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## AVAILABILITY AND UTILIZATION OF E-RESOURCES IN UNIVERSITY LIBRARIES FOR EFFECTIVE RESEARCH OUTPUT BY UNDERGRADUATES OF SOCIAL STUDIES IN SOUTH EAST NIGERIA

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**AVAILABILITY AND UTILIZATION OF E-RESOURCES IN UNIVERSITY  
LIBRARIES FOR EFFECTIVE RESEARCH OUTPUT BY UNDERGRADUATES OF  
SOCIAL STUDIES IN SOUTH EAST NIGERIA.**

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**Abstract**

This study sought to investigate the availability and utilization of e-resources in university libraries for effective research output by undergraduates of Social Studies in south-east, Nigeria. It is a descriptive survey research design. two research questions guided the study. A sample of 191 students from four stratified randomly selected universities in south east, Nigeria, were used for the study. The instrument for data collection is the researcher's designed and validated questionnaire, tagged: 'The Use of E-Resources in University Libraries Questionnaire' (UERULQ). The instrument was trial tested using Cronbach Alpha, while reliability coefficient of 0.98 was obtained, which was considered high enough for the study. Mean and standard deviation, frequency and standard deviation was used to answer the research questions. The results showed among others that students use e-library resources but not to the maximum because they lack ICT skills and do encounter problems while using them. It concluded among others that when strategies for enhancing the utilization of e-resources suggested in this study were adhered to, it will reduce the problems students encounter in using e-resources for their academic research and ultimately, lead to effective research output. The study recommended among others that the National Universities Commission (NUC), National Commission for Colleges of Education (NCCE) among other educational bodies should be focused towards preparing teachers to acquire appropriate skills in e-resources utilization.

Keywords: Availability, Utilization, E-resources, University Libraries, Research Output, Undergraduates, Social Studies, South East Nigeria

## **Introduction**

The word ‘resource’ may mean different things to different people depending on the area of usage. E-libraries resources are comprised of e-journals, e-books, documents, databases, multimedia materials and links to other resources. An e-resource (electronic resource) is any resource which is accessed through the internet. E-Libraries provides access to information in an electronic format. Examples of e-resources include electronic books (e-book), electronic journals (e-journal), CD-ROMs, online databases in varied digital formats, e-mails, Adobe Acrobat documents, WebPages, e-magazines, e-serials, e-dissertations and theses, World Wide Web, Online Public Access Catalogues, Reference Databases, e-images and e-audio visual resources, (OKore, Asogwa & Eke 2009)

Electronic journals and databases are used by university lecturers for teaching and research. Academics have continued the use of electronic resources because it leads to better research and improved scholarly communication (Adegboro, 2011). Tahir, Mahmood and Shafique in Adegboro (2011) noted that academic environment has been transformed with the help of Digital technology, which has changed the teaching style and research methods of academics. Today, university libraries provide different online services, which include and not limited to access to online databases consisting of electronic resources such as e-books, e-journals, e-theses and dissertations, to help users across the globe.

In the views of Tyner (2014); Ji, Michaels and Waterman (2014) as expressed in Okite-Amughoro, Makgahlela and Bopupe (2014:4), “there has been a rapid growth in electronic resources, and university libraries have been spending huge amounts of their annual budgets on subscriptions to online databases. According to, Tyner (2014), “electronic resources have many advantages over traditional print-based resources”. These advantages include the fact that electronic resources contain current information because they are updated regularly. Similarly, the storage of search results is flexible and they have advanced search capabilities which “allow access to information without the restrictions of time and location” (Togia & Tsigilis 2009). With the arrival of electronic resources and the approval of Nigeria Virtual Library Project by the Federal Executive Council (FEC) of Nigeria in 2002, Nigerian universities have joined their counterparts across the globe in developing electronic libraries to improve the quality of teaching, learning and research. The aim of virtual library project is to bring together resources electronically, connecting all universities libraries in Nigeria with the hub at National University Commission.

Formerly, researches in universities was dominated by the use of materials in hard copies as major sources of information. But recently, advances in Information Communication Technology (ICT) have changed the narrative (Ndinoshiho 2010). Tella, Owolabi and Attama

(2009:1) state that “it is no longer surprising that, in this digital age, many libraries in tertiary institutions are connected to the internet or have plans to get connected soon”.

University libraries are increasingly utilizing the many benefits of Information and Communication Technologies (ICTs) to provide improved access to electronic information resources (EIR). ‘Making use of information in electronic media has, created opportunities for access to information’ (Okite-Amughoro, Makgahlela and Bopupe (2014:2) globally, improvement in the speed of service, rise in the number of users served, increase in the quantity and exhaustiveness of information provided, and helped tertiary education students to find information they need concerning their research areas (Varghese, 2008). The development of EIR in university libraries in Nigeria will facilitate access to electronic journals and large collections of digital books for the students (Afolabi, in Okite-Amughoro, Makgahlela and Bopupe, 2014).

Hemminger, Vaughan & Adam (2007) is of the view that there has been a dramatic shift towards the use of electronic resources since the beginning of the twenty-first century. The primary driver of change has been the widespread availability of web-based electronic journals. The academic sector has also experienced this transformation towards the use of electronic resources. Electronic resources have become the most popular instrument for teaching, learning and research. (Golwal, Sonwane & Vaishnav, 2008). According to Okello-Obura and Magara (2008), the major purpose for choosing e-resources is to make ‘access to international information resources via the internet easy, and also, the timely dissemination of both local and international research output’. This is because researchers still need information, mainly for subsequent reading of their existing knowledge on given topics, and for keeping themselves up to date on new developments (Okite-Amughoro, Makgahlela and Bopupe, 2014). Information is also needed for solving topical problems and for brainstorming ideas for new research. Several studies across the globe have stated that the use of electronic resources could increase and has improved the efficiency, effectiveness and quality of education, learning and the research process. For example, Gardner, Juricek and Xu (2008) as reported by Okite-Amughoro, Makgahlela and Bopupe (2014:4) ‘carried out a survey of electronic information in the top one hundred colleges and universities in the United States of America, and found out that the quality of circulation and the ability to support teaching and research have been largely enhanced’.

## **Literature Review**

Dilek-Kayaoglu (2008) carried out a study on the usage of electronic resources by an academic community in Istanbul, Turkey and found out that many of the respondents supported the transition from print to electronic resources. Hence, the use of electronic information is very important because, as opined by Rioux (2014), electronic resources are essential part of University libraries where academic resources help in teaching, learning, and research activities. The allocation of funds to the development of library information systems, electronic services and resources is very important, if researchers are to be productive and competitive.

According to Fabunmi, Paris & Fabunmi (2006), the manual system of searching for information resources does not give one access to multiple options and use of the same information resources by different users at the same time unlike online services. Today, libraries adopt modern technologies to make library resources available to users in electronic form. (Bajpai; Hada, & Bajpai, 2016). For libraries to satisfy their users well, they need to manage their e-resources well.

Batool and Ameen (2010) identified technological core competency of library personnel to effectively manage the e-library. They added that “skills, knowledge and behavior related to library technology are important for organization success, and personnel performance in the e-library. Aina (2008) mentioned the following strategies on how best to manage an e-library: law, policies and procedures, staff, training, storage and accessibility of e-library resources. Bar-Ilan and Fink (2005) in their survey on e-library users show that if the e-library is well managed, it will lead to an increase of e-library resources with time.

The concept ‘utilization’ is the extent to which a product can be accessed to achieve specified goals with effectiveness; efficiency and satisfaction in a specified extent of consumption. Using e-library resources is a common practice, but the skill of using these resources to the utmost is not so common. The utilization and non-utilization of the universities libraries by the student is dependent on how well access is provided by the librarians. The librarians should manage the e-libraries well. Ajayi and Akinniyi (2004) were of the opinion that, there is frustration among students as a result of their inability to access the e-library resources.

Utilization literally means to consume, in a layman’s understanding. E-library resources utilization therefore is the total amount of e-library resources actually consumed compared to the amount of resources planned for a specific process. Utilization is the accessibility of a product, services, environment, or facility by people with widest range of capability. Oyediran-Tidings (2004) observed that there was low utilization of the e-library resources by students which was attributed to the expressed unavailability of desired information resources.

Accordingly, Neil (2003) is of the view that students do not use ICT because they are not ICT competent. Different studies have identified how students acquire their search skills for the use of e-resources. Majority of students obtained their knowledge by trial and error, or with the help of fellow students, or practical self-teaching. Irrespective of gender, e-resources are used by students for different purposes. E-resources are used for theses/dissertation/ project writing by postgraduate and final-year students. Reiner and Smith (2008) and Badu and Markwei (2005) all reported that students used e-resources mainly for research and assignments.

### **Statement of the Problem**

E-resource is very indispensable in facilitating effective research because it helps researchers to have access to a vast information, accurate and latest developments across the globe at a faster rate. It helps to make the research findings known to the public. Observation shows that there is

low usage of e-library resources in public universities in South-East, Nigeria. Anecdotal evidence and the researchers' personal experiences have revealed that majority of the undergraduate students made little or no use of electronic resources provided by the university library despite the high cost of these resources.

## Research Questions

1. What are the types of e-library resources provided in the university libraries for effective research output by undergraduates of Social Studies?
2. What is the extent of utilization of e-resources by undergraduates of Social Studies?

## Methodology

This study adopted descriptive survey research design. The population for the study comprised all undergraduate students of social studies in South East Nigeria. The sample is 191 students. This consists of 77 male undergraduate students, 114 female undergraduate students, making it a total of 191 students. Stratified random sampling was used to select the sample size. The instrument for the study is a self-designed questionnaire titled "The Use of E-Resources in University Libraries Questionnaire" (UERULQ). Cronbach Alpha method of reliability and estimation of internal consistency methods were adopted and reliability coefficient of 0.98 was obtained. Two research questions were tested using mean, standard deviation and frequency counts and simple percentage.

## Results and Discussion

### Results

**Research Question One:** What are the types of e-library resources provided in university libraries for effective research output by undergraduates of Social Studies?

Table 1: Types of e-library resources provided

S/N	ITEM STATEMENTS	MEAN	SD	DECISION
1	e-books	3.15	.790	Accept
2	e-journals	2.94	.878	Accept
3	e-databases	2.84	1.074	Accept
4	e-magazines	2.74	1.012	Accept
5	e-serials	2.84	.874	Accept

6	e-dissertations and theses/projects	2.67	.901	Accept
7	CD-ROMS	2.74	1.013	Accept
8	Online Public Access Catalogue	2.97	.729	Accept
9	Reference Databases	2.55	1.029	Accept
10	e-images	2.87	.794	Accept
11	e-audio visual resources	2.65	.993	Accept

Table 1 shows the type of e-library resources provided. Generally, the table revealed that the mean response of respondents on the type of e-library resources provided was above 2.50, meaning that e-resources was provided for effective research output. For instance, e-books had a mean response of 3.15, e-journals had a mean response of 2.94, e-databases had a mean response of 2.84, e-magazines 2.74, e-serials 2.84, e-dissertations and theses/projects 2.67, CD-ROMS 2.74. Online Public Access Catalogue 2.97, Reference Databases 2.55, e-images 2.87 and e-audio visual resources had a mean response of 2.65. Similarly, their standard deviations are as follows: .790, .878, 1.074, 1.012, .874, .901, 1.013, .729, 1.029, .794, .993 respectively.

**Research Question Two:** What is the extent of utilization of e-resources by undergraduates of Social Studies?

**Table 2: Utilization of e-resources**

S/N	ITEM STATEMENTS	F	%
12	e-books	132	69.1
13	e-journals	132	69.1
14	e-databases	137	71.8
15	e-magazines	116	60.7
16	e-serials	99	51.8
17	e-dissertations and theses/projects	133	69.6

18	CD-ROMS	118	61.7
19	Online Public Access Catalogue	116	62.3
20	Reference Databases	112	58.6
21	e-images	107	56
22	e-audio visual resources	127	66.5

Table 2 reveals the extent of utilization of e-resources. For instance, 132(69.1%) respondents agreed to the utilization of e-books. The table further reveals that 132(69.1%) respondents utilize e-journals. The result further reveals that 137(71.8%) respondents utilize e-databases. On e-magazines, 116(60.7%) respondents. On e-serials, 99(51.8%) respondents. On e-dissertations and theses/projects, 133(69.6%) respondents. On CD ROMS, 118(61.7%) agreed. On Online Public Access Catalogue, 116(62.3%) agreed. On Reference Databases, 112(58.6%) utilizes them. On e-images, 107(56%). On e-audio visual resources, 127(66.5%) respondents.

### **Discussion of Findings**

The findings of the study revealed that the mean response of respondents on the types of e-library resources provided was above the bench mark set for this study, which means that e-library resources were provided for effective research output by undergraduates of Social Studies. It was further found that there is no significant difference in the responses of male and female students on the types of e-library resources provided. The findings of this study are in line with that of Bajpai; Hada and Bajpai (2016), who found out that today, university libraries adopt modern technologies to make library resources available to users in electronic form and also provide various online services to their users across the globe. The findings also agree with the findings of Habib, Enite and Aworo (2015), who found out that students have access to and utilize e-library resources. These findings confirm the assertion made by the Federal Executive Council (FEC) of Nigeria in 2002 that, with the arrival of electronic resources and the approval of Nigeria Virtual Library Project, that Nigerian universities have joined their counterparts across the globe in developing electronic libraries to improve the quality of teaching, learning and research. The implication of the above findings is that e-library resources are provided in university libraries, in order to help students make effective research and also join in the ongoing e-learning across the globe.

The findings of the study show that frequencies and percentages of the respondents on the extent of utilization of e-library resources are higher. This means that students utilize them. Thus, there is a significant difference in the responses of male and female students on their level of utilization of e-library resources. The findings of this study are consistent with Ndubuisi and Nwokocha (2013), who found out students were motivated to use the electronic information



resources in their university libraries because they found e-resources to be more informative and easy access. The findings also agree with the findings of Akpojotor (2016), who found out that students highly use electronic information resources. However, the findings disagree with the findings of Ozoemelem (2009), who reports a high frequency in use of electronic information resources by both male and female postgraduate students. Hence, that there is no significant difference in the responses of male and female students on their level of utilization of e-library resources. The implication of the above findings is that students utilize e-library resources for effective research output, and male students utilize them more than females.

## **Conclusion**

1. The mean response of respondents on the types of e-library resources provided was above the bench mark set for this study, which means that e-library resources were provided for effective research output by undergraduates of Social Studies. It was further found that there is no significant difference in the responses of male and female students on the types of e-library resources provided.
2. The frequencies and percentages of the respondents on the extent of utilization of e-library resources are higher. This means that students utilize them. Thus, there is a significant difference in the responses of male and female students on their level of utilization of e-library resources.

## **Recommendations**

1. The National Universities Commission (NUC), National Commission for Colleges of Education (NCCE) among other educational bodies should be focused towards preparing teachers to acquire appropriate skills in e-resources utilization. This is because, when teachers are competent in the use of e-resources, they can easily teach the students, which will help them to make effective research.
2. The ministry of education should through seminars, workshops and conferences equip serving Social Studies teachers with requisite knowledge, skills and competences on the use of e-resources. This would help make the teaching, learning and research of Social Studies effective.

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