

AVAILABILITY AND UTILIZATION OF ELECTRONIC INFORMATION RESOURCES BY UNDERGRADUATE STUDENTS OF PROF. A.A. RASHEED LIBRARY FEDERAL UNIVERSITY WUKARI, TARABE STATE, NIGERIA.

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Abstract

This study examined availability and utilization of electronic information resources by undergraduate students of Prof. A.A. Rasheed Library. The purpose of the study is to investigate the availability and extent of utilization of electronic information resources. The population for the study is 2056 comprising registered undergraduate students using the library. The study sampled 331 undergraduate students drawn from the seven faculties of the university. The questionnaire was designed and presented to registered undergraduate students using the library. Out of the 331 questionnaire distributed, 250 were filled, returned and used for this study. Data collected were analyzed using descriptive analysis in form of table showing items, frequency and percentage. Findings showed that electronic information resources (e-books, e-journals, e-newspapers, e-magazines etc.) are available, accessible and utilized by undergraduate students. It also revealed high extent of utilization of electronic information resources by undergraduate students although insignificant figures showed low extent and no extent. Results equally showed reasons for utilization which include academic work 77 (30.8%), Assignment 73 (29.2%), Project 55 (22%). Findings from the study also highlighted challenges such as lack of steady power supply, lack of ICT skills, internet connectivity among others which affect effective utilization of electronic information resources. Strategies for the challenges include provision of steady power supply, training of staff and students among others. Based on findings, the study recommended ICT training for staff and orientation for students for optimal utilization of available electronic information resources.

Keywords: University Library, Electronic Information Resources, Undergraduate Students, Availability, Utilization.

Introduction

Originally, library resources were predominantly in print format where users must be physically available in the library to access the resources. But with advent of technology, libraries are beginning to embrace and apply technology to serve their clientele adequately. Technology has succeeded in transforming all spheres of human disciplines and endeavours. Libraries likewise have over the years shifted from analog mode of operation to modern way of serving their clientele. Lewis (2004) described two major transitions in the last fifty years: first, transition from paper to automation; two, transition from automation to electronic library. This shift necessitated the acquisition and organization of electronic (non-print) resources to meet evolving needs. Kumbar, (2021) revealed that today, library resources and services are transforming from conventional collections to global resources provided on demand through the most advanced networking technologies. He stressed further that it is now possible to retrieve information independent of time zones and geographical location and to obtain the most up-to-date information from the form of the library without walls or the virtual library. Libraries, globally, especially university libraries have embraced technology to acquire organize and disseminate adequate and relevant information resources to their community of users. (Osinulu, (2020) pointed out that the emergence of Electronic Information Resources (EIRs) has brought changes to all academic activities in Nigerian Universities.

Thus, university libraries are libraries sited in the universities to provide necessary information resources to support various programmes of the institution as well as help the university achieve its tripartite goal of teaching, learning and research. Igwela, & Opara, (2020) buttressed that one of the reasons of establishing university library in any institution of higher learning is to provide the academic community with relevant information resources in formats that are comprehensive and easily accessible. It therefore means that university libraries are vital for effective academic activities in any given institution. One of the cardinal objectives of a university library is the provision of access to available library information resources both print and non-print resources.

However, this study focuses or centres on electronic (non-print) information resource available in the university library. To align themselves to global and changing trends, university libraries are now poised at providing resources in format (electronic) that will meet such needs adequately. Equally, Jerome and Egbe, (2014) stressed that libraries and information centres have incorporated and adopted various electronic information resources for its collection development to fulfill the requirements of different categories of library users in a better way. In the same vein, Igwela and Opara, (2020) concurred that the emergence of electronic information resources is gradually sweeping away the print forms of information resources. Demand for electronic information resources has made university libraries to provide electronic information resources to serve their users adequately. Similarly, Osinulu, (2020) agreed that the emergence of Electronic Information Resources (EIRs) has brought changes to all academic activities in Nigerian Universities. These electronic information resources could be accessed remotely without being physically present at the library which has greatly improved academic activities

within the university. Furthermore, Abubakar and Mamman, (2020) supported the fact that electronic information resources play vital role in all areas of human endeavours in academic libraries and the academic world has increasingly become more dependent on them. In furtherance of the fact that university libraries have embraced the acquisition and organization of electronic information resources, Faga and Ihuman, (2024) stressed that in the digital age, electronic information resources have become a vital component of academic and research activities, providing undergraduates with a vast array of information to enhance their learning experiences.

Thus, electronic information resources are resources that are in non-print format accessible via computer and other related technological devices. Manjack, Danjani, & Fari, (2019) stressed that electronic information resources are digitized information, facilitated by computers, network connectivity, electricity and other peripheral components and most importantly human beings. Igwela and Opara, (2020) viewed electronic information resources as information materials that appear in electronic arrangement, form and layout and are capable of been shared through networking of computer devices. These electronic information resources include electronic books, electronic journals, electronic newspapers, electronic magazines, databases etc. similarly, Bankole, Ajiboye and Otunla (2015) revealed that electronic information resources consist of information resources provided in electronic formats such as internet, CD-ROM databases, e-books e-journals, Online database, Online Public Access Catalogues, and other computer –based electronic networks. The provision of electronic information resources has over the years meet varied needs adequately as well as enhancing quality of academic activities in higher institution of learning. These resources (electronic information resources) form a major

part of library collection and are provided by university libraries to meet the need of both undergraduate and postgraduate students.

Undergraduate students are individuals currently undertaking their first degree (in the case of university) programme who are yet to graduate from their course of study. These individuals are expected to receive bachelor degrees after passing prescribed courses allotted to a course of study. These programs span from four (4) to five (5) years depending on the course of study. Undergraduate students of a given university are enrollees from various programs in different faculties of the university and these faculties include pure sciences, social sciences, humanities, Medical sciences etc. Universities are expected to provide the necessary facilities and conducive environment for effective teaching, learning and research for the undergraduate students. University library is one of the major facilities responsible for the provision of relevant information resources available and accessible to undergraduate students.

Availability is a state of easily obtaining, accessing or using a particular thing or resources from a collection. In this context, availability has to do with easy access to available information resources that are made accessible through the internet or online platforms. These resources can be accessed and retrieved via computers, laptops, phones or tablets to both undergraduate and postgraduate students using university library. However, this study targets the undergraduate students using Prof. A.A. Rasheed Library, Federal University Wukari, Taraba State. Electronic information resources are major resources provided by university libraries to adequately satisfy and promote effective teaching, learning and research activities. Ankrah and Acheampong, (2017) supported the fact that electronic resources satisfy the unique needs of students, faculty and research scholars faster and at much lower cost than borrowing or purchasing low cost

because they are readily available and online and the delivery of the resources virtually to one's desktop saves time and expense on physical trips to the library. The availability and accessibility of electronic information resources makes their utilization possible and seamless by undergraduate students using the library.

Utilization of electronic information resources can only be possible where such information resources are made available by university libraries. Thus utilization of electronic information resources revolves around prompt access and optimum use of such resources by a library user to effectively satisfy information need. Tariq and Zia (2014) asserted that utilization of electronic information resources refers to the use of electronic information resources with full extent for getting required information through internet. These resources are provided to complement other resources in various formats (print) and to provide timely access to available information resources. Similarly, Olajide and Adio, (2017) stressed that the utilization of electronic information resources in the University libraries is aimed at broadening the range of available information within the library and adding value to the content by making them accessible through digital means so that students, researchers, and the entire members of the university community can access them anytime and anywhere. Kumbar, (2021) pointed out that utilization of electronic information resources has become important in the drive to make information and data transfer available to users. It therefore means that electronic information resources are vital for effective academic activities as remote access can be possible in a timely manner.

Statement of the Problem

The advent of technology has provided avenue for university libraries to provide electronic information resources to adequately satisfy the need and save the time of users. One of the laws of librarianship has been to save time of users and that can be achieved effectively through the application of technology. University libraries now leverage on technology to provide diverse electronic resources such as e-books, e-journals, e-magazine among other relevant electronic resources to satisfy their clientele and enhance scholarship. The demand for electronic information resources has made university libraries to strive to meet this evolving need. Thus, electronic information resources are critical for effective teaching, learning and research experiences. It therefore means that the university libraries are expected to make available and provide access to electronic information resources to their community of users for optimum academic activities. Failure to provide such information resources will invariably hamper teaching, learning and research activities in campuses. What is the state of availability and utilization of electronic information resources in the library? This is the problem that the study seeks to find out.

Research Question

1. What are the types of electronic resources available for undergraduate students using Prof. A.A. Rasheed Library, Federal University Wukari, Taraba State?
2. What are the reasons for utilizing electronic information resources by undergraduate students using Prof. A.A. Rasheed Library, Federal University Wukari, Taraba State?
3. What is the extent of utilization of electronic information resources by undergraduate students using Prof. A.A. Rasheed Library, Federal University Wukari, Taraba State?

4. What are the challenges faced by undergraduate students using Prof. A.A. Rasheed Library in accessing electronic information resources?
5. What are the possible solutions for effective access to electronic information resources?

Review of Related Literature

The increasing quest and dependence on electronic information resources has made university libraries to work toward their availability to meet modern demand. Electronic information resources play vital role in all areas of human endeavors in academic libraries and the academic world has increasingly become more dependent on them (Abubakar and Mamman (2020). It therefore means that the electronic information resources are preferred and have taken prominence over the print resources. In support of this fact, Igwela and Opara, (2020) concurred that electronic information resources are rapidly taking over the traditional information resources in academic libraries as a result of the influence of information technology. In the same vein, Kumbar, (2021) revealed that technology is changing the nature of libraries, and continues to exert a major influence on the strategic direction of libraries in society. University libraries are now poised at ensuring acquisition and application of necessary technologies that will enhance the provision and access to electronic information resources. However, there are quite a number of empirical studies that have been conducted on the availability and utilization of electronic information resources.

Adedokun and Fawole (2018) conducted an investigation on Use of Electronic Information Resources by Undergraduates of National Open University of Nigeria in Ilorin Study Center. The study aimed investigating the use of Electronic information resources among

students of National Open University of Nigeria in Ilorin Study center. The study adopted descriptive design, selected 120 undergraduates from the study center using questionnaire to collect data while data collected were analyzed using frequency counts, percentages and mean scores. The findings revealed that the respondents use electronic mail, e-news, e-books, and CD-ROMs among others. The respondents use e-mail, e-news and e-books frequently while online databases, e-journals and CD-ROMs are used less frequently. The findings equally revealed that the students use e-resources for research, classwork/assignment, to stay informed and for collaboration. Furthermore, financial constraints, erratic power supply, and poor internet connectivity constitute barriers to effective use of EIRs by the students. The study recommended the need for more awareness of the electronic information resources that are available in the library and adequate funding of the universities by the Nigerian government is crucial for the provision of facilities and resources to support learning and research.

Igwela and Opara (2020) carried out a study on the availability and use of electronic information resources by postgraduate students in River State University Library. The study used descriptive survey design and adopted a population two hundred and forty nine (249) postgraduate students. Accidental sampling technique was used to select postgraduate students that patronize the library. The study equally employed structured questionnaire to collect data while frequency count of simple percentages was used to analyse data collected. The result indicated that electronic information resources available include e-book, e-journal and e-theses. Thus, the study recommended that training and retraining of both staff and postgraduate students to enhance effective use of electronic information resources.

Abubakar, Mallo and Suleiman (2020) conducted an investigation on availability and accessibility of information resources in university libraries for students' academic use: a case study of pharmaceutical science students of the university of Jos. The study was aimed at finding out the availability and accessibility of information resources for pharmaceutical students of university of Jos. The study employed survey design, used population of 549 undergraduate students of pharmaceutical science of university of Jos while 55 samples were drawn from the total population. Questionnaire was used to collect data. The data collected for the study was analyzed using simple descriptive statistics using frequency distribution, percentages and mean. Findings from the study showed that most of the information resources were available while some were moderately accessible. Thus the study recommended that the library should sustain the available and accessible information resources, and more information resources be acquired and access provided for students.

Temboke and Diso, (2022) conducted an investigation on availability and accessibility of electronic information resources in federal college of education libraries in Northern Nigeria. The study Pragmatist research paradigm and Triangulation mixed research design to collect qualitative data. Similarly, structured interviews and quantitative data, using a questionnaire were used. Population for the study includes 12 structured interviews and quantitative data, using a questionnaire in the libraries under study. The study also sampled 378 respondents and data collected from the questionnaire administered were analyzed using using descriptive and inferential statistics while data collected through interview were analyzed using thematic analysis with themes and sub-themes. Findings from the study revealed that electronic information resources were found to be available on the platform of e-databases, institutional

repository, e-Granary and CDS and most of the users accessed e-journal, e-newspapers and audio visual resources available while E-manuscripts, e-dissertations/theses/projects, e-discussion and e-images available were not accessible by majority of the respondents. Thus, the study recommended that libraries should acquire relevant resources, provide unlimited access remotely, enhance network facilities, training on search skills should be given to enable users have access and use the resources without difficulty.

Methodology

The study adopted descriptive survey design. The population for the research work comprises of undergraduate students of Prof. A.A. Rasheed Library, Federal University Wukari, Taraba State, totaling 2056. The study sampled 331 undergraduate students drawn from the seven faculties (Faculty of Education, Faculty of Agriculture and Life Sciences, Faculty of Humanities, Faculty of Social Sciences, Faculty of Pure and Applied Sciences, Faculty of Engineering and the Medical College). To obtain accurate data for the study, the questionnaire were used to elicit information from undergraduate students who patronize the university library. The questionnaire was designed and presented to registered undergraduate students using Prof. A.A. Rasheed Library Federal University Wukari, Taraba State.

Out of the 331 questionnaire distributed, 250 were filled, returned and used for this study. Data collected were analyzed using descriptive analysis in form of table showing items, frequency and percentage.

Result

Table 1: Electronic information resources available and utilized by undergraduate students Using Prof. A.A. Rasheed library Federal University Wukari, Taraba State.

Items	Available (A)	Not Available (NA)
E-books	185 (74%)	65 (26%)
E-journals	160 (64%)	90 (36%)
E-newspapers	190 (76%)	60 (24%)
E-magazines	150 (60%)	100 (40%)
E-bibliography	110 (44%)	140 (56%)
E-dictionary	120 (48%)	130 (52%)
Online databases	197 (78.8%)	53 (21.2%)
E-encyclopedias	152 (60.8%)	98 (39.2%)
E-maps	100 (40%)	150 (60%)
CD-ROM database	155 (62%)	95 (38%)

Table 1 show that 185 respondents representing 65% revealed that e-books are available and accessible while 65(26%) revealed that e-books are not available. 160 (64%) indicated that e-journals are available while 90 (36%) not available. 190 (76%) indicated that e-newspapers are available and can be accessed while 60 (24%) indicated that e-journals are not available. 150 (60%) e-magazines are available while 100 (40%) not available. 110 (44%) e-bibliographies are available while 140 (56%) not available. 120 (48%) e-dictionaries are available while 130 (52%) are not available. 197 (78.8%) online databases are available while 53 (21.2%) are not available. 152 (60.8%) e-encyclopedias are available while 98 (39.2%) are not available. 100 (40%) e-maps are available while 150 (60%) are not available. And 155 (62%) respondents indicated that CD-ROM databases are available while 95 (38%) revealed that CD-ROM databases are not available.

Therefore, the result shows that must of the electronic information resources are available, accessible and being utilized by undergraduate students especially e-books (74%), e-journal (64%), e-newspapers (76%), e-magazines (60%), online databases (78.8%) and CD-ROM databases. Others include e-bibliography (44%), e-dictionary (48%) and e-map (40%).

These electronic information resources are available and utilized by undergraduate students using Prof. A.A. Rasheed Library Federal University Wukari, Taraba State, Nigeria.

Table 2: Reasons for utilizing electronic information resources by undergraduate students using Prof. A.A. Rasheed Library Federal University Wukari, Taraba State.

Items	Frequency	Percentages
Academic work	77	30.8%
Assignment	73	29.2%
Leisure	20	8%
Self-development	25	10%
Project work	55	22%
Total	250	100

Table 3 above revealed that 77 representing 30.8% of the respondents utilize electronic information resources for academic work, 73 respondents representing 29% utilize electronic information resources for assignment, 20 respondents representing 8% utilize electronic information resources for leisure, 25 respondents representing 10% utilize electronic information resources for self-development while 55 representing 22% of the respondents utilize electronic information resources for project work.

Reasons for the utilization of electronic information resources by undergraduate students using Prof. A.A. Rasheed Library federal University Wukari, Taraba State revealed that 77 respondents representing 30.8% utilize electronic information resources for academic purposes, 73 respondents representing 29.2% utilize electronic information resources for assignments. Others include 20 respondents representing 8% who utilize electronic information resources for leisure, 25 (10%) utilize electronic information resources for the purpose of self-development

while 55 respondents representing 22% utilize electronic information resources for project purposes.

Table 3: Extent of utilization of electronic information resources by undergraduate students using Prof. A.A. Rasheed Library Federal University Wukari, Taraba State.

Items	Frequency	Percentages
Very High Extent (VHE)	60	24%
High Extent (HE)	130	52%
Low Extent (LE)	37	14.8%
No Extent (NE)	23	9.2%
Total	250	100%

Table 2 above shows that 60 respondents representing 24% indicated very high extent of utilization of electronic information resources; 130 respondents representing 52% opted for high extent of utilization of electronics information resources; 37 respondents representing 14.8% revealed low extent of utilization of electronic information resources while 23 respondents representing 9.2% showed no extent of utilization of information resources .

The extent of utilization of electronic information resources by undergraduate students using Prof. A.A. Rasheed Library Federal University Wukari, Taraba State revealed that 60 representing 24% indicated very high extent of utilization of electronic information resources, 130 respondents representing 52% indicated high extent utilization of electronic resources, 37 respondents representing 14.8% revealed low extent while 23 respondents representing 9.2% showed no extent utilization of electronic information resources.

Table 4: Challenges faced in electronic information resources by undergraduate students using Prof. A.A. Rasheed Library Federal University Wukari, Taraba State.

Items	Frequency	Percentages
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Lack of stable power supply	70	28%
Inadequate ICT facilities	20	8%
Lack of ICT Skill of users	40	16%
Problem of internet connectivity	30	12%
Inadequate bandwidth	40	16%
Lack of search skill	20	8%
Lack of instructors to assist users	10	4%
Inadequate computer to access electronic information resources	20	8%
Total	250	100%

Table 4 above indicated lack of stable power supply 70 (28%), inadequate ICT facilities 20 (8%), lack of ICT Skill of users 40 (16%), problem of internet connectivity 30 (12%), inadequate bandwidth 40 (16%), lack of search skill 20 (8%), lack of instructors to assist users 10 (4%) and inadequate computer to access electronic information resources 20 (8%). Utilizing electronic information resources undergraduate students using Prof. A.A. Rasheed Library Federal University Wukari, Taraba State face numerous challenges. Findings revealed that 70 respondents representing 28% indicated lack of stable power supply, 20 respondents representing 8% indicated inadequate ICT facilities, 40 (16%) revealed lack of ICT skill of users, 30 (12%) indicated problem of internet connectivity, 40 (16%) indicated inadequate bandwidth, 20 representing 8% showed lack of search skill to navigate the internet. Others include 10(4%) revealed lack of instructors to assist the undergraduate students in utilizing the available electronic information resources while 20 respondents representing 8% revealed inadequate computer to access electronic information resources.

Table 5: Solution to effective utilization of electronic information resources

Item	Frequency	Percentages
Provision of steady power	71	28.4%

supply		
Provision of adequate ICT facilities	20	8%
Training on acquisition of ICT skills	44	17.6%
Enhance internet connectivity	35	14%
Provision of adequate bandwidth	43	17.2%
Guide on information search	20	8%
Users should be assisted on how to search for information	10	4%
Provision of adequate computer systems	7	2.8%
Total	250	100%

Table 5 above shows that 71 respondents representing 28.4% indicated the provision of steady power supply, 20 representing 8% of the respondents indicated the provision of adequate ICT facilities, 44 respondents representing 17.6% showed need for training for the acquisition of ICT skills, 35 (14%) revealed the improved internet connectivity, 43 (17.2) adequate bandwidth, 20 (8%) guide on information search, 10 (4%) assisting users while 7 respondents representing 2.8 % indicated the the provision of adequate computer system. Solutions to the challenges faced in the utilization of electronic information resources by undergraduate students using Prof. A.A. Rasheed Library Federal University Wukari, Taraba State showed that 71 respondents representing 28.4% indicated the provision of steady power supply, 20 (8%) indicated the provision of adequate ICT facilities, 44 (17.6%) indicated ICT training, 35 (14%) indicated enhanced internet connectivity. Others include 43 (17.2%) indicated the provision of bandwidth, 10 (4%) indicated user assistance in information search. While 7 respondents representing 2.8% revealed the need for the provision of computer systems.

Recommendation

Based on findings from this study, the following recommendations were made to further enhance the availability and utilization of electronic information resources which include:

1. Management of the university library should make conscious effort in ICT training for staff and orientation for students for optimal utilization of available electronic information resources.
2. Management of the university library should ensure steady power supply by providing alternative power sources to complement the available source of power.
3. Management of the university library should solicit for funds from the university to enable the library to operate efficiently, carry out subscription, provide the much needed facilities and services to satisfy their community of users.
4. The library management should provide modern facilities (state of the art facilities) and ensure their sustenance for efficient utilization of electronic information resources in order to effectively meet the growing information need.

Conclusion

The major goal of university library is to provide relevant and much needed information resources in varied formats in a timely manner to satisfy its community of users. One of such varied formats of information resources provided by an ideal university library is electronic information resources. Prof. A.A, Rasheed Library Federal University Wukari, Taraba State like other university libraries now leverage on technology to provide users with wide range of electronic information resources such as e-books, e-journals, online databases among other electronic information resources. The provision of these electronic information resources has

invariably provided undergraduate students using the library with new experiences thereby improving academic activities. This study (Availability and Utilization of Electronic Information Resources by Undergraduate Students of Prof. A.A. Rasheed Library Federal University Wukari, Taraba State, Nigeria revealed that the library made available and accessible electronic information resources for undergraduate students to utilize. Study equally revealed that e-books, e-journals, e-newspapers, e-magazines, online data bases, encyclopedias and CD-ROM databases electronic information resources that are frequently accessed and utilized by undergraduate students using Prof. A.A. Rasheed Library Federal University Wukari, Taraba State. Other electronic information resources such as e-dictionary, e-map, and e-bibliography are marginally being utilized by undergraduate students.

In spite of the availability of electronic information resources, there were challenges faced by undergraduate students in utilizing these resources which include lack of steady power supply, lack of skills of users to utilize the available electronic information resources, inadequate bandwidth, and inefficient internet connectivity among others. However, results equally showed that these challenges can be surmounted through the provision of steady power supply, training, provision of adequate bandwidth, improved internet connectivity among others.

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