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CHALLENGES ASSOCIATED WITH ACCESSING AND UTILIZING LIBRARY ELECTRONIC INFORMATION RESOURCES BY ECONOMICS EDUCATION STUDENTS' IN SOUTH EAST, NIGERIA

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Abstract

This study focused on ascertaining the challenges associated with accessing and utilizing library e-resources by Economics Education students' in South East NigeriaThe study adopted a descriptive survey research design. Samples were drawn using a purposive sampling technique in selecting four hundred and ninety-two (492) Economics Education students' from the study area. Data was collected using a validated 4-point Likert rated questionnaire for challenges associated with accessing and utilizing library e-resources (QCAUER) instrument with a reliability coefficient of 0.72. Two research questions and two research hypotheses were formulated to guide the study. Frequency count and simple Percentage was used to answer the research questions, while Mann Whitney U test was used in testing the hypotheses at 0.05 level of significance using statistical package for social sciences (SPSS). The findings revealed that, there were a number of challenges that was identified, commonly which include slow internet speed, struggle in finding related information, surplus of information on the Internet, slow speed of the internet affected the speed at which information is retrieved, limited computer system, power outage, lack of ICT skills, insufficient Database in Economics education, Inadequate user ability in manipulating e-resources, expensive internet subscriptions, limited access to e-resources, and poor networking system. Based on the challenges appropriate strategies were suggested to solve the identified, the strategies include an increase in bandwidth, provision of stable power, organize training and workshops on ICT, provide a more user-friendly platform, first-year students should be introduced to computer training, among other strategies. Based on the findings the researchers recommended that government and other non-governmental organization should partner with library management to make cater to these challenges to bring about a sailing experience in the effective use of e-resources.

Keywords: Challenges, Access, Utilization, Students, South East Nigeria

Introduction

Given the everyday advancement in technology around the world, it is true to say that almost everything is now associated and inclined with the phrase "electronic" in such that Institutions, businesses, and other non-governmental organizations make provisions for electronic information for easy accessibility, convenience and timely access to information anytime and anywhere.

The early 1450s brought about innovation in the book industry when Johann Gutenberg's invented the printing machine. By that time, computer joined into the process and the book industry took its share from transformation to having books in an electronic platform, which is now referred to as (e-books). The concept of electronic book (e-book) was introduced as a result of the recurrent upgrading of the electronic world and as such, it was first released to the market place in the 1990s (Gregory, 2008). The invention and provision of online resources according to Daramola (2016: 366) is aimed at "broadening the range of available information resources 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". This was a major breakthrough for the libraries to have their books in an electronic form and as such it could be accessed from any location. Since the launching of the electronic book in the USA, the platform has been increasingly prevalent.

Since the emergence of electronic method of accessing information, it has given the libraries a new phase and a more global reformed system where information resources can be shared within different libraries to aid global information accessibility and management in the university environment in Nigeria (Ani and Ahiazu, 2008). Ani and Ahiazu (2008) further explained how most libraries information and services in Nigeria have been fully automated, as

such most libraries in Nigeria now provide library users with online reference materials services. These services are provided to support e-learning programmes for other institutions. These are all geared to support teaching learning and research. Consequentially, it is important for student to avail themselves and seize the opportunity these resources provide. In cases where there is difficulty, Hardy (2010) suggested that as well trained academic librarians ought to be positioned to help readers navigate and evaluate library – based information resources.

However, given the poor state of funding, most university libraries are greatly under pressure to provide resources that will meet the need of information seekers to enable them to carry out research, teaching, and learning. Universities libraries within their little resources now carry out a number of initiatives to expedite the establishment and utilization of electronic information resources. Some of the initiatives that were developed are the MacArthur Foundation to support selected university libraries in Nigeria, the Electronic Information for Libraries' Network (eiFL.Net) and the Universities' Connect MTN Foundation. These initiatives have led to an increasing in the accessibility of electronic resources across university libraries in Nigeria (Ani & Ahiazu, 2008).

The dictionary for library and information science, explained the term accessibility to mean the ease with which an individual may have easy access to the library and also have equitable access to information resources without hitches. Generally, accessibility connote the ability to locate and access information by information seeker... In the web environment, accessibility is associated with the extent to which information can be usable, given the available technologies like computer systems.

Despite the prodigious advantages of online information resources, users still face some challenges with the use of these resources. According to Annuobi (2009), the problems of

associated with the utilization of electronic resources arise basically when there are inadequacies with on the library itself in providing a working database as well as mediums to which these resources are provided as well as a bandwhich that can accommodate large numbers of users. Annuobi (2009) further explained that library information sometimes has issues with arranging information resources sequentially, with information dispersed all around the library database, it becomes very difficult for users to filter relevant information within the short possible time, as such defeating the aim of e-resource provision on the part of time efficiency. Epic (2001) was of the opinion that the continual explosion of information sources for both articles and other need information provisions both in soft and hard copies which are made available may be confusing to some users, since retrieving too much information is a problem, as this might get some users to become lost and may not know when to quit searching. These issues have limited the accessibility and effective utilization of these resources.

Hence, the study examined the challenges associated with the use of electronic resources as well as possible strategies for enhancing the utilization among Economics Education students'' in South East Nigeria.

Research Questions

1. What are the challenges associated with the use of e-resources in university libraries in South East Nigeria by Economics Education students?
2. What are the strategies for enhancing the use of e-resources in the library by Economics Education students?

Hypothesis

Ho1:   There is no significant difference in the response of male and female students' of Economics education on the challenges associated with the use of e-resource materials.

Ho2:   There is no significant difference in the response of male and female students' of Economics education on the strategies suggested for enhancing the use of e-resource materials.

Methodology

The study adopted a descriptive survey design to find out the challenges associated with the use of library e-resource information among Economics Education students' in South East, Nigeria Nworgu (2015) explained that a descriptive survey design targets at gathering data and describing that data in an orderly manner, the attributes or facts about a given inhabitants. Five (5) public university was purposefully selected on the bases that they offer Economics Education as a course of study and four hundred and ninety-two (492) Economics Education students were used as the respondents for the study. During the course of data collection, there was a mortality of 74 respondents. Hence amounting the total respondents to be 418.

A researcher self-developed questionnaire was used for data collection titled "challenges associated with accessing and utilizing library e-resources" (QCAUER). The questionnaire solicited for information on the challenges associated with accessing and utilizing library e-resources as well as the strategies for solving these problems. The questionnaire consisted of two broad parts; Part A and part B. Part A are on demographic and characteristics of the respondents while part B was sub-divided into two (2) clusters. Cluster one elicits information on the various challenges associated with accessing and utilizing e-resources. While cluster two deals with strategies for enhancing accessibility and utilization of e-resources.

The instrument was validated by three experts. One in Social Science Education, one in library and information science and the third individual was in the department of science education, at the University of Nigeria, to ascertain the content coverage of the items in respect of the research

questions. All the corrections made by the validators where effected. The instrument was trial tested and a reliability of 0.72 was established using Cronbach alpha with the help of statistical package for social sciences (SPSS). The instruments were administered by the researchers and two research assistant. After the collection of data, frequency counts and the simple percentage was used to analyze the data While the null hypothesis was tested using Mann Whitney U at 0.05 level of significance. This means that any item with 49% and bellow respectively is not available or utilized while item with 50% or above is available or utilized.

Results and Discussions of Findings

Research Question One

What are the challenges associated with the use of e-resources in university libraries in South East Nigeria by Economics Education students?

Table 1: Challenges associated with the use of e-resources in university libraries.

S/N	ITEM STATEMENT	Agree Freq.	%	Disagree Freq.	%	Decision
1	Slow internet speed	382	100	0	0	Agree
2	Struggle in locating relevant information	270	70.5	113	29.5	Agree
3	Surplus of information resources on the Internet	255	79	68	21.1	Agree
4	Time inefficiency in viewing/downloading pages	276	72.1	107	27.9	Agree
5	Privacy problem	151	39.5	231	60.5	Disagree
6	Limited computer system	199	52	184	48	Agree
7	Power outage	359	93.8	24	6.3	Agree
8	Lack of ICT skills	290	75.7	92	24.1	Agree
9	Insufficient Database in Economics education	222	58	161	42	Agree
10	Inadequate user ability in manipulating e-resources	263	68.8	119	31.2	Agree
11	Expensive internet subscriptions	382	100	0	0	Agree
12	Limited access to e-resources	287	75.1	95	24.9	Agree
13	Poor networking system	315	82.2	68	17.8	Agree

Decision criteria (%: < 50 = Disagree; > 49 = Agree)

CHALLANGES ASSOCIATED WITH THE USE OF E-RESOURCES

■ Agree ■ Disagree

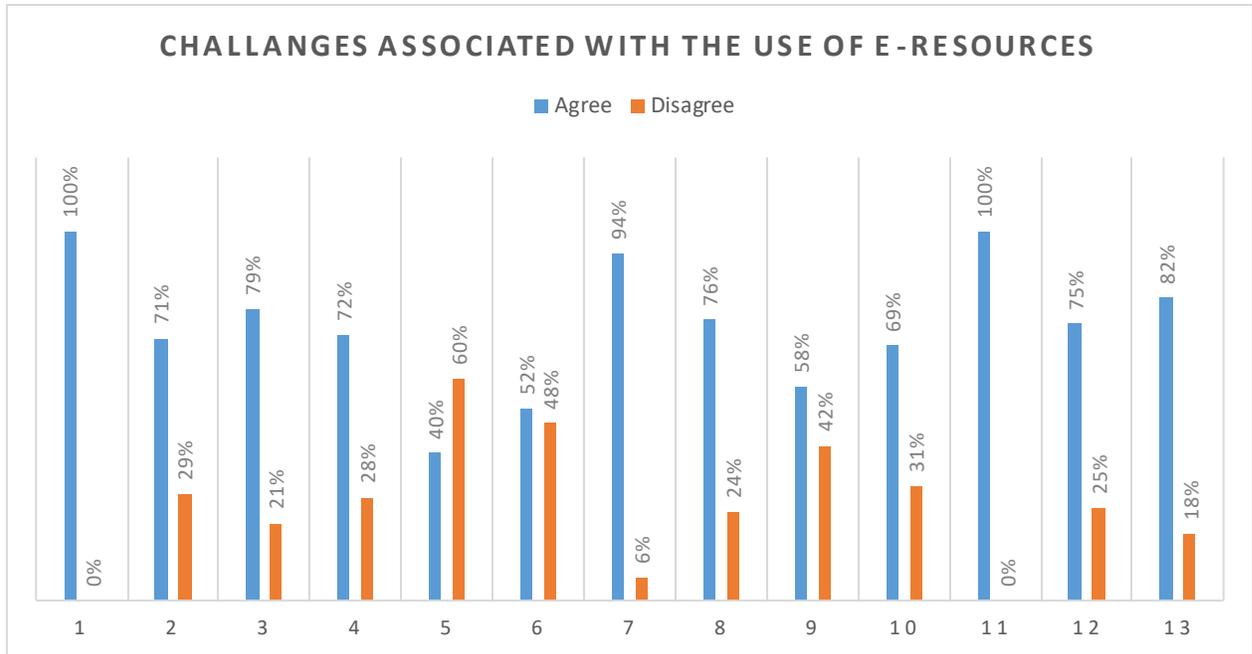| Item	Agree	Disagree
1	100%	0%
2	71%	29%
3	79%	21%
4	72%	28%
5	40%	60%
6	52%	48%
7	94%	6%
8	76%	24%
9	58%	42%
10	69%	31%
11	100%	0%
12	75%	25%
13	82%	18%

Chart Showing Students' opinions on the challenges associated with that use of e-resource

Result presented in Table 1 above shows the frequency and percentage responses of students on challenges associated with the use of e-resources in university libraries. The table revealed that items 1,2,3,4,6,7,8,9,10,11,12 and 13 with a frequency and percentage level of 382(100%), 270(70.5%), 255(79%), 276(72.1%), 199(52%), 359(93.8%), 290(75.7%) 222(58%), 263(68.8%), 382(100%), 287(75.1) and 315(82.2%) respectively were the challenges identified by Economics education students while item 5 with a frequency and percentage level of 231(60.5%) was not identified as a challenge. This implies that the challenges associated with the use of e-resources identified by Economics education students' include; slow internet speed, trouble in locating relevant information, surplus of information resources on the Internet, Time inefficiency in viewing/downloading pages, limited computer system, power outage, lack of ICT skills, insufficient Database in Economics education, Inadequate user ability in manipulating e-resources, expensive internet subscriptions, limited access to e-resources, and poor networking

system, respectively. While the privacy problem was not identified as a challenge. This finding was further verified by hypothesis seven.

Hypothesis One: There is no significant difference in the response of male and female students' of Economics education on the challenges associated with the use of e-resource materials.

Table 2: Mann Whitney U test of students' response to the challenges associated with the use of e-resources material.

	U Value	Z Value	Sig. (2 tailed)	Decision
Gender	15341.0	-1.065	0.287	Not Significant

Table 2 indicates that the probability level of 0.287 is greater than the set alpha level of 0.05 with a Z value of -1.065. Accordingly, the Null hypothesis of no significant difference between the response of male and female Economics Education students' on the challenges associated with the use of e-resources provisions is therefore accepted. This implies that the response of male and females economics education students on the challenges associated with the use of e-resource materials do not differ.

Question Two

What are the strategies for enhancing the use of e-resources in the library by Economics Education students?

Table 3: Strategies for enhancing the use of e-resources materials.

S/N	ITEM STATEMENT	Agree Freq.	Agree %	Disagree Freq.	Disagree %	Decision
1	Increase bandwidth	334	87.4	48	12.6	Agree
2	Provision of stable Power	382	100	0	0	Agree
3	Provision of more computer Units	137	35.8	246	64.2	Disagree
4	Organize training and workshops on ICT	334	87.4	48	12.6	Agree
5	Provide a more user-friendly platform	323	84.6	59	15.4	Agree
6	First-year students should be introduced to computer training	335	87.5	48	12.5	Agree
7	The University should have more networked computers	245	64.1	137	35.9	Agree
8	Information literacy skills are incorporated into the academic program	208	54.3	175	45.7	Agree
9	Lecturers should insist on students using e-resources	289	76	91	23.9	Agree
10	Increase access to database	93	24.5	287	75.5	Disagree

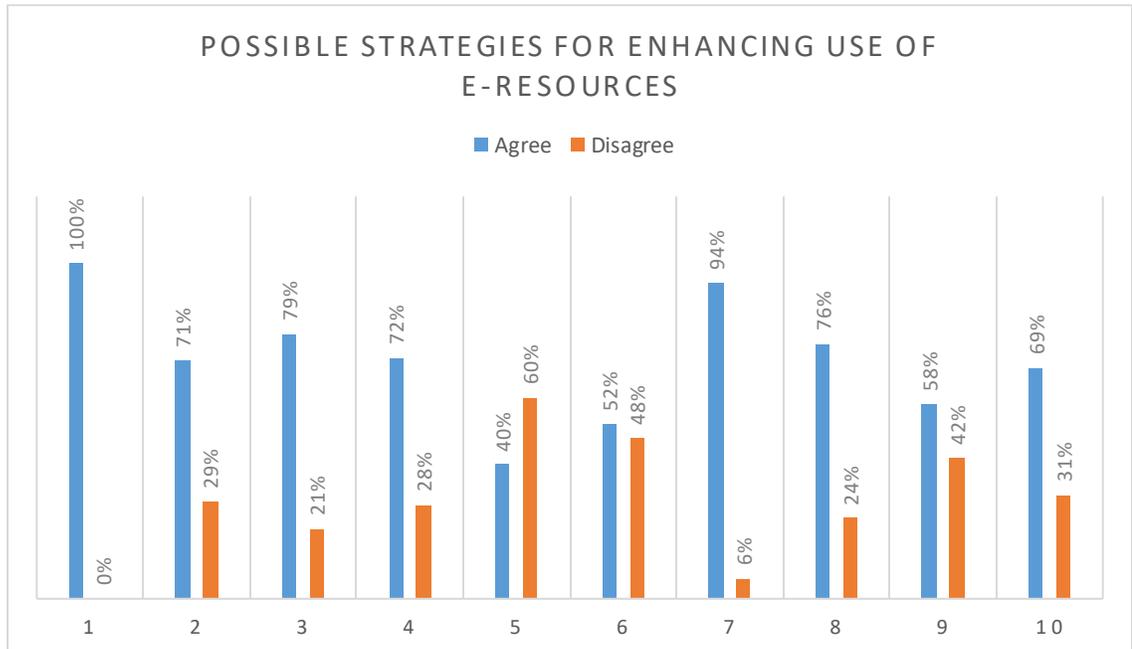**Decision criteria (%: < 50 = Disagree; > 49 = Agree)**

Chart showing possible strategies suggested by the student for enhancing the use of e-resources

Result presented in Table 3 above shows the frequency and percentage responses of students on various strategies for enhancing the use of e-resource materials. The table revealed that items 1,2,4,6,7,8, and 9 with a frequency and percentage level of 334(87.4%), 382(100%), 334(87.4%), 323(84.6%), 335(87.5%), 245(64.1%), 208(54.3%) and 289(76%), respectively were the strategies identified by Economics education students while item 3 and 10 with a frequency and percentage level of 246(64.2%) and 287(75.5) was not identified as a strategy. This implies that the strategies for enhancing the use of e-resources identified by Economics education students' include; increase bandwidth, provision of stable power, organize training and workshops on ICT, provide a more user friendly platform , first-year students should be introduced to computer training , the university should have more networked computers, Information literacy skills be incorporated into the academic program and that lecturers should insist on students using e-resources, respectively. While the provision of more computer units and increase access to the database were not identified as part of the strategies. This finding was further verified by hypothesis eight.

Hypothesis One: There is no significant difference in the response of male and female students' of Economics education on the strategies suggested for enhancing the use of e-resource materials.

Table 4: There is no significant difference in the strategies suggested by male and female students' in enhancing challenges faced in the course of using e-resources.

	U Value	Z Value	Sig. (2 tailed)	Decision
Gender	11553.5	-4.937	0.00	Significant

Table 4 indicates that the probability level of 0.00 is greater than the set alpha level of 0.05 with a Z value of -4.937. Accordingly, the Null hypothesis of no significant difference between the response of male and female Economics Education students' on the challenges associated with the use of e-resources provisions is therefore rejected. This implies that the response of male and females economics education students on strategies for enhancing the use of e-resource differs.

Challenges associated with the use of e-resources in university libraries in South East Nigeria

The result of data analyzed in table 1 with regard to the challenges associated with the use of e-resources in universities library revealed that the major challenges that students were confronted with were highlighted as follows; slow internet speed, difficulty in finding relevant information, overload of information on the Internet, it takes too long to view/download pages, limited computer system, power outage, lack of ICT skills, insufficient Database in Economics education, Inadequate user ability in manipulating e-resources, expensive internet subscriptions, limited access to e-resources, and poor networking system, respectively. The findings revealed that this is the common problems that are associated with the use of e-resources in higher institutions in Nigeria. The findings were further tested by hypothesis one in table 2 which revealed that there is no significant difference in the response of male and female students on the challenges they are confronted with. Hence both male and female Economics education students' are confronted with the same challenges.

The finding of this study further validated the opinion of Montgomery and King (2012) who opined that the lack of funding of the library system will lead to many inadequacies and challenges in the course of making resources available.

The strategies for enhancing the use of e-resources in the library

Based on the obtained results analyzed in table 15 with respect to strategies suggested by students' for enhancing the use of e-resources in the university libraries. The analysis showed that the strategies that were suggested by students include; increasing the strength of bandwidth, provision of stable power supply, organization of training and workshops on ICT for students to enhance their usability capability, the introduction of a computer training programme for first-year students' among other suggestions made. In line with the challenges that Economics education students face in the course of utilizing e-resource materials. The suggestions were particular peculiar to each student and how it affected their usage of the resources. The findings were further tested in hypothesis two in table 4, which revealed that there is a significant difference in the response of male and female students on the strategies suggested. Hence both male and female Economics education students' proffered different suggestions that are peculiar to their usage.

The findings of the study further authenticated the view of Mason (2010), who suggested that since a university library has the mission to build and manage a collection of materials that will favour and enhance the instructional needs of the institution, academic libraries are expected to meet all the challenges of students by putting in place all necessary provisions for all sources of information that are required for research and other academic activities. Similarly, it also comforted the opinion of Jones (2010) who observed that in most cases there could availability of information resources but students don't have access to them as a result of varying challenges, thus adequate measures should be taken.

Conclusions

1. Challenges associated with the use of e-resources identified by Economics education students' include; slow internet speed, difficulty in finding relevant information, overload of information on the Internet, it takes too long to view/download pages, limited computer system, power outage, lack of ICT skills, insufficient Database in Economics education, Inadequate user ability in manipulating e-resources, expensive internet subscriptions, limited access to e-resources, and poor networking system.

2. Strategies suggested by Economics Education students' for enhancing utilization of e-resource materials include; increase bandwidth, provision of stable power, organize training and workshops on ICT, provide a more user friendly platform , first-year students should be introduced to computer training , the university should have more networked computers, Information literacy skills be incorporated into the academic program and that lecturers should insist on students using e-resources, respectively.

Recommendation

- The study recommended that government and other non-governmental organization should partner with library management to make accommodate these challenges to bring about a sailing experience in the effective use of library e-resources.

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