Availability and Use of Electronic Information Resources by Postgraduate Students in John Harris Library University of Benin Benin City

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Abstract

The study investigated the availability and use of electronic information resources by postgraduate students in the John Harris Library University of Benin. A descriptive survey design was used for the study. The population of the study is 249 registered postgraduate students. An accidental sampling technique was used. A structured questionnaire was used for data collection. Out of 80 copies of the questionnaires distributed, 47 were found valid for analysis. Frequency count and the simple percentage were used for data analysis. The resushowed that the electronic information resources available include e-books, e-journals and e-thesis. Electronic information resources were used for project writing, assignments, and academic achievement, and their reasons for using the resources include easy access, multi-access, saving time, and space among others. The challenges faced by postgraduate students in using electronic information resources in the library include; poor infrastructure, erratic power supply, and inadequate skills by both staff and students. It was therefore recommended that there should be training and retraining of both staff and postgraduate students to promote effective use of electronic information resources.

Keyword: University library, Electronic information resources, development, Postgraduate students, Availability and Use, John Harris library

Introduction

One of the major reasons for establishing a University library in any University institution is to provide the academic community with relevant information resources in formats that are comprehensive and easily accessible.Ajibero (2003) sees the university library as the heart of the university and no other single non-human factor is as closely related to the quality of university education. University libraries are commonly referred to as research libraries that are attached to

a university, whose main purpose is to fulfill the aims and objectives of its parent body and to support teaching, research, publication, extension services, conservation and the management of knowledge. University libraries owe to their parent organization the responsibility of providing all kinds of information resources in their respective forms to satisfy the various academic community members' who are; students, lecturers, and researchers to support their teaching, learning and research needs. Scholars have emphasized the vital role of academic libraries in research and scholarship in higher institutions of learning. With the revolving technological advancement, Information resources in University libraries have changed. The emergence of electronic information resources is gradually sweeping away the print forms of information resources. This has brought about an increase in the quality and quantity of electronic information resources which have also altered the demand chain of the university community, thereby leaving libraries with no option but to re-strategize their plan for mass inclusion of electronic resources in their collection. The fact remains that No library can survive in this 21st century age without the addition of electronic information resources (EIRs) to supplement the print collections. According to Jerome and Egbe (2014), "now libraries and information centers have incorporated and adopted various electronic information resources for its collection developments to fulfill the requirements of different categories of library users in a better way". Some of the Electronic information resources are freely available to anyone over internet access (open access) but many are commercially available (closed access).

Electronic information resources are information materials that appear in electronic arrangement, form and layout and are capable of being shared through the networking of computer devices. Electronic information resources are, therefore, those resources that include documents in electronic formats that can be accessed via the internet in a digital library environment (Sinha, Sinha & Sinha, 2011). Electronic information resources are those electronic products that deliver a collection of data, be it text, image collection, or other multimedia products like numerical, or graphical mode which are commercially available for library and information centers. These may be delivered on CD-ROM, over the internet or intranet, (Jerome and Egbe 2014). Aina (2014) sees electronic information resources as systems in which information is stored electronically and made accessible through electronic systems and computer networks. Essentially, EIR is in the form of e-books, e-journals, articles, newspapers, theses, dissertations, databases, and CD-ROMs, which

are likely to be the alternative to print media (Adeniran, 2013). Bhati and Ganai, (2017), posit that Electronic Information Resources (EIRs) have begun to have a great impact on libraries. These have started to change the functioning of libraries, especially in higher education institutions across the world. However, on a large scale, University libraries now often prefer electronic information resources to complement print collections for easy access and optimum use. Many reasons including physical space, high cost of journal, quick search system, digital literacy, and multiple access to mention but a few, make University libraries opt for electronic information resources in meeting the needs of their academic community members. Agboola (2009) stated that the library provides relevant print and electronic information resources for undergraduate and postgraduate students, lecturers, staff, and researchers.

Postgraduate students, therefore, include all students who are undergoing a master's and a Doctor of Philosophy (Ph.D.) degree that require an undergraduate degree as part of the pre-requisites in a University. They are different from undergraduate study in that they tend to specialize and focus on a subject field. However, they are broadly divided into master's degrees and Doctor of Philosophy (Ph.D.). A Master's degree is divided into taught and research masters. Postgraduate students are important members of a university community and are given special attention by libraries, through the provision of information materials in different formats to foster their educational and professional pursuits.

The term availability can be referred to as being able to easily find and reach. As regards this research work, implies the ability to physically find electronic information resources in university libraries. The issue of whether postgraduate students will use the information resources cannot be effectively evaluated if they are not presently and physically available in the library. It can also be said that "use" comes after availability in that, it describes the ability to take independent and judicious advantage of the available resources that are present in the library. However, as a research library, University libraries cannot afford to be behind technological development in that; it serves as the first point of invention and innovation. More to this, the existence and variety of electronic information resources is not a new phenomenon, it is their availability and use of them in the library that can be judged.

As noted by Omeluzor, Molokwu, Dika, and Anene (2022), for a long time, the library has realized the importance of providing access to information in electronic format other than the print sources. The proliferation and development of ICT have necessitated university libraries to include in their collection electronic information resources such as e-books, e-journals, e-thesis and e-databases to meet the information needs of the users in the 21st century. This also helped to save time and space as well as help users in accessing information easily. Due to its importance, University libraries are expected to acquire and make the EIRS available to the users. The unavailability of these resources in the wake of the technology may impede utilization and the role of the university library in the support of her parent institution. However, university libraries all over the world are providing information resources in electronic format but in John Harris Library, University of Benin, the researchers are uncertain whether the University library provides sufficient electronic information resources for postgraduate students in John Harris Library, University of Benin. The study, therefore, sought to investigate recent development in the availability and use of electronic information resources by postgraduate students in John Harris Library, University of Benin.

Objective of the study:

The fundamental objective of this study is to investigate the recent development in the availability and use of electronic information resources by postgraduate students in John Harris Library, while the specific objectives are to;

2 Identify the types of electronic information resources available for use by postgraduate students in John Harris Library.
3 Determine the uses of EIRs by postgraduate students in John Harris Library.
4 Ascertain the benefits of EIRs by postgraduate students in John Harris Library.
5   Find out the challenges of using EIRs by postgraduate students in John Harris Library.

Literature review

Electronic information resources are rapidly taking over the traditional information resources in academic libraries as a result of the influence of information technology. There is no doubt that many University libraries in the world have adopted this trend of information resources to meet the information need of their patrons. Okiki and Asiri (2011) stated that electronic

information resources are products of information and communication technologies and they have been found relevant to the learning and research process in Universities. According to them, electronic information resources include e-journals, ebooks, Databases, OPAC, e-thesis and dissertations, the internet, etc. Oketunji (2006) opined that the future of libraries is very much linked to their abilities to harness and sustain connectivity to available information resources and, therefore, serve as a base for providing effective and efficient access to information to their clientele. The use of electronic information resources provides a better platform and more opportunities for users been that which has obvious advantages over printed information resources, (Afebende and Uyanah, 2008).

Jerome and Egbe (2014), evaluated electronic information resources in University libraries at Covenant University and Bells University, Ogun state. A survey research design was used and a structured questionnaire was used as the major data collection instrument. The study found that the libraries have in their collection electronic information resources. It was also revealed that there is a need for the evaluation of electronic information resources. Among the criteria used in the evaluation are; authority, cost, relevance, coverage, currency, etc. it was also found that the librarians identified relevant Electronic information resources through vendors, Online reading, librarians, academic staff, and students. Among the challenges of using E-resources are finance, lack of technical know-how, power outage and low bandwidth. It was recommended that libraries and librarians should take an evaluation of EIRs very seriously because there is an explosion of EIRs.

Asemi and Riyahiniya (2007) researched to investigate the awareness and use of digital resources by 250 students in the libraries of Isfahan University of medical sciences, Iran. The results were that 70 percent of students were aware of digital resources, but only 69 percent of them have used them, 62 percent were aware of offline databases, whereas only about 19 percent use them through their central library network (LAN). In total 87 percent of students felt that the available data resources met their information needs. Users were faced with problems like low-speed connectivity and a shortage of hardware facilities.

Isiakpona and Ifijeh (2012) evaluated the available electronic resources for service provision in University libraries in Ogun State, Nigeria and how they affect the effective provision

of electronic information resources in selected university libraries in South West Nigeria. The researchers used a survey research design; the stratified random sampling was used to collect data from the study population which was a total of one thousand and thirty-eight (1038) academic staff and librarians from the Federal University of Agriculture, Covenant, and Babcock Universities. The instruments used to collect data were questionnaires and structured interviews. Their findings were that the University libraries have electronic databases; however, the most common of the databases was AGORA while IEE was the least common. The study also revealed that the majority of the University libraries have the adequate basic infrastructure for effective electronic information services. The major challenge involved in the provision of electronic resources among the University libraries was an electricity power outage; findings further showed that there was no significant relationship between the availability of databases and effective electronic resources provision($r = 071$, $N = 414$, $p \geq 05$) and also it revealed that there was a significant relationship between the availability of basic infrastructures and effective electronic resources provision ($r = 523$, $N = 414$, $p \geq 01$). The study recommended that the provision of basic infrastructure that supports the effective use of electronic resources should therefore be made available, this will further guarantee that the electronic information resources acquired by the library are put into use by the library clientele, thereby promoting the achievement of the users' information needs.

Ojo and Ocheye (2015) carried out a study on relevant electronic information resources in the contemporary information age: an assessment of the availability of electronic information resources in Nigerian School libraries. The purpose of the study was to know the state of availability of electronic information resources in government-owned secondary school libraries in the Ijumu Local Government Area of Kogi State, Nigeria. A descriptive survey design was adopted for the study. Questionnaires, observations and interviews are instruments of data collection. 16 secondary schools were randomly selected from 22 and their libraries were studied. Simple percentages were used for data analysis, were below 50% disagree and above 50% agreed. Hence, out of 9 itemized electronic information resources in the questionnaire 3 (33.3%) are available, while 6 (66.7%) were not available. Identified challenges associated with the availability of electronic information resources is 10 (90.9%), more these, data gathered through observation and interviews were used to buttress the discussion of the study. Recommendations were provided

to know the precise types of electronic information resources to acquire in secondary school libraries.

Mafix (2010) emphasized the usefulness of electronic resources and the need for their adoption by law faculties in Nigeria. The author states that electronic legal information resources are designed specifically for legal professionals and lecturers. They make research work prompt, save time and also enhance efficiency due to powerful searching and cross-referencing technology. In the words of Robert (2005), the availability of electronic resources provides access to authoritative, reliable, accurate and timely access to information. In addition to this, the resources can enable innovation in teaching and increase timeliness in research. Madukoma, Onuoha and Ikonne (2014) identified a lack of awareness as a major contributing factor to the non-use of electronic information resources.

Kunwar and Rameh (2017) examined users' satisfaction with library resources and services. The researchers suggested that University libraries should develop an intranet search facility and training of personnel is essential because the effectiveness of the library depends on the performance of the staff. It is suggested that University libraries should enhance other electronic information resources to satisfy the information needs of the patrons.

Methodology

A descriptive survey design was used for the study. The population of the study is 249 registered postgraduate students of the university of Benin. An accidental sampling technique was used to select the postgraduate students that used the library within a week. A structured questionnaire titled "Availability and Use of Electronic Information Resources" (RDAUEIR) was used for data collection. Out of 80 copies of the questionnaire distributed, 47 copies of the instrument were found valid and used for analysis. The data was analyzed using frequency count of simple percentage.

Analysis of data and discussion

Question one: What are the types of electronic information resources available for postgraduate students in John Harris Library?

Table 1: Electronic information resources available in the library

Item	SA	A	D	SD
E-book	25 (53%)	22 (47%)	-	-
E-journal	30 (64%)	17(36%)	-	-
E-thesis	15(32%)	17(36%)	15(32%)	-
E-magazine	9 (19%)	21 (45%)	10 (21%)	7 (15%)
E-database	20 (43%)	11 (23%)	4(9%)	-
E-conference proceedings	16 (34%)	20 (43%)	11 (23%)	-
E-dictionary	10 (21%)	23 (49%)	9 (19%)	5 (11%)
E-encyclopedia	11 (23%)	25 (53%)	8(17%)	3 (6%)
E-maps	7 (15%)	24 (51%)	7 (15%)	-
E-bibliography	9 (19%)	25 (53%)	10 (21%)	3 (6%)

Table 1 shows that e-book (100%), e-journal (100%), e-conference proceedings (76%), e-encyclopedia (76%), e-bibliography (72%), e-dictionary (70%), e-thesis (68%), e-database (66%), e-maps (66%) ande-magazine (62%) were the electronic information resources available in the library.

Question two: What are the EIRs used for by postgraduate students in John Harris Library?

Table 2: Uses of electronic information resources

Item	SA	A	D	SD
Assignment	28 (60%)	19 (40%)	-	-
Lecture note	24 (51%)	23 (48%)	-	-
Project writing	21 (45%)	26(55%)	-	-
Self- entertainment	15 (32%)	19 (41%)	13 (28%)	-
Academic achievement	25 (53%)	22 (47%)	-	-
Self-education	20 (43%)	27(57%)	-	-

Table 2 shows that electronic information resources were used for assignment (100%), lecture notes (100%), project writing (100%), academic achievement (100%), self-education (100%) and self-entertainment (72%). This shows that the respondents were utilizing information and for academic purposes.

Question 3: What are the benefits of EIRs by postgraduate students in John Harris Library?

Table 3: Benefits of using electronic information resources

Item	SA	A	D	SD
Easily accessed	21 (45%)	26(55%)	-	-
Multi-accessed	22 (47%)	25 (53%)		-
Save space	18 (38%)	29 (62%)		-
Save time	20 (43%)	27(57%)		-
Inexpensive	15 (32%)	11(23%)	13(28%)	8(17%)
Easily searched	17 (36%)	21 (45%)	9 (19%)	-
Contain large and useful information	18 (38%)	27 (57%)	2 (4%)	

Table 3 above shows that the benefits of using electronic information resources according to the respondents were multi-accessed (100%), easily accessed (100%), saving space (100%), containing large and useful information (95%), easily searched (81%) and inexpensive (55%).

Question four: What are the challenges of using EIRs by postgraduate students in John Harris Library?

Table 4: Challenges of using electronic information resources

Item	SA	A	D	SD
Inadequate skills by library staff	19 (40%)	22 (47%)	6 (13%)	-
Inadequate skills by library users	17 (36%)	22 (47%)	8(17%)	-
Poor ICT infrastructure	20 (43%)	25 (53%)	2 (4%)	-
Poor internet connection	15 (32%)	23 (48%)	9 (19%)	-
Erratic power supply	11 (23%)	21 (45%)	10 (21%)	5 (11%)
High cost of maintenance	14 (30%)	23 (49%)	8 (17%)	2 (4%)
Information overload	14 (30%)	23 (49%)	8 (17%)	2 (4%)

Table 4 above shows that poor ICT infrastructure (96%), inadequate skills by library staff (87%), inadequate skills by library users (82%), poor internet connection (80%), and high cost of maintenance (79%), information overload (79%) and erratic power supply (67%) were the challenges that faced the utilization of electronic information resources.

Discussion of Findings

The study esterblished the availability of electronic resources in the University library under study. This corresponds with the study of Isiakpona and Ifijeh (2012) on the availability of electronic resources for service provision in University libraries in Ogun State and found that there was provision of electronic information resources.

The study also revealed that elctonic resources are very useful in various way in the University library under study. This finding corresponds with Mafix (2010) on the usefulness of electronic resources and the need for their adoption by law faculties in Nigeria. He discovered that electronic information resources make research work prompt, save time and also enhance efficiency due to powerful searching and cross-referencing technology.

In general, the study was able to ascertain that the post graduate students in the University library under study knew about and made use of electronic resources. This is in line with the study of Asemi and Riyahiniya (2007) on the awareness and use of digital resources by students in the libraries of Isfahan University of medical sciences and found among other things, poor internet connection and poor infrastructure as the challenges affecting digital resources.

Conclusion

The proliferation and the development of the electronic environment have necessitated the acquisition of EIRs such as e-journals, e-books and e-databases which have provided postgraduate students with a wide range of information for their academic use. Therefore, the availability and use of information resources are critical to the academic and professional achievement of postgraduate students. When postgraduate students are exposed to information resources available in a University library, they stand a chance of accessing them and are also encouraged to utilize them judiciously to satisfy their information and research needs. The study which investigated recent development in the availability and use of electronic information resources by postgraduate students in John Harris Library, University of Benin, revealed that electronic information resources were available in the schools under study and were utilized based on their benefits as found in the study. The challenges faced include poor ICT infrastructure, inadequate skills by library staff and students, and high cost of maintenance.

Recommendations

Based on the findings of the study, it is recommended that:

1. The library management should organize training and retraining for both staff and postgraduate students for effective utilization of electronic information resources
2. Government should provide the state of the art infrastructure for the effective management of electronic information resources.
3. The university management should provide funding for the procurement and maintenance of electronic information resources.
4. The parent body of the library should provide basic infrastructure to enhance the use of electronic information resources in and within the library.

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