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IMPACT OF ONLINE INFORMATION RESOURCES ON ACADEMIC PERFORMANCE OF UNDERGRADUATE STUDENTS IN UNIVERSITIES IN BENUE STATE, NIGERIA

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Abstract
The study investigated the impact of online information resources on academic performance of undergraduate students in universities in Benue State, Nigeria. Two research objectives and questions guided the study. The study adopted a descriptive survey research design. The population consisted of 7,177 registered undergraduate library users of Joseph Sarwuan Tarka University Makurdi (JOSTUM) and Rev. Fr. Moses Orshio Adasu University Makurdi (MOAUM). The sample size consisted of 359 respondents; represent 5% of the population. The sample size was selected using a multi-stage sampling procedure. Observation checklist and questionnaire were used as instruments for data collection. The questionnaire was trial tested on a sample of 20 undergraduate students of Nasarawa State University Keffi who were not part of the main sample but have characteristics and the overall coefficient of 0.92 was obtained. Data were analyzed using descriptive statistics of mean and standard deviation. The findings of the study showed that 281(80.43%) respondents said online information resources are available while 69(19.57%) said online information resources are not available in university libraries, all the identified online information resources were utilized by undergraduate students for their academic work, undergraduate students highly utilized online information resources for academic performance and utilization of online information resources has a high impact on academic performance.
Keywords: Online Information Resources, Academic Performance, Undergraduate Students Universities

Introduction

Online information resources refer to library's information materials which are in electronic form which include electronic books (e-books); electronic newspapers (e-newspapers); electronic journals (e-journals) as well as internet resources. They also consist of databases, magazines, archives, thesis, conference papers, government papers, scripts and monographs in an electronic form (Edem and Edem 2025). Online information resources are element of infrastructure that enables the transaction of certain selected significance and relevant data, prepared so as to provide content and information services that can be used directly by the users**.** Online information resources are resources that can be accessed through the internet-connected devices such as electronic journals (e-journals), electronic books (e-books), electronic dictionaries (e-dictionaries), animations, online databases, locally loaded databases, websites, CD-ROM, electronic text (e-text), electronic news (e-news), electronic image (e-images) and electronic music (e-music) are seen as example of online resources (Ihekwoaba, 2022).

Online resources provide students with new opportunities that earlier generations did not have. Online resources could be used to encourage students to learn actively and independently while also collaborating with others. According to Ogunbodede and Oribhabor (2022), online information resources have the potential to increase students' academic performance by providing them with appropriate and up-to-date information items. The backbone of teaching, learning and research in any discipline is online information resources as such it is expected that undergraduate students utilize online information resources in the library to meet all their information needs and academic excellence. Online resources have been considered as one of the most essential sources of information for students as they offer them current and relevant information on a variety of topics in libraries. The importance of online information resources has no effect if they are not available and accessible to students.

Information availability through the internet in a university library possess a great advantage because electronic documents may be distributed, saved, and retrieved whenever needed, library services are incorporated into local, regional, national, and international networks rather than being restricted to their physical location as a result of availability of the information resources (Okolo, 2024). The backbone of teaching, learning and research in any discipline is online information resources as such it is expected that undergraduate students utilize online information resources in the library to meet all their information needs and academic excellence.

Utilization is to make use of available resources at the individual's disposal. These resources include facilities, equipment and experienced personnel. In a school, the available resources need to be used in such a way that they enable the students to acquire desirable learning competencies to improve academic performance. Utilization of online information resources in teaching and learning may bring about fruitful learning outcome as it may stimulate students' senses and motivates them. According to Olom and Nyiam (2025), proper utilization of educational resources provides teachers with interesting platforms for conveying information since they motivate learners to learn more and more. Utilization of online information resources in the context of this study is the actual patronage of the school technological or electronic facilities, equipment and supplies by the teacher and students in teaching and learning to promote students' academic performance.

The importance of the utilization of online information resources to students and academic libraries cannot be over emphasized. This is because these resources could offer undergraduate students the chance to access relevant and current information from different subject areas. Lawal and Maharazu (2021) maintained that the emergence of online (electronic)

resources has tremendously transformed the handling and management of information in Nigerian academic environments and university libraries in particular. The use of online resources according to Ogo, Nweke, and Omosekejimi (2022), reduces pressure on academic libraries for physical storage space for books and journals and provide unlimited access to users.

Many researchers have established the efficacy of the use of online information resources to students, especially undergraduate students of library studies. For instance, investigating the use of electronic resources by undergraduate students of the Department of Library and Information Science in Delta State University, Tlakula and Fombad (2017) noted that there was a high level of usage of electronic resources by undergraduate students. In Australia, Deng (2010) established various purposes for the use of electronic resources by undergraduate students which includes: gathering information on a specific topic, gaining general information, obtaining answers to specific questions, completing assignments, reviewing literature, writing essays and helping decision making. Such revelation reflects the facts that students are dependent on use of e-resources to meet their academic task.

Utilization of online information resources such as journal articles, electronic resources, books and reference works could affect undergraduate students' academic performance. Students are expected to study further after class instructions in order to collect relevant information for their class assignments, seminars, term papers, dissertations, thesis and projects. All these can be done through the use of library and its information resources. According to Eyiolorunshe and Eluwole (2017) academic library plays essential role in every institution, by offering services to students, researchers and other users. The roles played by academic libraries include providing and maintaining standard intellectual resources that will stimulate users' interest in promoting and adding value to such institution. Academic libraries also provide students with rich online resources which could enhance their academic performance.

Academic performance refers to a student's overall academic achievement or the amount to which he or she has met his or her educational objectives. Academic performance, according to Kumar, Agarwal and Agarwal (2021), is defined as a student's achievement of their educational goals. Every student expects to succeed in their academic endeavours. This implies that utilization of online resources would help students to succeed. Although research indicates that there are hindrances to students' utilization of online resources. Some reasons for the students' inability to access and utilize online resources which include lack of awareness of the availability of online resources at the library, lack of information literacy skills on how to access e-resources, and lack of information and communication technology (ICT) competence among users of online resources.

Academic performance is the major determinant and key feature of educational quality. Academic performance is considered to be the pivot upon which education system revolves. According to Pizarro (2015), academic performance refers to a measure of the indicative and responsive abilities that express in an estimated way, what a student has learned as a result of a process of education or training. Academic performance of students determines the success or failure of any university library. Signh, Malik and Signh (2016) emphasize that academic performance of students has a direct impact on the socio-economic development of a country. Students' academic performance serves as bedrock for knowledge acquisition and the development of skills. It represents achievement outcomes that indicate the extent to which a student has accomplish specific goals that were the focus of activities in instructional environment, especially libraries in universities.

Universities are higher institutions of higher education and research which awards academic degrees in several academic disciplines (Federal Republic of Nigeria, 2014). There are

public and private universities across the world. The public universities are those established and owned by the government of the nation while the private universities are those established and owned by private individuals and organizations. The purpose of establishing a university is to contribute to national development through high manpower training and to develop the intellectual capacity of individuals to understand and appreciate their local and external environment (FRN, 2014). The public universities in Nigeria also appear to be spending huge amounts of money to subscribe to online resources with the aim of satisfying the teaching, learning and research needs of the staff and students, however, it appears that libraries in Nigerian public universities are deficient in the use of online resources such as textbook, journals and magazines. One of the major aims of utilizing online resources by Nigerian universities is to promote academic excellence among the students.

Students in any university are guided for effective learning which may be supported by provision of online information resources in university libraries. Online information resources help for development of students with the spirit of enquiring knowledge through training and research in an atmosphere of intellectual independence and individual creativity with a strong sense of group cooperation (Lateef, Omotoso & Owolabi, 2013). Research establishes that students were motivated to use electronic resources in their university libraries because they found them to be more informative, easy to access and use, saves time, more useful and less expensive. In Benue State of Nigeria, there are public universities that promote the teaching and learning among undergraduate students. These universities seem to take priority in enhancing academic performance of undergraduate students through utilization of online resources.

In modern era of information technology, students' academic performance may best be improved through utilization of online resources. Despite the significance of online resource, it appears the utilization of these resources in universities in Benue State has not been fully achieved as it also appears that undergraduate students in recent times still experience low academic performance.

Although, research by Edem and Egbe (2016) indicates that undergraduate students make use of online resources for different purposes including research, assignment, current awareness, information acquisition, e-mail and news acquisition, the extent to which these online information resources are utilized by the undergraduate students in universities in Benue State seems not be well established. It is based on the above gap that this study sought to investigate impact of online information resources on academic performance of undergraduate students in universities in Benue State, Nigeria.

Statement of the Problem

Online information resources have indeed become important to students of higher institutions of learning in accessing up-to-date information at the right time and in the right form globally. They enable students to have access to quality information and offer opportunity to search for online information from multiple files reducing their time spent for looking for information at different times. If properly utilized, online information resources can play an important role in teaching and learning processes at university level and provide assistance to users. This to an extent can enhance students' academic performance.

The emergence of online information resources has transformed the way information is accessed and used globally as people in different sectors of the economy and organisations such as scholars, businessmen, politicians, entertainers, doctors and other professionals prefer accessing electronic resources such as e-books, e-journals, e-dictionaries, animations among others to the

print resources due to its convenience, multi-access capabilities and unrestricted access to information to satisfy their daily information needs. University undergraduate students are also not left out in their desire to use online information resources for academic activities. These set of students uses online information resources for a variety of reasons 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 in with impeccable results.

The researcher observed that despite the benefits of the use of online information resources to students generally and undergraduate ones in particular for enhancement of their academic performance, majority of the undergraduate students seemed not to be using online information resources in their university libraries as they are supposed be using even though huge sums of money spent by the university administration in subscribing to e-resources. This seems to make it difficult for students to write quality projects and seminar papers as well as complete their assignment effectively. It is against this backdrop that this study seeks to investigate impact of online information resources on academic performance of undergraduate students in universities in Benue State to ascertain the source of their low academic performance overtime.

Objectives of the Study

The main objective of the study is to investigate impact of online information resources on academic performance of undergraduate students in universities in Benue State, Nigeria. Specifically, the study sought to:

i. find out online information resources available in university libraries in universities in Benue State.
ii. determine whether undergraduate students utilized online information resources in their academic work in universities in Benue State.

Research Questions

The following research questions guided the study.

i. what are the online information resources available in university libraries in universities in Benue State?
ii. do undergraduate students utilize online information resources in their academic work in universities in Benue State?

Research Methodology

The study adopted a descriptive survey research design and was conducted in Benue State, Nigeria, focusing specifically on the two major universities in the Makurdi metropolis: Joseph Sarwuan Tarka University (JOSTUM) and Rev. Fr. Moses Orshio Adasu University (MOAUM), chosen because they provide online information resources to their users. The population consisted of 7,177 registered undergraduate library students from both universities, with a sample size of 359, representing 5% of the population, which aligns with Cohen, Manion, and Morrison's (2019) recommendation for populations between one hundred and one thousand. Using proportionate stratified random sampling, the sample was divided between JOSTUM (67.8%) and MOAUM (29.05%), calculated by multiplying the sampling frame by the population of each stratum. Data collection instruments included an observation checklist and a structured questionnaire, which was validated by three experts, two from Library and Information Science at MOAUM and one from Test and Measurement at JOSTUM, and reliability was confirmed through

a trial test with 20 similar students from Nasarawa State University Keffi, yielding a high reliability score (cluster mean of 0.92). Data were analyzed using descriptive statistics, specifically mean and standard deviation, to answer the research questions.

Results

Research Question One

What are the online information resources available in university libraries in universities in Benue State?

To answer research question 1, data on online information resources available in university libraries in universities in Benue State were collected and analyzed as presented on Table 1.

Table 1: Frequency and Percentage Count of Online Information Resources available in University Libraries in Benue State

S/N	Item	N	A (%)	NA (%)
1	Electronic books	350	272 (77.71)	78 (22.29)
2	Electronic journals	350	301(86)	49(14)
3	Electronic magazines	350	287 (82)	63 (18)
4	Electronic newspapers	350	254(72.57)	96 (27.43)
5	Electronic dictionary	350	309(88.29)	41 (11.71)
6	Animations	350	276(78.86)	74 (21.14)
7	E-conference proceedings	350	297(84.86)	53 (15.14)
8	E-newsletters	350	226(64.57)	124 (35.43)
9	Electronic projects, thesis and dissertations	350	282(80.57)	68 (19.43)
10	E-reference resources	350	311(88.86)	39(11.14)
	Total	**350**	**281(80.43)**	**69(19.57)**

Source: Field Work (2025)

Data presented on Table 1 shows the online information resources available in university libraries in universities in Benue State. The item by item analysis indicates that the respondents 272(77.71%) said that electronic books is available while 78(22.29%) said not available; 301(86%) said electronic journals are available while 49(14%) said not available; 287(82%) said electronic magazines are available while 63(18%) said not available; 254(72.57%) said electronic newspapers are available while 96(27.43%) said not available; 309(88.29%) said electronic dictionary is available while 41(11.71%) said not available; 276(78.86%) said e-conference proceedings are available while 74(21.14%) said not available; 297(84.86%) said e-newsletters are available while 53(15.14%) said not available; 226(64.57%) said electronic projects are available while 124(35.43%) said not available; 282(80.57%) said thesis and dissertations are available while 68(19.43%) said not available and 311(88.86%) said e-reference resources are available while 39(11.14%) are not available. This result implies that majority of the respondents 281(30.43%) said online information are available while 69(19.57%) said online information resources are not available in university libraries in universities in Benue State.

Research Question Two

Do undergraduate students utilize online information resources in their academic work in universities in Benue State?

To answer research questions 2, data on undergraduate students utilize online information

resources in their academic work in universities in Benue State were collected and analyzed as presented on Table 2.

Table 2: Frequency and Percentage Count of Online Information Resources utilized by Undergraduate Students in their Academic work in Universities in Benue State

S/N	Item	N	U (%)	NU (%)
1	Electronic books	350	341 (97.4)	9 (2.6)
2	Electronic journals	350	339 (96.9)	11(3.1)
3	Electronic magazines	350	324 (92.6)	26 (7.4)
4	Electronic newspapers	350	338 (96.6)	12 (3.4)
5	Electronic dictionary	350	341 (97.4)	9 (2.6)
6	Animations	350	327 (93.4)	23 (6.6)
7	E-conferences proceedings	350	338 (96.6)	12 (3.4)
8	E-newsletters	350	346 (98.9)	4 (1.1)
9	Electronic projects, thesis and dissertations	350	319 (91.1)	31 (8.9)
10	E-reference resources	350	322 (92.0)	28 (8.0)

Source: Field Survey (2025) **Key:** ***N=Number, U=Utilize, NU=Not Utilize***

Data presented on Table 2 shows whether undergraduate students utilize online information resources in their academic work in universities in Benue State. The item by item analysis indicates that 341 (97.4%) respondents utilized electronic books while 9(2.6%) did not utilize, 339(96.9%) utilized electronic journals while 11(3.1%) did not utilize, 324(92.6%) utilize electronic magazines while 26(7.4%) did not utilize, 388(96.6%) utilize electronic newspapers while 12(3.4%) did not utilize, 341(97.4%) utilize electronic dictionary while 9(2.6 %) did not utilize, 327(93.4%) utilize electronic dictionary while 9(2.57%) did not utilize, 327(93.4%) utilized animations while 23(6.6%) did not utilize, 338(96.6%) utilize e-conference proceedings while 12(3.4%) did not utilize, 346(98.9%) utilize e-newsletters while 4(1.1%) did not utilize, 319(91.1%) utilize electronic projects, thesis and dissertations while 31(8.9%) did not utilize and 322(92.0%) utilize e-reference resources while 28(8.0%) did not utilize. Since majority of the respondents utilize all the online information resources, it implies that all the online information resources are utilized by undergraduate students in their academic work in universities in Benue State.

Discussion of Findings

The first findings of this study revealed that majority of the respondents 281(80.43%) said online information resources are available while 69(19.57%) said online information resources are not available in university libraries in Benue State the available online information resources include electronic books, electronic journals, electronic magazines, electronic newspapers, electronic dictionary, animations, e-conferences proceedings, e-newsletters, electronic projects, thesis and dissertations, e-reference resources. This finding agreed with that of Ihekwoaba (2022) which indicated that all *respondents agreed to the availability of all the listed resources in the questionnaire. The finding also agreed with that of Edem* and Edem (2025) **which indicated that** electronic resources were available in University of Calabar Library and postgraduate students utilized them. However, online databases were underutilized and the university library had e-journals, e-books and access to databases and internet resources, while e-journals were the most

often used electronic resources.

The second findings revealed that the online information resources in university libraries in Benue State that students utilize in their research work includes the following, electronic books, electronic journals, electronic magazines, electronic newspapers, electronic dictionary, animations, e-conferences proceedings, e-newsletters, electronic projects, thesis and dissertations as well as e-reference resources. The findings agreed with that of Lawal and Maharazu (2021) which showed that *majority of the respondents use the library information resources for the purpose of obtaining general information, for examination, for assignment and for research, while textbooks were found to be the most utilized library resources by the respondents. The finding also agreed with that of Ogo,* Nweke and Omosekejimi (2022), which indicated that students who learn statistics through Interactive E-book (IE) produced higher scores in academic achievement than students who learn through Traditional E-book (TE).

Conclusion

Based on the findings of the study, it was concluded that online information resources are available in university libraries in Benue State, undergraduate students utilized online information resources in their academic activities, utilization of online information resources has high impact on academic performance of undergraduate students in university libraries in Benue State, there are challenges encountered in the utilization of online information resources on academic performance of undergraduate students and there are strategies to enhance utilization of online information resources on academic performance of undergraduate students in universities in Benue State.

Recommendations

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

1. University administrators should ensure that there are more available online information resources such as electronic books, electronic journals, electronic magazines and many others in university libraries in Benue State. This may help to enhance undergraduate students' academic performance in universities in Nigeria.
2. Undergraduate students should strengthen utilization of online information resources such as electronic books; electronic journals; electronic magazines; electronic newspapers, electronic dictionary, animations; e-conferences proceedings, e-newsletters, electronic projects, thesis and dissertations, e-reference resources in their academic works. This could help them to access relevant information to effectively do their assignments and prepare for semester's examinations.

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