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INFORMATION LITERACY SKILLS AND UTILISATION OF ELECTRONIC INFORMATION RESOURCES BY POSTGRADUATE STUDENTS IN NIGERIA

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Abstract

The study investigated information literacy skills and utilization of electronic information resources by postgraduate students in Nigeria. The study adopted the ex post facto research design to investigate the relationship that exists between information literacy skill variables and the utilization of electronic information resources by postgraduate students in Nigeria. The population of the study comprised 3,744 postgraduate students from three federal universities in Nigeria, namely; University of Uyo, Uyo; University of Calabar, Calabar and University of Port Harcourt, Choba, Port Harcourt. The sample size for the study is 374 respondents which was determined using the Taro Yamane's (1969) method for sampling. Data was collected through the instrument of questionnaire and the data collected were analysed using descriptive statistics of mean and standard deviation. The findings from the study revealed that a significant relationship exist among postgraduate students' knowledge of electronic resources, search skills, access to information, information evaluation capability and their utilisation of electronic information resources. The study therefore concluded that it is imperative for information literacy programmes to be included in the curriculum of students across all levels as this will help improve their overall academic achievement.

Keywords: Information Literacy Skills, Electronic Resources, Information Utilization, Information Resources, Postgraduate Students, Nigeria

Introduction

The continuous development of Information and Communication Technologies has greatly increased the amount of information in circulation. Several publishing outlet has sprang up, publishing information resources in either print or electronic form. According to IGI Global (2021), information resources refers to content or materials that provides information or data for users. These resources are sometimes called information bearing materials. Abinew and Vuda (2013) further opined that information resources contain a collection of important information produced by individuals for the consumption of others so as to meet their needs. Information resources often include all forms of information carriers which information seekers or researchers use to meet their needs. However, with the exponential increase in the amount of information resources, it becomes a challenge for information seekers to effectively utilize the different information resources, especially the utilization of electronic information resources.

The utilization of electronic information resources in recent time has become an issue of global discourse due to the complexities associated with many electronic information resources. The International Federation of Library Association and Institutions (IFLA) defined electronic information resources as information bearing materials that require the use of electronic or computer technology to appreciate its contents. These kind of resources include electronic databases, E-books, E-Journals, online newspapers and websites content. While literate individuals can easily use traditional books and other traditional information resources, they will require some special skill to be able to effectively utilize electronic information resources. The utilization of electronic information resources simply refer to the use of electronic information resources like E-books with full extent for getting required information from it. While there are concerns about the utilization of electronic information resources, Akpojotor (2016) observed

that information literacy skilled individuals are more likely to be effective users of electronic information resources. Hence, information literacy skills could influence the utilization of electronic information resources by postgraduate students in Nigeria.

According to Skyline College (2021; p.1), information literacy skills “refers to the ability to find, evaluate, organize, use, and communicate information in all its various formats, most notably in situations requiring decision making, problem solving, or the acquisition of knowledge”. Okuonghae and Ogiamen (2016) observed that information literacy combines several other skills such as critical thinking skills, research skills, ICT skills, problem solving skills and communication skills to be successful in solving problem or executing a task. The skill is considered a vital set of competencies which every individual must possess in order to be effective users of information. Hence, the Association of College & Research Libraries (2002) gave a more comprehensive and widely accepted definition of information literacy skills. They defined it as a set of competencies which enables individuals to know when information is needed, identify the different information sources, evaluate information sources and use retrieved information effectively. Consequently, every postgraduate student who intend to be effective users of electronic information resources must possess strong information literacy skills. It is on this note that this study was conducted to investigate information literacy skills and utilization of electronic information resources by Postgraduate students in Nigeria.

Statement of the Problem

The continuous growth of information resources has increased the challenge associated with the accessibility and utilization of information resources. Aside having print or paper information resources, information today are being stored in electronic format and these new format comes with its own challenge of accessibility. The continuous growth in information resources, otherwise referred to as information explosion has further increased the complexities associated with information utilization. This has made the utilization of information resources difficult as there are many sources of information and as such information seekers must be skilled in retrieving only the right information from the pool of information. Observation has revealed that postgraduate students with high information literacy skills are able to effectively utilize information resources. This is because, information literacy skills equip them with the ability to identify and evaluate information sources, as well as effectively use retrieved information. Information literate individual are able to identify when they are in need of information, access information, use information as well as evaluate information sources. Consequently, this study was carried out to examine the relationship between information literacy skills variables and utilization of electronic information resources by Postgraduate students in Nigeria.

Objective of the Study

The objective of this study is to examine postgraduate students' information literacy skills and their utilization of information resources. Specifically, the study sought to:

1. Find out the relationship between postgraduate students' knowledge of electronic resources and their utilisation of electronic information resources;

2. ascertain the relationship between postgraduate students' knowledge of search skills and their utilisation of electronic information resources;
3. determine the relationship between postgraduate students' access to information and their utilisation of electronic information resources; and
4. examine the relationship between postgraduate students' information evaluation capability and their utilisation of electronic information resources.

Research Questions

The following research questions guided the study:

1. What is the relationship between postgraduate students' knowledge of electronic resources and their utilisation of electronic information resources?
2. What is the relationship between postgraduate students' knowledge of search skills and their utilisation of electronic information resources?
3. What is the relationship between postgraduate students' access to information and their utilisation of electronic information resources?
4. What is the relationship between postgraduate students' information evaluation capability and their utilisation of electronic information resources?

Literature Review

The utilization of electronic information resources has attracted varying degrees of attention globally. Bola and Ogunlade (2012) conducted a study on students' accessibility and utilization of electronic information resources. Their study revealed that students who are skilled in the use of ICTs frequently use electronic information resources while those not highly skilled in the use of ICTs use electronic information resources less frequently. Furthermore,

Abdulwahab, Amusan, and Umma, (2009), investigated the effects of information literacy on the use of E-library resources among students of the University of Ilorin, Kwara State, Nigeria. The study revealed that students with higher skills in searching, accessing and evaluating information sources were better users of E-library resources. The study also revealed that the student with high ICT skills were independent users of E-library resources while those with less ICT skill often require the assistance of librarians to use E-library resources.

In another study conducted by Omeluzor, Bamidele, Onuoha, and Alarape, (2013), it was observed that postgraduate student mainly get their information literacy training from seminar, user education (library instruction), orientation, one-on-one discussion and tutorial. Furthermore, it was also gathered that most postgraduate students do not attend seminar organized for them by PG school. Urhiewhu and Omah (2016) noted that postgraduate students needs information literacy skills to be able access and use electronic resources. The ability to identify e-resources is imperative for postgraduate students to meet their various information needs. This knowledge to identify e-resources can be gotten when the postgraduate student is exposed to information resources to assist in their research and education which will in turn yield to positive utilisation of information resources. Knowledge can also be linked to the awareness of a resource or ability to identify how best to utilize e-resources.

Other advantages derived from the knowledge of electronic resources include the fact that “electronic information sources are often faster than consulting print indexes and they are straight forward when wishing to use combinations of keywords. They open the possibility of searching multiple files at one time, a feat accomplished more easily than when using printed equivalents. Electronic resources can be printed, and searches saved to be repeated later; they are updated more often than printed tools.”

Methodology

This study used an ex post factor research design. An ex post facto research design is a method in which groups with qualities that already exist are compared on some dependent variables. Ex post factor research design is appropriate for this research because utilisation of information resources has already occurred by postgraduate students in the universities under the study and the researcher aim is to investigate how the various IL skills influence how they utilize electronic information resources.

The population of the study comprised Postgraduate students from three federal universities in Nigeria, namely; University of Uyo, Uyo; University of Calabar, Calabar and University of Port Harcourt, Choba, Port Harcourt. A total of 3,744 postgraduate students who are registered library users from the three selected Federal Universities formed the population of the study. The sample size of the study is 374 respondents. The sample size is considered adequate for the study and it was achieved using the Taro Yamane's (1969) method for sampling of respondents.

The instrument used for data collection was a self-developed questionnaire which was divided into three sections. While section A addressed the respondents' bio-data, sections B addressed issues related to information literacy skills. Section C addressed the utilization of electronic information resources. Both sections B and C were measured using the Likert scale of strongly agree (SA), agree (A), disagree (D), strongly disagree (SD); with a weighting of 4,3,2,1. The instrument was subjected to face and content validity by experts and it was also tested for reliability. A reliability coefficient of 0.83 was achieved and considered adequate. The data collected for the study were subjected to analysis using descriptive statistics of Mean and Standard Deviation (SD).

Decision Rule

Each item on information literacy and utilisation of electronic information resources had the cutoff point of 2.5 which is the midpoint between agree and disagree or often and non-often on the rating scale. The resource status was categorized into two: knowledgeable and non-knowledgeable. For the resource to be knowledgeable, it must have at least a score of not less than 2.5 and vice versa for a resource non knowledgeable

Presentation of Result

The section addressed the presentation of results and hypotheses for the study in line with the stated research questions and hypothesis.

Research Question 1: What is the relationship between postgraduate students' knowledge of electronic resources and their utilisation of electronic information resources?

Table 4.1: Mean and Standard Deviation on the difference in the utilisation of electronic information resources by postgraduate students based on their knowledge of electronic resources?

S/N	Item	Variation	N	Mean	SD
1.	I have adequate knowledge of; Google	knowledgeable	323	29.48	3.92
		Non Knowledgeable	43	29.16	3.95
2.	Electronic book	knowledgeable	332	29.45	3.95
		Non Knowledgeable	34	29.47	3.65
3	Electronic Journals	Knowledgeable	299	29.39	3.91
		Non Knowledgeable	67	29.69	3.97
4	Online Databases	Knowledgeable	309	29.48	3.95
		Non Knowledgeable	57	29.28	3.80
5	Web blogs	Knowledgeable	245	29.40	4.14
		Non Knowledgeable	121	29.55	3.45
6	Internet	Knowledgeable	274	29.58	3.87
		Non Knowledgeable	92	29.03	4.07
7	Online Public Access Catalogue	Knowledgeable	297	29.41	3.81
		Non Knowledgeable	69	29.61	4.38
Overall		Knowledgeable	248	30.33	3.65

Non Knowledgeable	118	27.57	3.84
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Table 4.1 reveals that out of the seven items listed for the knowledge of electronic resources, internet stands out as the most knowledgeable electronic resources with a Mean score of 29.58 and those without the knowledge of internet have a Mean score of 29.03, Google and online databases are the next most knowledgeable electronic resources with an equal mean score of 29.48 for the both of them. Electronic journal and OPAC stands out as the most non knowledgeable electronic resource with a mean score of 29.69 and 29.61 respectively. The overall cluster Mean and standard deviation for the items in Table 4.1 reveals that the number of postgraduate students with the knowledge of electronic resources are more than the postgraduate students without the knowledge of electronic information resources. This implies that postgraduate students who are knowledgeable of electronic resources utilize electronic resources more than students without the knowledge of electronic resources.

Research Question 2: What is the relationship between postgraduate students’ knowledge of search skills and their utilisation of electronic information resources?

Table 4.2: Mean and Standard Deviation on the difference in the utilisation of electronic information resources by postgraduate students based on their knowledge of search skills?

S/N	Items	Variation	N	Mean	S. D
1.	I am able to define my specific information needs before the information search	Knowledgeable	295	29.36	3.90
		Non Knowledgeable	71	29.83	4.01
2.	I can use several search engines when searching for information	Knowledgeable	316	29.39	3.91
		Non Knowledgeable	50	29.80	3.98
3	I can develop successful search strategies	Knowledgeable	300	29.54	3.95
		Non Knowledgeable	66	29.03	3.77
4	I can effectively use Boolean search Techniques	Knowledgeable	257	29.54	3.94
		Non Knowledgeable	109	29.22	3.88
5	I can search for information using OPAC	Knowledgeable	244	29.45	3.92
		Non Knowledgeable	122	29.45	3.95

6	I know the appropriate search tools to use when searching for information	Knowledgeable	248	29.64	3.92
		Non Knowledgeable	118	29.04	3.90
Overall		Knowledgeable	243	30.47	3.67
		Non Knowledgeable	123	27.44	3.62

Table 4.2 reveals that out of the six items listed for knowledge of search skills, those who know the appropriate search tools to use when searching for information have the highest Mean score of 29.64 followed by those who can effectively use Boolean search techniques with a Mean score of 29.54. The table also reveals that students who are not knowledgeable of ways to define their specific information needs before the information search have a Mean score of 29.83 followed by those who cannot use several search engines when searching for information have a Mean score of 29.80. The overall cluster Mean and standard deviation for the items in Table 4.2 reveals that the numbers of postgraduate students with the knowledge of search skills are more than the postgraduate students who are without the knowledge of search skills. This implies that postgraduate students who are knowledgeable of search skills can utilize electronic resources more than students without the knowledge of search skills.

Research Question 3: What is the relationship between postgraduate students' access to information and their utilisation of electronic information resources?

Table 4.3: Mean and Standard Deviation on the difference in the utilisation of electronic information resources by postgraduate students based on their access to information

S/N	Items	Variation	N	Mean	S. D
1.	I can access information resources through; Search engines	Accessible	261	29.32	3.94

2.	Web indexes	Inaccessible	105	29.74	3.88
		Accessible	203	29.36	3.96
3	Citations	Inaccessible	163	29.55	3.88
		Accessible	310	29.48	3.86
4	Bibliographies	Inaccessible	56	29.27	4.26
		Accessible	264	29.25	3.94
5	Cybercafé	Inaccessible	102	29.95	3.83
		Accessible	217	29.52	3.92
Overall		Inaccessible	149	29.34	3.92
		Accessible	235	30.04	3.64
		Inaccessible	131	28.39	4.18

Source: Field data (2018)

Table 4.3 reveals that out of the five items listed for access to information resources, students access information resources more through the cybercafé with a Mean score of 29.52 followed by students who accessed electronic resources through citations with a Mean score of 29.48. The table reveals that students who cannot access electronic information resources through bibliographies with a mean score of 29.95 followed by access to information resources through search engines with a mean score of 29.74. The overall cluster Mean and standard deviation for the items in Table 4 reveals that the number of postgraduate students who can access information resources are more than those who cannot access information resources. This implies that postgraduate students who can access information resources utilize electronic information resources more than those who cannot access information resources.

Research Question 4: What is the relationship between postgraduate students' information evaluation capability and their utilisation of electronic information resources?

Table 4.4: Mean and Standard Deviation on the difference in the utilisation of electronic Information resources by postgraduate students based on their evaluation of information.

S/N	Items	Variation	N	Mean	SD
1.	I evaluate information resources by the; Currency of the work	Informed	254	29.54	3.92

2.	Authority of the work	Uninformed	112	29.23	3.92
		Informed	256	29.32	3.93
3	Content of the work	Uninformed	110	29.74	3.91
		Informed	168	29.23	4.03
4	Relevance of the work	Uninformed	198	29.64	3.82
		Informed	214	29.38	3.95
5	Accuracy of the work	Uninformed	152	29.54	3.88
		Informed	211	29.33	3.96
Overall		Uninformed	155	29.61	3.91
		Informed	183	30.30	3.69
		Uninformed	183	28.60	3.97

Source: Field data (2018)

Table 4.4 reveals that students who can evaluate information resources more by the currency of the work with a Mean score of 29.54 followed by the relevance of the work with a Mean score of 29.38. Students who cannot evaluate information resources through the authority of the work stands out with a mean of 29.74 followed by students who cannot evaluate information resources through the content of the work with a mean score of 29.64. the overall cluster Mean and standard deviation for the items in Table 4.4 reveals a close similarity between postgraduate students who can evaluate information resources and those who cannot evaluate information resources. This shows that postgraduate students are not well informed about evaluation techniques that are used to evaluate electronic information resources, and this will in turn lead to poor utilisation of electronic information resources.

Discussion of Result

Knowledge of Electronic Resources on Utilisation of Electronic Resources

The findings on knowledge of Electronic Resources as presented in Table 4.1 shows that postgraduate students have a fair knowledge of electronic resources and these resources includes Google, online databases, and internet. Results also revealed that postgraduate students do not have a good knowledge of Electronic books, electronic journals, web blogs and Online Public Access Catalogue. From the tables, postgraduate students have more knowledge about the Internet than any other electronic resources. Online public access Catalogue had the highest number of mean on non-knowledgeable electronic resources and this implies that postgraduate students did not have enough knowledge about OPAC.

The finding of this study also corresponds with the research carried out by Igbinoia, Okuonghae, and Adebayo, (2021) which revealed that student have high information literacy competencies ($\bar{x} = 3.42$), which ultimately result in was low prevalence level of COVID-19 pandemic fake news ($\bar{x} = 2.35$) among them. It further opine that the respondent have knowledge of electronic information resources, especially the online resources. This study also reveals that students had low knowledge of online databases like ERIC and other educational databases been used by the institution.

The findings of the study are also in line with the results of the study by Bashorun *et al.*,(2011) which revealed that academic staff and postgraduate students had the knowledge of electronic resources which led to the utilisation of these resources ranging from electronic journals, online reference works, online catalogue, electronic books and bibliographic databases. This result corresponds with Renwick (2005) which showed that the faculty members had high knowledge of the electronic resources made available by the MSL but low use of MSL-specific resources supporting the suggested problem of under utilisation. The findings correspond with

the study because high knowledge of information resources will lead to proper utilisation of these resources.

The difference in the utilization of electronic resources by postgraduate students based on the knowledge of electronic resources has shown that there is a positive and significant difference between these two variables. The outcome of this test shows that the knowledge of electronic resources significantly improves the utilisation of electronic resources by postgraduate students. This could be as result of the fact that knowledge of electronic resources has to do with awareness and being able to properly utilize of the various electronic resources that are available to students which will in turn help them to solve their various information needs. The result suggests that when the knowledge of electronic resources increases, it becomes easy to use the resources.

Knowledge of Search Skills on Utilisation of Electronic Information Resources

The findings on knowledge of search skills on utilisation of electronic resources as presented shows that postgraduate students have a good knowledge of the ways of developing successful search strategies, can use Boolean search techniques when searching for information and they are knowledgeable of the different information search technique which enhances their overall research productivity. Findings from the table also reveals that postgraduate students are not able to define their specific information needs before the information search, they cannot use different search engines when searching for information and they cannot search for information using OPAC. From the table, postgraduate students know the appropriate search tools to use when searching for information and this has contributed immensely to their utilisation of electronic information resources. Results also revealed that postgraduate students cannot define their specific information needs before their information search.

The findings is in tandem with Okon *et al.*, (2014) that many postgraduate study possess the necessary information literacy skills needed to search and retrieve information for their research project. The study revealed that the individual should assess the value of various types of information resources before the commencement of search strategy, the individual needs to know the basic concepts and keywords that will help to develop the search strategy and the individual should be able to identify the criteria for evaluating information sources to enhance retrieval.

The differences in the utilisation of electronic resources by postgraduate students based on the knowledge of search skills have shown that a relationship exist between information literacy skills and the utilization of information resources. The reason for this result can be traced to the fact that knowledge of search skills has to do with ability to define information needs before the actual information search, ability to use a number of search engines when searching for information, ability to develop search techniques and use Boolean search techniques.

Access to Information Resources on Utilisation of Electronic Information Resources

The findings on Access to Information Resources on utilisation of electronic resources as presented in Table 4.3 shows that postgraduate students accessed information resources through the various items listed in the study. Results from the tables also reveals that postgraduate students accessed information resources through citations and at the cybercafé. Access to the internet through the cybercafé has increased because of the proliferation of information resources and this can be traced to the reason for the increased to information resources at the cybercafé. Postgraduate students did not fully access information resources through the bibliographies, web indexes and search engines. Postgraduate students accessed information resources more through the cybercafé and accessing information resources through bibliographies was also a problem for

them. The findings from the student revealed that graduate students accessed information at the university campus 82%, off campus 28%, internet café 68% and other resources 28%. The university campus was rated highly than other options and this may be because the university campus offered free internet service to graduate students with good connectivity speed which has led to the improved usage of these resources by the graduate students.

Information Evaluation on Utilisation of Electronic Information Resources.

The findings on knowledge of Electronic Resources as presented in Table 4.4 shows that postgraduate students are uninformed about the criteria for evaluation of electronic information resources. Results also revealed that postgraduate students can only evaluate information resources by the currency of the work. Results from the table also reveals that Postgraduate students cannot evaluate information resources through the authority, content, accuracy and relevance of the work. The findings reveal that out of all the items listed, only currency of the work was familiar and used by postgraduate students to evaluate information resources. This implies that postgraduate students are not properly informed about the evaluation criteria for information resources. This can be as a result of dearth of information evaluation seminars and workshops for postgraduate students. The overall mean and standard deviation for the study shows that postgraduate students are indeed aware of these evaluation criteria's and proper knowledge of them will lead to utilisation of electronic resources.

This corroborates that of a study carried out by Egberongbe, (2014) on the evaluation of e-resources in two academic libraries. The study discovered that both libraries had e-resources, and that students evaluated them based on their relevance, currency, authority, coverage and authority. The study also included cost, popularity, open access, coverage and objectivity as

criteria's for evaluating of electronic resources. This result, however, controverts that of a study carried by Nagra (2009) on the evaluation of electronic resources and services in academic libraries using E-metrics and other related methods for measurement and assessment. A model was designed for the study and the application of e-metrics, different methods to capture data in different settings and the types of information resources in the libraries was studied. Results revealed that this method was not common to librarians and students and utilisation of electronic information resources was low using this evaluation technique.

The outcome of this study has revealed the difference in the utilization of electronic information resources by postgraduate student based on the level of information evaluation. This finding agrees with that of Ose *et al.*, (2014) which showed a positive correlation between evaluation of electronic resources and utilisation in Academic libraries. Their findings revealed that students evaluated information materials through the authority, cost, coverage, currency. It was also found out that librarians identified relevant e-resources through vendors, online reading, other librarians, academic staff and students. Evaluation of resources will enable the librarians and students to have access to the relevant and necessary e-resources in order to satisfy users. The influence of information evaluation on the utilisation of electronic resources was also revealed by Devi and Devi (2005) in their study about evaluation of e-resources. They revealed that e-resources should be evaluated because they are created at a very high level and that they are meant to be used for a varied audience. Findings from study also described some important criteria's for evaluating information and these includes: the authority behind it, currency, intended audience, ease of use and accuracy

Conclusion

In a world of continuous growth in the amount of literature, there is need for information seekers, particular postgraduate students, to be information literate in order to use different kinds of information effectively. As it has been established in the study, the effective utilization of electronic information resources is greatly dependent on the level of information literacy skills of the information seeker. A highly information literate postgraduate student stand better chance of effectively searching, retrieving and utilizing information in different formats and volume. Therefore, it is imperative for information literacy programmes to be included in the curriculum of students across all levels as this will help improve their overall academic achievement.

Recommendations

Based on the findings from this study, the following recommendations were made.

- i. More relevant electronic information resources, services and databases such as e-journals and e-books should be included in the list of electronic resources available for use by the postgraduate students in the e-libraries.
- ii. Periodic tutorials in form of training should be mounted for the fresh and returning postgraduate students in order to expose them to search skills that will ensure maximum use of the electronic information resources and services at their disposal.
- iii. The library management need to integrate user education and information literacy skill in order to enable students to be adequately instructed on the ways of accessing information resources skills and use of online information resources.
- iv. Postgraduate students should be informed through course programs on the strategies to be used for evaluating information resources to ensure possession of adequate and up-to-date information resources.

- v. The management of higher institutions libraries should as a matter of policy enforce that information literacy and its attendant skills be introduced into student's curriculum. This will ensure that the utilisation of electronic information resources will improve and students will be able to have access to a wide range of information resources that can be used to solve their various information needs.

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