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USE OF ELECTRONIC INFORMATION RESOURCES AND ACADEMIC PERFORMANCE OF UNDERGRADUATES IN UNIVERSITIES IN BENUE STATE, NIGERIA

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Abstract
This paper investigated the Influence of use of Electronic Information Resources and Academic Performance of Undergraduates of Joseph Sarwuan Tarka and Benue State Universities, Makurdi, Nigeria. Specifically, the study sought to: identify the types of electronic information resources and ascertain the purpose of use of electronic information resources. Two research questions were formulated in-line with the specific purposes of the study. The study adapted a descriptive survey design. The population of the study consisted of 9247 undergraduate registered library users. The sample size for the study was 370 registered undergraduates' library users using stratified proportionate sampling technique. A structured questionnaire was used as instrument for data collection. Data were analyzed descriptively using mean and standard deviation. Findings revealed that electronic information resources such as e-books, e-journals, e- magazines etc were used by undergraduates. It also revealed that undergraduates used electronic information resources for the purpose of finding relevant information in their area of studies, writing their assignments and term papers. Based on the findings of the study, it was recommended that: the management of University Libraries should sustain the manner in which it acquires e-resources and makes them available for optimal use by undergraduates in order to improve their academic performance. This can be appreciated through user orientation programmes as well as marketing of university library resources through flyers, SDI services among others. Also, the management of University libraries should continue to improve and encourage undergraduates to use e-resources by providing services such as Selective dissemination of information (SDI), Current Awareness Service (CAS), exhibition etc. This could go a long way in enhancing academic performance of undergraduates in the study area and beyond. Finally, all ICT components that has to do with e-resources be provided to students as well as encourage those who are not conversant with use of e-resources to participate in various training programmes of the libraries.

Keywords: Electronic Information Resources, academic performance, undergraduates, electronic resources, e-resources

Introduction

Information technology, the defining technology of the 21st century, began reshaping library and information services in the latter part of the 20th century. Its emergence has fundamentally altered the landscape of librarianship, notably increasing the utilization of electronic resources in university libraries due to the growing demand for relevant information among faculties and students. To effectively respond to this demand, university libraries and librarians have had to redefine their roles and adapt to this global shift. Consequently, university libraries now prioritize investments in electronic resources as highlighted by Alhassan and Macaulay (2015).

According to Adedokun and Fawole (2018), electronic information resources (EIRs) serve as the cornerstone of academic success by providing accurate and timely information, facilitating the retrieval of vast amounts of data crucial for teaching, learning, and research. Topaloglu and Tekkanat (2014) emphasized the importance of individuals who continuously update their knowledge, adapt to changes, and stay abreast of emerging trends. University libraries are tasked with ensuring that students' information needs are met, prompting librarians to prioritize electronic collections such as e-books, e-journals, and electronic reference materials like encyclopedias across various subject areas over print materials. These resources are accessible through computers and related devices.

Adeniran (2013) identified several types of electronic information resources (EIRs) available for students' use, to include: e-journals, e-books, e-reference materials, e-news, e-mail, and Compact Disk Read Only Memory (CD-ROM) databases. Manda and Nawe (N.D) outlined the various purposes for which students utilize electronic resources, including searching for new bibliographic information, accessing full-text articles that were previously unknown, verifying bibliographic details of previously known items, reviewing abstracts, accessing full-text articles retrieved from databases, and browsing tables of contents of journals. Academic performance of students that access the resources is expected to improve.

Yousef (2011) defined academic performance as the level of achievement attained by a student, teacher, or institution in reaching their educational objectives, whether short or long-term. It encompasses excellence across academic disciplines, including both classroom and extracurricular activities such as sportsmanship, confidence, and communication skills. Various criteria indicate academic performance, including procedural knowledge (such as acquired skills) and declarative knowledge within an educational system, as well as curricular-based factors like grades or performance on educational achievement tests, and cumulative indicators like certificates.

Statement of the Problem

The advent of electronic information resources has revolutionalised the way information is accessed and used globally as people in different sectors of the economy and organisations such as businessmen, politicians, entertainers, doctors and others

professionals prefer accessing electronic resources such as e-journal, e-books, e-reference materials, e-news among others to the print resources due to its convenience, multi-access capabilities and unrestricted access to information to satisfy their daily information needs. Undergraduates are also not left out as they also use electronic resources for academic activities such as assignments, term papers, seminars, project writing and studying for their examinations. This is the global perspective of users of electronic resources which the students in the study area are also involved with impeccable results.

Despite the benefits of use of electronic resources to students generally and undergraduates in particular for enhancement of their academic performance, the researchers observed that majority of undergraduates seemed not to be aware of e-resources in their university libraries as evident in delay in submission of their assignments, projects and term papers while some contract cyber cafe operators who are not knowledgeable in their fields or surf the Internet and write for them which they end up scoring low grades or failing. Also, the low performance of students in the study areas according to empirical evidence is due to the fact that they do not use electronic resources for personal as well as academic purpose as evident in their low performance.

It is against this backdrop that this study was carried out with a view to investigate use of electronic information resources and academic performance by undergraduates of Benue State University and Joseph Sarwuan Tarka Universities Makurdi to determine the source of low academic performance overtime. In addition, the study perceived that if immediate and precise steps are not taken to address the source of the perceived low performance of undergraduates, the institution's aims and objectives may not be achieved.

Purpose of the Study

The general purpose of the study was to investigate the use of electronic information resources and academic performance of undergraduates in universities in Benue State, Nigeria. Specifically, the study sought to:

1. identify the types of electronic information resources used by undergraduates in universities in Benue State to enhance their academic performance
2. ascertain the purpose of use of electronic information resources by undergraduates in the study area

Research Questions

1. What are the types of electronic information resources used by undergraduates in universities in Benue State to enhance their academic performance?
2. What is the purpose of use of electronic information resources by undergraduates in the study area?

Literature Review

Electronic Information Resources (EIRs) are the bedrock of academic success as they provide accurate and timely information for better educational outcomes and aid in

and Mabawonku, 2013). An electronic resource is defined as a resource which requires computer access or any electronic product that delivers a collection of data refer to full text bases, electronic journals, image collections, other multimedia products and numerical, graphical or time based, as a commercially available title that has been published with an aim to being marketed. These may be delivered on CD ROM, on tape, via Internet and so on (Baskar, 2017).

Sharma (2018) posited that electronic resources are the electronic representation of information. They are available in various forms like e-books, digital libraries, online journal magazines, e-learning tutors and online tests. Because of their effective presentation with multimedia tools, these e-resources have become important and effective sources of information. Electronic resources form collection of information in libraries as full text databases, e-journals, image collections, multimedia in the form of CD, tape, Internet, web technology, e-discussions, e-news, data archives, e-mail, even online chatting. E-resources are convenient to use and make research a lot easier. In the process, they enable one to search for information at a faster rate because of the use of search engines as opposed to manual searches in the library using catalogues. He further reported that e-resources are "materials consisting of data and/ or computer program(s) encoded for reading and manipulation by a computer by the use of a peripheral device directly connected to the computer or remotely via network such as the Internet. The category includes software applications, electronic texts, bibliographic databases, etc." (Sharma, 2018, pg. 163-172).

On the other hand, Yusuf, Onifade and Bello (2016) maintained that academic performance can be understood as the quantifiable and apparent behaviour of a student within a definite period and is an aggregate of scores fetched by a scholar in various evaluations through class tests, mid and end of semester examinations etc. Narad and Abdulla (2016) posited that academic performance is the knowledge gained which is assessed by marks by a teacher in line with educational goals to be achieved over a specific period of time.

Electronic information resources are products of information and communication technologies and they have been found relevant to the learning and research process in universities. Hence, it's universal acceptable in the world of research especially with the university education. Scholars have need for electronic information resources, undergraduates for instance, make high use of EIR among Nigerian universities. Various electronic information resources used for academic purposes include CD-ROM, Internet/www, online public access catalogue (OPAC), Local Area Network (LAN), Wide Area Network (WAN), wire radio phone, portals, modems, e-newspaper, digital libraries, online academic databases, e-dissertation, e-theses among others.

Thanuskodi (2012) opined that e-resources are available in various forms like e-books, digital libraries, online journal magazine, e-learning tutors and online test. Isiakpona, and Ifijeh (2012) highlighted Health Inter Network Access to Research Initiative (HINARI), Access to Global Online Research in Agriculture (AGORA), Online Access to Research in the Environment (OARE) as some of the university library

electronic databases. Adeniran (2013) mentioned the following types of electronic resources; internet source, Online Databases, CD-ROM, OPAC (Online Public Access Catalogue) and E-Journals. Furthermore, Sukula (2010) submitted that various types of e-resources used in higher institution libraries are: database; e-journal; e-books, e-news; e-image; e-music and sound collection; data/GIS; academic commons; e-reference; subject guides.

Electronic resources play a very important role in education for learning and teaching both for students and academic staff. Owolabi, Idowu, Okocha and Ogundare (2016) noted that electronic information resources offer today's students new opportunities not available to previous generations. In this era of globalization where teaching and learning is driven by ICT, electronic resources are invaluable research tools that complement the print-based resources in a traditional library setting (Owolabi et al, 2016). Electronic information resources is a catalyst to access information resources that might be restricted to users due to geographical location, finances and lack of print resources, access to more current information, and provision of extensive links to additional resources or related content. Further, Ellis and Oldman (2005) cited in Bankole, Ajiboye and Otunla (2015) posited that the use of electronic resources has availed researchers and students' access to global information resources, particularly the internet for their scholarly exercises.

Similarly, Okiki and Ashiru (2011) in their study reported the purposes for using electronic resources by undergraduate students to include; for their research projects, gain quick access to information and to search for new things. Tariq and Zia (2014) conducted a study on the use of electronic information resources by the students of Faculty of Science, University of Karachi and Pakistan reported that the students used electronic resources for class assignments and to get updates about their specialty. Moreso, Owolabi, Ajiboye, Lawal and Okpeh (2012) observed that EIRs have increasingly become an invaluable asset in education, research, teaching and learning. They noted that EIRs have transformed the conduct of research and teaching in universities by allowing academic staff opportunity for accessing a wide range of accurate and timely information on various subjects.

Research Methodology

The study adapted a descriptive survey design. Descriptive survey according to Emaikwu (2016) is aimed at collecting data and describing in a systematic manner the characteristics, features, or fact about a given population. The area of study is Benue State University Library and Information Services and Francis Idachaba Library of Joseph Sarwuan Tarka University, Makurdi located in Makurdi, the Benue State headquarters. The population of the study consisted 9247 registered undergraduate library users of the two University libraries under study. (Source: Office of the University Librarian, BSUM and JOSTUM, 2023). The sample size for the study was 370 users which is 4% of the population using proportionate stratified random sampling technique. The instrument used for this study was the researcher's constructed questionnaire titled: Use of Electronic

Information Resources and Academic Performance of Undergraduates Questionnaire (UEIRAPQ). Data for the study was collected using the self-constructed questionnaire. To that end, data collected was analyzed using descriptive statistics of Mean and Standard Deviation to answer the research questions. Any item with a cut off value of 2.50 and above were agreed while those below 2.50 were disagreed.

Analysis of Data

Research Question 1: What are the Types of Electronic Information Resources Used by undergraduates of JSTUM and BSUM to enhance their Academic Performance?

Table 1: Types of electronic information resources used by undergraduates of JOSTUM and BSUM to enhance their academic performance

S/N	Item description	SA	A	D	SD	?	*SD*	Remark
	The following types of EIRs are use by undergraduates:							
1	Electronic books	130	179	41	20	3.13	0.81	Agreed
2	Electronic journals	56	169	137	8	2.74	0.74	Agreed
3	Electronic magazines	68	146	136	20	2.71	0.83	Agreed
4	Electronic newspapers	52	154	120	44	2.58	0.88	Agreed
5	Internet resources	157	180	17	16	3.29	0.75	Agreed
6	Information materials on CD-ROM/DVD	78	128	124	40	2.66	0.93	Agreed
7	E-databases like Ebscohost, AGORA, JSTOR and BioOne,	52	153	121	44	2.58	0.88	Agreed
8	Electronic projects	122	196	20	32	3.10	0.85	Agreed
9	E-conferences proceedings	69	201	72	28	2.84	0.81	Agreed
10	E-newsletters	60	146	108	56	2.57	0.94	Agreed
11	Electronic thesis and dissertations	64	216	58	32	2.84	0.81	Agreed
12	E-reference resources	117	229	20	4	3.24	0.60	Agreed
	Cluster Mean and Std.					**2.86**	**0.82**	**Agreed**

Source: Fieldwork, 2024

Table 1 sought to find out the types of electronic information resources used by undergraduates of JOSTUM and BSUM to enhance their academic performance. Result showed that all the items were above the cut-off point of 2.50 with internet resources, e-reference resources and e-conference proceedings having the highest mean of 3.29, 3.24 and 3.10 respectively. It also indicated an overall Cluster Mean score of 2.86 and standard deviation of 0.82 which is above the cut-off point of 2.50. This shows that respondents in this study agreed to the types of electronic information resources used by undergraduates of JOSTUM and BSUM to enhance their academic performance.

Research Question 2: What is the purpose of use of electronic information resources by undergraduate in the study area?

Table 2: Purpose of use of Electronic Information Resources by Undergraduates

S/N	Item Description	SA	A	D	SD	X	*SD*	Remark
13	Finding relevant information in their area of studies	250	116	4	-	3.66	0.50	Agreed
14	Writing assignments	189	165	12	4	3.46	0.62	Agreed
15	Writing term papers	122	186	58	4	3.15	0.71	Agreed
16	Update knowledge/keep abreast of latest development in the society	172	166	20	12	3.35	0.73	Agreed
17	Research writing	210	132	16	12	3.46	0.73	Agreed
18	Prepare for examinations	189	148	29	4	3.41	0.68	Agreed
19	Complement classroom teaching	144	181	37	8	3.25	0.72	Agreed
20	Seminar presentations	169	135	50	16	3.23	0.84	Agreed
	Cluster Mean					**3.37**	**0.69**	**Agreed**

Source: Fieldwork, 2024

Table 2 seeks to find out the **purpose of** use of electronic information resources by undergraduates. Results indicated that the respondents agreed to all the items on the table with finding relevant information in their area of studies, research writing, writing assignments, update knowledge/keep abreast of latest development in the society having the highest mean of 3.66, 3.46, 3.46 and 3.35 respectively and overall Cluster Mean score of 3.37 and standard deviation of 0.69 which is above the cut-off point of 2.50. This shows that respondents in this study agreed with the purpose of use of electronic information resources by undergraduate students.

Summary of Findings

i. Electronic information resources such as electronic books, electronic journals, electronic magazines, electronic newspapers, information materials on CDROM/dvd, electronic projects, e-conferences proceedings, electronic thesis and dissertations, and e-reference resources were used by undergraduates of JOSTUM and BSUM to enhance their academic performance.
ii. Undergraduates used electronic information resources for the purposes of finding relevant information in their area of studies, writing assignments, writing term papers, update knowledge/keep abreast of latest development in the society, research reporting and prepare for examinations.

Discussion of Findings

Findings from research question one revealed that, the types of electronic

information resources such as Electronic books, journals, magazines, newspapers, Information materials on CD-ROM/DVD and Electronic projects are used by undergraduates of JOSTUM and BSUM to enhance their academic performance. The result of this study is in consonance with the findings of Kavithanjali (2019) who highlighted the types of electronic information resources used by students of Madurai Kamaraj University to include: e-books, e-journals, electronic magazines, e-thesis, e-dissertations, e-newspaper and information on CD-Rom databases among others. The result also corroborates the findings of Thanuskodi (2012) who opined that e-resources are available in various forms like e-books, online journal magazine, e-learning tutors and online test. Furthermore, the researcher's observation in the university libraries under study during the period of instrument administration showed that undergraduates make use of electronic information resources in the university libraries as a good number of students were seeing in the virtual Library otherwise called ICT section of the libraries accessing e-resources and surfing the Internet for other information. The probable reason why the libraries under study have a number of e-resources could be that undergraduates in the study area demand for them and the library management provides them for use.

Findings from research question 2 revealed the purpose of use of electronic information resources to include; for finding relevant information in their area of studies, writing assignments, writing term papers, updating knowledge/keeping abreast of latest development in the society, research reporting and preparing for examinations. The findings of this study is in agreement with the views of Okunlola (2021) who reported that students use electronic/digital resources mostly for reading for examination and seminar presentations. This is also in line with what Tiemo (2017) reported that students used electronic information resource databases to write assignments, prepare for seminar papers, prepare for examinations, and write thesis. Other reasons are: for group discussion, sharing of knowledge, updating of knowledge, recreation or leisure and preparing for conferences. The result of the study also corroborates the findings Okiki and Ashiru, (2011) who in their study reported the purposes for use of electronic information resources by undergraduates to include: for research reporting as well as gain quick access to current and relevant information.

Recommendations

Based on the findings of this study, the following recommendations were made:

a. the management of University Libraries should sustain the manner in which it acquires e-resources and makes them available for optimal use by undergraduates in order to improve their academic performance. This can be appreciated through user orientation programmes as well as marketing of university library resources through flyers, SDI services among others.
b. management of University libraries should continue to improve and encourage undergraduates to use e-resources by providing services such as Selective dissemination of information (SDI), current awareness service (CAS), exhibition etc. This could go a long way in enhancing academic performance of undergraduates in

the study area and beyond. Finally, all ICT components that has to do with e-resources be provided to students as well as encourage those who are not conversant with use of e-resources to participate in various training programmes of the libraries.

Conclusion

The study investigated use of electronic information resources and academic performance of undergraduates of Joseph Sarwuan Tarka and Benue State Universities Makurdi, Nigeria. The study found that undergraduates used e-books, e-journals, e-newspapers, e-magazines etc. The study also found that undergraduates use electronic information resources for the purpose of finding relevant information in their area of studies, writing their assignments, term papers and research works as well as to update their knowledge of latest development in the society.

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