students, Libraries

Introduction

Availability and accessibility of electronic information resources (EIR) is the core channel for seeking and sourcing for information by library users, most especially in federal university libraries in South East, Nigeria. This is because availability of EIR in libraries provides users easy access to information needed, which enhance research, teaching, learning, and studies. The accomplishments of these duties depend largely on the available library resources. However, without the availability and accessibility of EIR, federal university libraries may not be able to deliver effective and efficient utilization of these resources that will enhance teaching, learning and research processes that federal university libraries are purposely established for. Availability of electronic resources refers to the presence of books and non-book resources in the library for immediate use.

Library is referred as a repository of various forms of recorded information which may be in print and non-print formats such as books, periodicals, reference materials, manuscripts, magazines, theses, gazettes etc. In addition, Nebeolise, 2019 referred library as a store house or an institution whose primary function is to collect, organize and disseminate information materials to clientele. The originality of printed books consisted in the collection of clay tablets dated back to 5000 years which eventually transformed into paper and this was progressively changed into other pieces of literature that have been kept in the Library (Yebowaah & Plockey, 2017).

Library resources involve materials such as books, periodicals that are provided for use by the people (Nebeolise, Okonkwo, & Alor, 2019). In other words, assessing these materials online with the aid of computer and Internet made them non-printed resources. Many non-printed materials such as micro-forms, films, magnetic tapes, slides, video tapes, and data are stored in electronic media like discs; CD-ROMs may be available in the libraries (Igvesi, 2010). The position libraries played in both past and late times makes them the foundation of instructive establishments (Vilgrand and George, 2017). In this note, Library is described to as the “nerve centre”, the “pivot”, the “heart”, or the “core” of the academic life of a university, where all academic/non-academic activities revolve around the resources that are stocked and exploited by the University community for all academic and administrative endeavors within the academia (Ishola & Obadare).

The academic library consequently compiles materials, distributed and uncirculated (unpublished), print and non-print, in some profundity and internationally in practically all fields of information (Igvesi, 2010). In different words, aside from the way that university libraries give required information sources and understanding materials, they simultaneously advance instructing, learning and exploration capacities through other different means, for

example, credit administrations, interlibrary loaning administrations and particular dispersal of information (Owolabi, Idowu, Okocha and Ogundare, 2016). Further their study stated that the university library should have the option to give past, quick and expected data (both in published and unpublished format) in fulfilling the objectives of the university. Hence, the primary motivation behind the university library is to help the goal of the university which is to advance educating, learning and exploration using electronic information.

It is apparent that the current upset of electronic information drives are presently basic issues that libraries, particularly in the scholastic environment can never again bear to crease their hands assuming they should keep on leftover pertinent in this advanced computer age. This is so on the grounds that the appearance of innovation has brought colossal changes for all intents and purposes in all part of human undertaking, including schooling. Libraries are steadily laying out asset sharing to diminish cost and meet the prerequisites of client requests (Prakash, 2017). This lays out an immediate connection among libraries and data administrations with joint impact on information disclosure and spread in the advanced period.

The utilization of data innovation has worked on the administrations of different libraries altogether. Moreover, the utilization of data innovation in libraries is giving open doors to clients to get to and use both web-based information and different administrations actually (Saikia & Gohain, 2013). Continuation of this, current libraries have both print and non-print records with contraptions and gear used to get to data (Kumar, 2016). A portion of the hardware include: PCs, digitization machines, CD-ROMs, scanners, printers and web which have contributed enormously to make the change of libraries a triumph (Dar, Jealani, Mir & Ganaie, 2017). In addition, advanced libraries have changed into computerized and virtual libraries where books, diaries and magazines have changed into digital books, e-diaries, and e-magazines which have expanded the worldwide dispersal of data (Abinew & Vuda, 2013). This course of change is viewed as electronic data information. As per Thanuskodi (2012), electronic data information is a wide scope of items going from electronic periodicals to CD-ROMs, from mailing rundown to data sets, every one of them having a typical component of being utilized and at some point changed by a PC. Bassey & Odu (2015), characterized the availability electronic information as the electronic presentation of data which can be gotten to through electronic framework and PC organization.

Electronic information is information materials in the library that must be gotten to electronically, with the utilization of Information and Communication Technology (ICT) offices (Ishola & Obadare, 2014). With regards to this review, electronic data information are those materials that require PC access, whether through a PC, centralized computer, or handheld cell phone utilized by postgraduates. Instances of the electronic data information as regularly counselled by student includes: Internet, Compact Disc (CD)-ROM data sets, online data sets, Online Public Access Catalogues (OPACs), electronic-journals, electronic books and digitized materials. More so, in contemporary library practice, data requirements of students

and information searchers are met through a plenty of data sources particularly with Electronic Information Resources (EIRs) overwhelming because of their capacity to be gotten to in any way whatsoever (Ukachi, 2013).

University libraries specifically provide these resources to cater for the academic needs of the university community. These resources give space for current and exceptional data to be gotten to effectively, convenient and from a distance without mandatory eye to eye contact with the supplier. Clearly libraries in Nigeria are to guarantee that understudy's approach direct data portrayed by being convenient, state-of-the-art, simple to get to and, in any way whatsoever (Ukachi, 2013).

Electronic data information in a library assumes a noticeable part in working with admittance to required data by the clients in a simple and quick way. Electronic data information is essential for postgraduate understudies principally in light of the fact that they give better, quicker and more straightforward admittance to data than data got to through print media. Furthermore, electronic data information assists with finishing clients (postgraduate understudies) to; extend availability, increment ease of use and adequacy; lay out new ways for understudies to utilize data to be more useful in their scholarly exercises; stay informed concerning current improvements in their particular subject fields (Khalil, 2014). For these overarching jobs and advantages of electronic data information to be achieved, its accessibility in different university libraries is emphatically supported for.

It is vital to take note of that accessibility of electronic data information assume vital part in deciding the moderate force of university libraries with regards to data. As indicated by Joseph & Philias (2011), accessibility is characterized as broad quality of an asset that is committable, operable, or usable upon request to play out its assigned or required capacities. Accessibility is characterized as something ready to be utilized or can undoubtedly be found and utilized. As such, they are that information that are committable or usable upon request to fill assigned or required role (Longman in Ukachi, 2013). Seth and Parida (2012) forewarned that accessibility of electronic data information don't consequently mean data use on the grounds that with the exception of a data source is made accessible to end client, it can't be utilized.

In this light, utilization is referred having the option to utilize what is accessible when it is required (Jimba and Atinmo, 2010). Electronic data information might be accessible in the library and, surprisingly, distinguished bibliographically as pertinent to one's subject of interest, yet the client will most likely be unable to lay hands on them in view of availability issues. For this reason, Ugah (2008) believed that the more available information sources are the more probable they are to be utilized and users will generally utilize information sources that require minimal work to get to. It is vital that for PG understudies to utilize e-information, they should be talented in data and correspondence advancements (ICTs) applications in order to acquire autonomous utilization of different electronic data information all over the planet.

Yet, one should not forget in a rush that notwithstanding the way that universities in South-East Nigeria has made a few huge interests in e-information in their university libraries, the utilization of data information by postgraduate understudies in university libraries accompanies two or three difficulties like; unfortunate broadcast communications foundations; unfortunate client abilities in exploring e-information; significant expense of web membership and confined admittance to e-information. Perceptions have shown that most electronic data information in the Nigerian universities were under-used (Olusanya, 2014, Aminu, 2016;). In light of this reason, one start to contemplate that since the presentation of CD-ROM, the quantity of clients of CD-ROM office is still tiny as against the quantity of enrolled library clients (Ekenna &Ukpebor, 2012). This they uncovered may be expected to under-usage of e-information. Subsequently, the core of this study is to explore the empirical study on accessibility and utilization of purpose of electronic data information by postgraduate understudies in federal university libraries in South-East, Nigeria.

Statement of the Problem

Electronic information resources could be available in the library and also identified bibliographically as relevant to one's field of interest, but the user may not be able to lay hands on these resources because of accessibility challenges. Previously, information was fundamentally introduced in paper formats and presently, information is produced at a dramatic rate and the need to make them promptly available and accessible, all turned into an issue, and in a bid to conquer this issue, attracted the journey for an elective media for holding and engendering information. With the Internet and other electronic information resources (EIRs), media like CD-ROM, databases, and OPAC, information can be put away in one spot and be made all the while accessible for utilization. Notably, EIRs being available in various formats in libraries are of great advantage to the academic and research needs of postgraduate students of library and information science.

Despite the benefits, most libraries are still battling to take advantage of these open doors given by electronic information towards user's satisfaction. Personal observation has shown that university libraries under study has provided some EIRs like computers, OPAC, CD-ROM databases, PowerPoint projectors in addition to internet services, but it seems as if postgraduate students are yet to take full advantage of these facilities for research studies and learning. The question is could it mean that postgraduate students of library and information science do not utilize these e-resources available to them? Could it be that they do not know about these EIRs and assuming they knew? Can anyone explain why utilization is ruined? Could it be that they are not aware of these EIRs and if they are aware why is it that usage is hindered? These amongst other questions prompted the researcher to determine the availability and accessibility of electronic information resources by postgraduate students in federal university libraries in South-East, Nigeria.

Purpose of the Study

The purpose of this research is to ascertain the Availability, Accessibility and utilization of information resources by postgraduate students in federal university libraries in south east. Specifically, the study will:

1. Determine the electronic information resources available at libraries disposal by the post graduate students in federal university libraries in South-East, Nigeria?
2. To ascertain is the level of utilization of the resources by the post graduate students in federal university libraries in South-East, Nigeria?
3. What are the main obstacles to postgraduate students using EIRs at federal university libraries in South-East, Nigeria?

Research Questions:

The following research questions guided the study:

1. What are the electronic information resources available at libraries disposal in federal university libraries in South-East, Nigeria?
2. To what level and extent do PG students make use of readily electronic information resources in federal university libraries in South-East, Nigeria?
3. What are the major challenges to the utilization of EIRs by postgraduate students in federal university libraries in South-East, Nigeria?

Methodology:

The descriptive survey research design as adopted for the study. According to Nworgu (2015), descriptive survey design involves the collection of extensive data from the population for the purpose of describing and interpreting an existing situation in relation to the population. The design is considered appropriate for the study because the study aimed at finding out the opinions of postgraduate students on the accessibility and extent of utilization of electronic information resources in federal universities in South-East, Nigeria.

The population of the study was carried out in South East, Nigeria. South East is one out of the six geo-political zones in Nigeria consisting of the following states: Anambra, Imo, Enugu, and Ebony. The population of this study comprised 5,027 postgraduate students in the federal universities in South East, Nigeria. A sample size of one thousand (1000) was drawn from five thousand and twenty- seven (5,027) postgraduate students in the federal universities in South East, Nigeria. The zones are Anambra(177), Enugu (489) and Imo(334) respectively. A total of 880 copies of questionnaire were retrieved from a total of 1000 copies of questionnaire distributed. This showed 88% retrieval rate.

The instrument used for the study was a structured questionnaire designed by the researcher. The instrument was used for data collections. The questionnaires were constructed on a two- point rating scale of Accessible (A) and Not Accessible (NA) for research question one (1). The questionnaire for research question two (2) were constructed on a five-point Likert scale of Very Great Extent (VGE, 5points); Great Extent (GE, 4points); Moderate Extent (ME, 3points); Low Extent (LE, 2points); and Very Low Extent (VLE, 1point).

Presentation of Result:

The results of the study were presented below:

Research Question 1: What are the electronic information resources available at libraries disposal in federal university libraries in South-East, Nigeria?

Table 1: Respondents' percentage responses on the electronic information resources available at libraries disposal in federal university libraries in South East, Nigeria (*N* = 880)

S/N	Shows which of the following electronic information resources available at libraries disposal in university library	Available		Not Available	
		F	%	F	%
1	Electronic-journals	804	91.6	76	8.6
2	Electronic-books	808	92.0	72	8.1
3	Compact-Disc-ROM	748	85.2	132	15.0
4	Online-database e.g., AGORA, HINARI, ERIC etc.	744	84.7	136	15.4
5	Internet	601	68.5	279	31.7
6	Electronic-catalogue (OPAC)	637	72.6	243	27.6
7	Electronic-magazines	141	16.1	739	83.9
8	Electronic-serials	92	10.5	788	89.5
9	WWW	659	75.1	221	25.1
10	Electronic-images	222	25.3	658	74.7
11	Electronic-dissertations and theses	180	20.5	700	79.5
12	Electronic-mails	792	90.2	88	10.0
13	Electronic-audio visual resources	118	13.4	762	86.5
14	References Database	82	9.3	798	90.6

From Table 1, it was observed that the response feedbacks by the respondents openly showed that electronic-journals with 804 (91.6%), electronic-books with 808 (92%), Compact Disc-ROM with 748 (85.2%), online access database with 744 (84.7%), internet with 601 (68.5%), e-catalogue (OPAC) with 637 (72.6%), WWW with 659 (75.1%) and electronic-mails with 792 (90.2%) were available. It further revealed that e-magazines with 141 (16.1%), e-serials with 92 (10.5%), electronic-images with 222 (25.3%), electronic-dissertations and thesis with 180 (20.5%), electronic-audio visual resources with 118 (13.4%) and online references

database with 82 (9.3%) were likely not available in federal university libraries in South East, Nigeria.

Research Question 2: To what level and extent do PG students make use of readily electronic information resources in federal university libraries in South-East, Nigeria?

Table 2: Post Graduate students' mean and standard deviation ratings on the level and extent post graduate students make use of available information resources in federal university libraries in South East, Nigeria (*N* = 880)

S/N	Shows the level and extent to which you make use of the following available information resources in federal university libraries	$\bar{X}$	SD	Remarks
1	Electronic-journals	1.75	1.09	Low level
2	Electronic-books	2.31	0.94	Low level
3	Compact Disc-ROM	3.67	0.96	Great level
4	Online Access database e.g., AGORA, HINARI, ERIC etc.	2.68	0.83	Moderate level
5	Internet	4.71	0.94	Very Great level
6	Electronic-catalogue (OPAC)	2.23	0.91	Low level
7	WWW	3.74	0.90	Great level
8	Electronic-mails	3.79	1.01	Great level

The item-by-item assessments of postgraduate students' utilization of the electronic information resources available in federal university libraries are shown in Table 2's data analysis. The analysis of the results showed that the item internet, with a mean score of 4.71, was rated to a very high level; the items CD-ROM, WWW, and e-mails, with mean scores of 3.67, 3.74, and 3.79, respectively, were rated to a great level; the item online database, with a mean score of 2.68, was rated on a moderate level; and the items 25, 26, and 30, with mean scores of 1.75, 2.31, and 2. This result analysis indicates that PG students utilize electronic information resources including CD-ROMs, the World Wide Web, and e-mails to a significant extent. Similar to item 27, with a mean score of 2.68, demonstrates that a modest amount of use was made of the online database.

Additionally, the items 25, 26, and 30 with mean scores of 1.75, 2.31, and 2.23 correspondingly showed that PG students at the federal university libraries in South East, Nigeria used e-journals, e-books, and e-catalogues to a low degree. The standard deviation ratings of 0.83 to 1.01 indicate that the PG students' replies were uniform in character.

Research Question 3: What are the main obstacles to postgraduate students using EIRs at federal university libraries in South-East, Nigeria?

Table 3: Respondents' mean and standard deviation ratings on main obstacles to the utilization of EIRs by PG students in federal universities (n = 880)

S/N	Items on hindrances to the use of EIRs	$\bar{X}$	SD	Remarks
1	The library has limited computer terminals	2.69	0.99	Agreed
2	The interface to the resources are not user friendly	2.93	1.01	Agreed
3	Constant problem of network connection hinders access	2.93	0.99	Agreed
4	There are restrictions on websites	2.75	0.94	Agreed
5	Complicated logging-in procedure makes access very difficult	2.73	0.89	Agreed
6	There is copyright management problem	2.74	0.88	Agreed
7	Low bandwidth problem frustrates access to the resources	3.78	0.92	Strongly agreed
8	Incessant power outage makes access difficult	3.69	0.93	Strongly Agreed
9	Constant breakdown of equipment	2.77	0.90	Agreed
10	Inadequate skilled personnel	2.62	0.95	Agreed

The difficulties to the use of EIRs at federal university libraries in South East, Nigeria, are examined item by item in the result analysis in Table 3. The examination of the results showed that item 43, with a mean score of 3.78, was highly supported, while the remaining items, with mean ratings of 2.69, 2.93, 2.93, 2.75, 2.73, 2.74, 2.77, and 2.62, were all found to be in agreement. This indicates that PG students concur that there are difficulties using EIRs in South East Nigerian federal universities. The standard deviation values, which ranged from 0.88 to 1.01, indicate that the replies of PG students were uniform.

Findings

Based on the analysis of data, the following findings were made:

1. The available EIR in university libraries in South East, Nigeria included e-journals, e-books, CD-ROM, online database, internet, e-catalogue, WWW and e-mails while e-magazines, e-serials, e-images, e-dissertations and thesis, e-audio visual resources and references database were inadequate.
2. Available electronic information resources like CD-ROM, internet, WWW and e-mails were used to a high level while available electronic information resources like e-journals, e-books and e-catalogues were used to a low level in university libraries in South East, Nigeria.
3. PG students agreed to all the items as regards hindrances on the use of electronic information resources in federal universities in South East, Nigeria.

Summary

The results show that PG students in federal universities in South East agreed that EIR such as e-magazines, e-serials, e-images, e-dissertations and thesis, e-audio visuals and

references database were inadequate. There are variations of agreement in both results which tend to the fact that some postgraduate students still develop negative attitudes (such as self-concepts, beliefs, prior experience) towards the degree of use of EIR. In addition, among other challenges, interrupted power supply was ranked the highest that hindered the accessibility of electronic information resources effectively which contributed in the low degree of the usability of these EIR by postgraduate students in South East Nigeria.

Conclusion:

In order to acquire the ideal, contemporary, and forward-thinking information necessary for academic brilliance, postgraduate students at Federal institutions in the South-East must use the library's electronic resources. The study came to the conclusion that electronic information resources such as e-Journals, digital books, CD-ROM, online databases, Internet, e-catalogue, WWW, and e-mails were available in Federal university libraries, while resources like e-magazines, e-serials, e-images, e-dissertations and theses, e-audio visual resources, and references databases were scarce.

University libraries in South East, Nigeria used the available electronic information resources like e-journals, e-books, and e-catalogues at a low level while the available electronic information resources like CD-ROM, internet, WWW, and e-mails were used to a considerable extent. Similar to this, the causes of the difficulties faced by EIRs have been determined.

The majority of postgraduate students, according to the survey, have intermittent power supplies, few computer terminals, and bandwidth issues, among other things. The recommendations made in this study need to be successfully implemented in order to address the issues impeding the efficient use of EIRs in federal university libraries.

Implications of the Study

The main goal of the study was to determine the electronic information resources that are available, the extent to which they are accessible, how they are used, and any obstacles to their use by graduate students at federal university institutions. The study's findings suggested that if these EIRs are not available, the knowledge of PG students cannot be expanded rather than having substantial knowledge growth.

Furthermore, it was implied that PG students underutilize EIRs such e-books, e-journals, and e-catalogues even when they are available but inaccessible. Additionally, no new literature will be produced.

Admitting the difficulties with the use of EIRs in Federal university libraries, including the lack of planning and finance, limited ICT skills, and inadequately trained people, if these issues are not effectively addressed, graduate students may find themselves unable to deal with the current difficulties in the digital library environment, and their local contents and resources

may not be available through the Global Information Network (GIN). A further issue is that if library managers do not properly plan for EIRs by creating an institutional policy, assuring enough financing and budgeting, and outlining training techniques, this will result in projects being shelved and wasted efforts.

Recommendations

On the basis of the study's findings, the following suggestions were made:

1. The University and library administration should always have a sufficient online subscription to electronic information resources.
2. In addition, librarians must offer orientation programs and training sessions for PG students on how to utilize the electronic information resources in order to enhance the consumption of the resources. To help PG students use the available e-resources at the federal university libraries, system analysts should be stationed locally.
3. Federal university administrators and library managements In order to enable students to use e-information resources should make efforts to increase bandwidth and improve internet connectivity.

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