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Raphael Ebiefung

Topfaith University, Nigeria, raphaelebiefung@gmail.com

Catherine Okafor

Federal University Otuoke, Obyteex@gmail.com

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Information Literacy Skills and Use of Electronic Information Resources (EIRs) By Undergraduates in Federal University Otuoke, Bayelsa State, Nigeria

BY

Raphael Ebiefung, CLN
Librarian
Topfaith University, Nigeria
rm.ebiefung@topfaith.edu.ng

Catherine Okafor
Physics Department,
Federal University Otuoke
Obyteex@gmail.com

ABSTRACT

This study investigated the level of information literacy skills and use of EIRs by undergraduates in the Federal university Otuoke, Bayelsa state, Nigeria. The study adopted descriptive research design and questionnaire as data collection instrument. From a population of 3043 undergraduates, a multi-stage random technique was used to select a sample size of 242 undergraduates for the study. The results indicated that 131 (51.4%) of the respondents “Strongly agreed” that they use the Internet in the course of their stay at the university. Some 89 (27.7%) respondents strongly disagreed that they use online databases. It was also found that the Internet was used by the majority 112(46.3%) and 58 (23.9%) of the respondents for Class Assignment and Research respectively. The findings also revealed that the ability to formulate questions based on the needed information was “Very High” among the majority 144(59.5%) of the respondents while the ability to access relevant information using different sources was “low” among most 73(30.2%). Poor network 129 (53.3%) and confusion due to too much information on the internet 125 (51.7%) were the major identified challenges faced. It was concluded that EIRs in libraries have contributed immensely to the academic progression of undergraduates and their use should be encouraged in Nigerian universities. It was recommended that academic institutions in Nigeria should ensure the provision of electronic facilities to boost access and use of EIRs by undergraduates.

Keywords: Information literacy, Electronic information resources, Library, University, Otuoke

1. Introduction

Universities across the globe are established to serve a tripartite goal of teaching, research and learning. Libraries are established to support these cardinal objectives of universities by providing information services in all formats. In recent times, libraries no longer rely only on print collections to achieve their crucial responsibility but also acquire and provide access to relevant electronic information resources (Nwalo and Adeleke, 2017). Thus, students, particularly, undergraduates that mostly form integral part of any university often find libraries with electronic information resources useful for research and other academic activities.

Electronic information resources as described by Igwe and Uzuegbu (2013) are information materials that need computer device to access, whether through a personal computer (PC), Mainframe or handled mobile devices and are facilitated through the internet or LANs. This is to say that electronic information resources in libraries connote library information resources whose access and use are possible via computers and electronic networks. Thus, a major advantage of electronic information resources over the print to undergraduates is that access and use can be done within and outside the library.

Electronic information resources are essential for research, study and other academic activities. This has led libraries to acquire, organise and provide access to electronic information resources required for their users. The non-print sources of information in libraries include but not limited to CD-ROM, audio-visual materials, e-journals, e-books, online databases and online abstracts. All these information resources are often used by undergraduates to support class assignments, project work, term papers and seminar presentation for effective and efficient achievement of academic excellence (Quadri, Adetimirin and Idowu (2014).

Furthermore, the tremendous growth of e-information resources and communication means have put a new challenge before students across the globe as the ability to access information alone can no longer serve the problem (Ahmad, Dar and Lone, 2020). It rather is the effective use of information that promises the solutions especially in the present information age. The ubiquity of electronic information resources necessitates the possession of adequate information literacy skills. There is therefore an urgent need for undergraduates to acquire information literacy skills and become information literate (Farmer & Henri, 2008) as the mere abundance of information cannot serve a genuine purpose unless information users are equipped with complementary cluster of abilities essential to use information effectively.

Information literacy is a term used to describe a skill that involves the knowledge and use of proficiency or capability that collectively enables effective and proper use of information. In general, information literate person, it means such a person knows how to identify information need, find and critically evaluate how genuine that that information is (Ahmad, Dar and Lone 2020). In the context of the library, information literacy is much broader than the acquisition of traditional information skills. This includes among others, how to use online catalogues such as OPAC, how to locate a book on the internet as well as how to access electronic databases (Adeleke and Emeahara, 2017). The skill set of information literacy is, therefore, highly essential among Federal University Otuoke undergraduates as they expected to be effective information searchers and users while carrying out various assignments, projects, seminar and presentations which demand filtered and distilled information (Dorvlo, 2016).

Federal University, Otuoke is a Federal government-owned university located in Otuoke, a town in Ogbia local government area of Bayelsa state, southern Nigeria the university was established in 2011 and started with 282 pioneer students. It offers degree courses at undergraduates' levels. Currently have six (6) faculties: Faculty of Education, Faculty of Engineering, Faculty of Humanities, Faculty of Social sciences, Faculty of Management Science and Faculty of Science and twenty-nine (29) Departments. The university library has as a vision to become an innovative and responsible library and information centre recognised as vital to study, research and achieving knowledge for intellectual development. This vision necessitated acquisition and provision electronic information resources by the library to effectively serve its users. It is therefore imperative to ascertain the level of Information literacy skills and use of electronic information resources by undergraduates.

Statement of the problem

Electronic information resources have come to acquire a central position in information infrastructure of the university libraries across the globe. In Nigeria, the effectiveness of university libraries is gradually being gauged by the extent of e-information resources available and the extent of electronic services to users. This is to say that electronic information resources are essential to all categories of users of libraries especially undergraduates.

However, despite revelations in literature that electronic information resources offer enormous advantages to academic work of undergraduates, preliminary findings revealed that use of electronic information resources by undergraduates in Federal university Otuoke, is still

below expectation. This may be attributed to lack of adequate information literacy skills by the undergraduates of Federal University Otuoke. This assumption is predicated on the fact that electronic information resources reside in a wide range of sources and effective access and use may depend on information literacy skills possession by undergraduates. From investigations, there seem to be no sufficient empirical literature on the level of information literacy skills by undergraduates in Bayelsa state, Nigeria. It is against this backdrop that this study sought to investigate the level of information literacy skills and use of EIRs by university undergraduates in Federal University Otuoke, Bayelsa, state.

Objectives of the Study

The general objective of this study was to investigate the level of information literacy skills and use of electronic information resources by undergraduates. The specific objectives were to:

1. find out the types of electronic information resources use by undergraduates in Federal University Otuoke;
2. determine the purpose of use of electronic information resources by undergraduates in Federal University Otuoke;
3. ascertain the level of Information literacy skills possess by undergraduates in Federal university Otuoke;
4. identify the challenges to the use of electronic information resources by undergraduates in Federal University Otuoke;

Research Questions

1. What are the types of electronic information resources use by Federal university undergraduates?
2. What are the purposes of use of EIRs by undergraduates in Federal University Otuoke?
3. What is the level of Information literacy skills possess by Undergraduates in Federal university Otuoke?
4. What are the challenges that hinder the use of electronic information resources by undergraduates in Federal university Otuoke?

2. Literature review

Studies in the area of electronic information resources have indicated that undergraduates have continued leverage the various types of EIRs to complement class room instructions and lecture notes. Salman et. al (2020) stated that the traditional university library cannot compete favorably well with information technology driven libraries, especially with their outdated and obsolete traditional resources of prints. This may have continuously informed libraries transformation into digital and virtual libraries where the physical collections such as books, journals and magazines have metamorphosed into e-books, e-journals, and e-magazines (Akpojotor, 2016).

Studying the various types of EIRs used by undergraduates, Adedekun and Fawole (2020) found in their study of 120 undergraduates of the National Open University, Ilorin, Study Centre, Nigeria, that most 80 (80.%) of the respondents used e-books and 72(72%) e-books while the least used 57(57%) online databases in academic information. This is evidence that undergraduates use EIRs in the course of their study. This goes to buttress the findings of Tamraka and Garg (2016) who investigated the most preferred EIRs by undergraduates and reported that most undergraduates prefer e-journals and other EIRs for diverse academic reasons.

Furthermore, many benefits associated with the use of EIRs have remained a major catalyst to the use of various electronic information resources by undergraduates for various academic purposes. According to Owolabi, Ajiboye, Lawal and Okpeh (2012), EIRs have over the years become an invaluable asset in education, research, teaching and learning which undergraduates have relied heavily upon for research and study.

This is line with a study by Ternenge and Kashimana (2019) study on the purpose of use of EIRs by 381 undergraduates in Benue State. The study adopted a descriptive survey design and questionnaire as instrument of data collection. It was found that majority of undergraduates with $\bar{x}=3.15$ and $\bar{x}=2.67$ admitted to have used e-journals and Online Public Access Catalogue respectively to a “Very Great Extent” for research. This is possible as EIRs provide up-to-date information resources that can be access and use within and outside the library. This important feature makes EIRs to assume a critical role in undergraduates’ research and study.

It must be noted also that electronic information resources deliver a lot of other advantages which make them useful to undergraduates (Thanuskodi, 2012). From enabling access to full-text articles, e-journals, image collections, multimedia content, e-news, EIRs use

facilitates academic e-conferencing. Buttressing the inherent benefits of EIRs to undergraduates, Liyi & Zhang, (2011) stated that EIRs offer a lot of advantages electronic compared to print. They highlighted among others; that EIRs need less storage space, have capacity of storing large information, can enable strong knowledge sharing and are ubiquitous; hence, facilitates wider information access and use.

However, despite that the crucial roles of EIRs in undergraduates' academic progression and engagements, literature has indicated that undergraduates' lack of information literacy skills could hinder effective use of EIRs. Odede (2018) conducted a study to ascertain the extent information literacy skills affect students in the use of EIRs. The study which adopted descriptive research design and questionnaire as data collection instrument had 118 students as sample size. The results showed that of respondents agreed that the use of EIRs is determined by their competency in information literacy. While majority 63(54.8%) of students agreed that their use of EIRs is determined by their ability to locate information in multiple sources, 41(35.7%) strongly agreed. Similarly, 54(47%) of respondents agreed that the use of EIRs is determined by their ability to browse online databases, 50(43.5) strongly agreed, 10(8.7%). It was further revealed that majority 53(46.1%) of the respondents use EIRs due to their ability to recognize different methods of accessing information resources. These results show that information literacy skills possession is a prerequisite to adequate use of EIRs by students. This is to say that lack of information literacy skills, among other factors militate against the use of EIRs.

Mole (2017) in a bid to satisfy his curiosity conducted to ascertain the challenges that militate against the use of online resources for academic purposes by 2500 undergraduates in University of Nigeria, Nsukka. The study adopted descriptive research design and questionnaire as data collection instrument. It was found that (\bar{x} = 2.60) undergraduates identified "inability to develop appropriate search strategy for specific information" as well as low bandwidth \bar{x} = 3.15 affects their use of online sources of information for academic work. This was corroborated by Olatoye, Nekhwevha and Muchaonyerwa (2020) who conducted a study to ascertain the challenges encountered by undergraduates when using EIRs and reported that "lack of search skills and too much information on the Internet" were agreed respectively by the majority 67 (31.3%) and 51(23.9%) of the respondents as the highest hindrance to their use of EIRs.

This implies that for undergraduates to respond effectively to an ever changing environment, they need more than just a knowledge base. The techniques for exploring variety of

EIRs, which will facilitate adequate usage and by extension, ensure practical use of EIRs for rational decision making or problem solving by undergraduates are also very critical. Thus, this study is significant as the findings will act as a catalyst to the effective use of EIRs among undergraduates in Nigerian universities especially now that EIRs become increasingly important.

3. METHODOLOGY

This study adopted a descriptive research survey design in eliciting response from the respondents. A multi-stage random technique was adopted for the study. The primary sampling unit was the six (6) faculties that make the Federal University Otuoke with the population of 9,655 undergraduates. First, two conventional faculties (Humanities and Management Sciences) from the university were purposively selected to a good representation of the undergraduates in the university. Convenience and purposive sampling techniques were adopted to select respondents from two homogeneous departments from the two (2) faculties. Random sampling technique was adopted in selecting the study sample. This is to ensure equal representation of the respondents at the faculty and departmental level. Thus, a total of 4 departments were sampled for the study. These selected departments were considered to have full representation of all departments, considering their population in the university. Hence, a sampling fraction of 15% was used to come up with a sample size of 242 out of the 3,403 undergraduates. Data used for this study were collected using a questionnaire adapted from Adeleke and Emeahara (2017). Descriptive statistics such as frequencies and percentages were used to analyse data collected.

Table 1. shows the study population of undergraduates as distributed across the selected faculties in Federal University Otuoke (FUO)

FEDERAL UNIVERSITY OTUOKE (FUO)			
FACULTY	DEPARTMENT	POPULATION	SAMPLE SIZE (15%)
Humanities	Political Science	988	52
	Public administration	820	62
Management Sciences	Accounting	811	63
	Economics	785	65
	TOTAL	3,403	242

Source: Faculty office(s) Registry 2019/2020

Results and Discussion of findings

- **Research question 1. What are the types of EIRS use by undergraduates in FUO?**

Table 3. Types of Electronic information resources use by undergraduates

S/ N	Items	SA		A		D		SD		N	
			%		%		%		%		%
1.	I use the Internet to search academic information	131	54.1%	76	31.4 %	19	7.9%	10	4.1 %	6	2.5 %
2.	I use e-journals for research work	118	48.8%	61	25.2%	34	14.0%	20	8.3%	9	3.7%
3.	I use e- books for academic work	50	20.7%	23	9.5%	5	2.1%	159	65.7%	5	2.1%
4.	I use CD-ROMs	74	30.6%	106	43.8%	16	6.6%	40	16.5%	6	2.5%
5.	I use Online Databases sometimes	36	1.9%	49	1.6%	66	13.1%	89	27.7%	2	55.8%
6.	I use Online Public Access Catalogue(OPAC) for information search	28	11.6%	58	23.9%	91	37.6%	58	23.9%	7	2.9%
7.	I use Online abstracts for information	20	8.3%	19	7.9%	172	71.1%	30	12.4%	1	0.41%

Key: Strongly Agree (SA), Agree (A), Disagree (D), Strongly Disagree (SD), Neutral (N)

Table 3 shows the results of the types of EIRs use by the undergraduates in FUO. As indicated, majority 131 (51.4%) of the respondents “Strongly agreed” that they use the Internet in the course of their stay in the university while very few 10 “Strongly Disagreed”. it was equally found that while most 61 (25.5%) and 106 (43.8%) agreed to have used e-journals and CD-ROMs respectively, some 89 (27.7%) respondents strongly disagreed that they use online databases.

The results reflect the important role of the Internet in the universities especially as it contains gamut of e- information resources; hence, receiving more patronage by undergraduates. It can also be deduced that most online databases require specially search skills and password for effective access. This may have resulted in the obvious inadequate use of online databases by undergraduates. This corroborates Adedekun and Fawole (2020) position who found in their study of 120 undergraduates of the National Open University, Ilorin, Study Centre, Nigeria, that most 80 (80 %) of the respondents used e-books and 72(72%) e-books while the least used 57(57%) online databases in academic information.

- **Research Question 2. What is the purpose of use of EIRs by undergraduates in FUO?**

Table 4. Purpose of Electronic Information Resources (EIRs) usage by Undergraduates

S/ N	Items	CA		R		S		EP		WP	
		f	%	f	%	f	%	f	%	f	%
1.	Internet	112	46.3%	58	23.9%	10	4.1%	12	5.0%	50	20.7%
2.	Electronic journals	16	6.6%	24	10.0%	26	10.7%	27	11.2%	149	61.5%
3.	Electronic books	46	19.0%	23	9.5%	68	28.1%	46	19.0%	59	24.4%
4.	CD-ROMs	23	9.5%	63	26.0%	41	16.9%	59	24.4%	56	23.1%
5.	Online Databases	28	11.6%	33	13.6%	14	5.8%	48	19.8%	119	49.2%
6.	OPAC (Online Public Access Catalogue)	23	9.5%	74	30.6%	12	5.0%	58	24.0%	75	31%
7.	Online abstracts	12	5.0%	117	48.3%	31	12.8%	17	7.0%	65	26.9%

Key: CA=Class Assignment; R=Research; S=Seminar; EP=Exam preparation; WP=writing project

Table 4 shows the purpose of electronic information resources (EIRs) by undergraduate students in FUO. The result of item-by-item analysis as presented in Table 4 reveals that the Internet was used by the majority 112(46.3%) and 58 (23.9%) of the respondents for Class Assignment and Research respectively. While online abstracts was used the least 12 (5.0%) for class assignment, most 149 (61.5%) and 59 (24.4%) respondents indicated to have used e-journals and e-books respectively for writing projects. The implication of the above findings is that undergraduates consider EIRs to be useful for class assignment and other academic related works. It is therefore, imperative for university libraries to prioritize acquisition of up-date e-resources for use by undergraduates.

The above finding is in tandem with the findings of Ternenge and Kashimana (2019) who studied the purpose of use of EIRs by 381 undergraduates in Benue State and found that majority of undergraduates with $\bar{x}=3.15$ and $\bar{x}=2.67$ admitted to have used e-journals and Online Public Access Catalogue respectively to a “Very Great Extent” for research and other academic purposes. Never the less the use of EIRs for academic purposes such as research, class assignment and seminar is expected considering the fact EIRs are information material that up-to-date, easy to download, sharable and easily available for use whether in the library or outside the library. These features may have necessitated their high patronage in Nigerian universities, particularly, undergraduates.

- Research Question 3. What is the level of Information retrieval skills possessed by undergraduates in FUU?

Table 5. Information literacy skills for EIRs use by undergraduates in FUU

S/N	Item description	VH (4)	H (3)	L(2)	VL (1)
I	Formulating questions based on information needs	144 (59.5%)	66 (27.2%)	25 (10.3%)	7 (2.9%)
II	Identifying potential electronic sources of information	103 (42.6%)	58 (24.0%)	56 (23.1%)	25 (10.3%)
III	Ability to develop successful search strategies	50 (20.7%)	49 (20.2%)	52 (21.5%)	91 (37.6%)
IV	Ability to access relevant information from a wide range of electronic sources	48 (19.8%)	55 (22.7%)	73 (30.2%)	66 (27.3%)
V	Ability to evaluate electronic information sources	57 (23.6%)	58 (24.0%)	66 (27.2%)	61 (25.2%)
VI	Ability to organize electronic sources for practical application	54 (22.3%)	55 (22.7%)	70 (28.9%)	63 (26.0%)
VII	Ability to use e-information resources for critical thinking and problem-solving	58 (24.0%)	65 (26.9%)	75 (40.0%)	44 (18.2%)
VIII	Ability to integrate new information from e-sources into an existing body of knowledge	56 (23.1%)	69 (28.5%)	66 (27.2%)	51 (21.1%)

Key: Very High (VH), High (H), Low (L), Very Low (VL)

Table 5 shows the level of information literacy skills possess by the undergraduates in FUU. The result of item-by-item analysis as presented in Table 5 revealed that ability formulate questions based on the needed information was Very High among the majority 144(59.5%) of the respondents while the ability to access relevant information using different sources was low among most 73(30.2%) respondents. Ability to integrate new information into an existing body of knowledge was high. This implies that undergraduates are effective in using information but have difficulty navigating the sources.

This is possible as EIRs reside in varied sources and will require one with high information literacy skills to access them. EIRs are crucial to all information users including undergraduates. It therefore means that undergraduates due to their lack of adequate search skills are not enjoying full benefits associated with the use of EIRs. Thus, this finding is in contradiction with the position of Odede (2018) who conducted a study to ascertain information literacy skills level among students in the use of EIRs. With a sample size of 118 students, it was found that undergraduates possess high information literacy skills as it was agreed by the majority 63(54.8%) that their use of EIRs is determined by their ability to locate information in multiple sources.

- Research Question 4. What are the challenges that hinder the use of EIRs by undergraduates?

Table 6. Challenges to the use of Electronic information resources by undergraduates

S/N	Items description	SA	A	D	SD
I	Not able to formulate search terms	51 (21.1%)	56 (23.1%)	66 (27.3%)	70 (29.0%)
II	Often confused due to too much information on the Internet	125 (51.7%)	82 (82.4%)	23 (9.5%)	12 (4.9%)
III	Difficulty in accessing some databases	90 (37.2%)	76 (31.4%)	48 (19.8%)	28 (11.6%)
IV	Poor network	129 (53.3%)	98 (40.5%)	10 (4.1%)	3 (1.2%)
V	High cost of internet access	120 (50.0%)	99 (41.0%)	21 (8.7%)	2 (0.9%)
VI	Inability to effectively evaluate EIRs	66 (27.3%)	87 (36.0%)	54 (22.3%)	35 (14.5%)
VII	Inadequate electronic facilities in the library	41 (16.9%)	53 (21.9%)	64 (26.4%)	81 (33.5%)

Key: **Strongly Agree (SA), Agree (A), Disagree (D), Strongly Disagree (SD)**

Table 6 shows the challenges that militate against the use of electronic information resources (EIRs) by undergraduates in FUO. The result of item-by-item analysis as presented in Table 6, more than half 129 (53.3%) and 125 (51.7%) of the respondents respectively identified poor network and confusion due to too much information on the Internet as the challenges they faced. High cost of Internet access was also indicated by half of the respondents 120 (51%) as a challenge. From the results, it can be deduced that many factors act as barriers to the use of EIRs by undergraduates. It has been revealed that besides the insufficient information literacy skills possession by undergraduates, infrastructural deficit is also a major challenge. This implies that the use of EIRs by undergraduates still leaves much to be desired in the university. This is in tandem with the findings of (Mole 2017) who indicated in his study of the factors that militate against the use of online information resources for academic purposes and reported that low bandwidth $\bar{x}=3.15$ was a major challenge to undergraduates use of EIRS in Nigerian academic institutions.

Conclusion and Recommendations

The use of electronic information resources and the electronic migration have brought satisfaction on the diverse and changing needs of undergraduates and other library users, including ease of access to information resources. Various types of EIRs such as e-books, e-journals and online databases have been essential to undergraduates' academic engagements such as class assignment, research and study. However, it must be noted that information literacy skills possession is one major contributor to adequate and effective use of EIRs by undergraduates. It is therefore imperative for undergraduates to make concerted efforts to acquire all the skills of an information literate person which consists among others ability to recognize when information is needed as well as ability to locate information from multiple electronic sources.

However, it would not be wrong to state that the use of electronic information resources in libraries has contributed immensely to the academic progression of undergraduates and their use should be encouraged in Nigerian universities. Academic institutions in Nigeria should ensure the provision of electronic facilities to boost access and use of EIRs. It is also worthy of note that availability of EIRs does not connote use; hence, the university libraries should contribute to the use of EIRs by organising information literacy skills training sessions as part of the compulsory use of library curriculum. This will foster the acquisition of requisite information literacy skills by undergraduates in Nigerian universities.

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