

**Extent of the public university librarians' agreement on the utilisation of online  
information resources for effective services delivery in public university libraries in  
South-East, Nigeria**

By

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**Abstract**

*The study looked into how much public university librarians in South-East, Nigeria agreed with each other regarding benefits of using online information resources (OIR) for efficient service delivery. The study was guided by one research objective, one research question, and one research hypothesis that was developed and tested at the 0.05 level of significance. Descriptive survey was adopted and the population consist 174 respondents made up the study population, which used a descriptive survey. Total enumeration was used for the study. Questionnaire was used for data collection, and validated copies were checked for reliability using Cronbach Alpha which yielded a reliability coefficient of 0.94 to vouch for its dependability. About 90% of the questionnaires were validly filled and returned, totalling 157 copies. Mean, frequency count and standard deviation of descriptive statistics were used data analysis. Research question was addressed using mean score, and hypothesis was tested using inferential statistics of t-test. Results indicated a mean of 2.95 high extent responses by respondents, conclusively indicating that public university librarians' use of online information resources (OIR) for efficient service delivery in public university libraries was of high extent and impact in public university libraries in South-East, Nigeria. Thus, university librarians are advised to effectively direct OIRs use for ongoing, extensive endorsement of services being provided in public university libraries in South-East, Nigeria.*

**Key Words:** Information, Resources, Services, University libraries/Librarians, and Utilisation.

## **Introduction**

The impact of information and communication technology (ICT) has persisted in today's society. ICT brought about a great deal of change that affected a wide range of livelihoods as well as the manner that services are delivered when there is Internet or online connectivity. For efficient information/information resource conveyance and service delivery in their organisations, almost all professionals across a wide range of vocations and sectors are integrating and utilising online/Internet platforms. ICT has undoubtedly contributed to many successes and improvements in human endeavours and activities. The information and communication sector now uses new words and vocabulary that were created as a result of its profound impact and spill over effects. The terms "online," "Internet," "wireless," "interface," and "cloud" stand out as being prominent and common. Utilizing and disseminating information, information resources, and other services locally and worldwide via Local Area Network (LAN) or Wide Area Network (WAN) has become possible thanks to their use and manipulation (Amadi, 2021). These are no longer news, and their importance cannot be overstated.

In fact, the delivery of services via the Internet and online platforms has substantially improved the banking sector and replaced many manual tasks related to information connections and transmission. When negotiations about library services are conducted online or via the Internet, university libraries and librarians are not excluded from this scenario. Information and information resources are collected, shared, and sent for use, among other things. With this trend and scenario in contemporary librarianship and service delivery, university librarians whose professional domains are university libraries are genuinely on the move.

Currently, there are many different types of internet information and information resources available. Along with other electronic devices, they all operate through the use of electricity, with the computer being the most prevalent due to its connectivity and peripherals. Therefore, at this time, the degree of consensus among university librarians regarding the utilisation of online information resources for effective service delivery to library users is necessary and can either increase or decrease service providers' confidence (the librarians). This is due to the fact that, in this paper's opinion, effective service delivery in a modern library setting is difficult to achieve and heavily depends on the use of online sources, resources, and materials, as well as the skill with which librarians and library users can both manipulate online tools and gadgets. A good understanding of and application of the various online/Internet information resources and tools in

the public university library services delivery has been seen as increasing the enormity and quantity of various information resources/materials and enhancing faster, timely, and timeless availability and utilisation of the library and library information resources for effective services delivery tremendously regardless of the time, distance, or location of both the service giver and receiver respectively.

In this study, the general term "Internet" also refers to "online," and as a result, both terms are used synonymously and interchangeably as ICT-related jargons. In order to effectively supply services in the public university libraries in the South-East of Nigeria, this study uses online to explain electronic/electrical processes of harnessing material information resources hoisted in the "cloud" and what are gotten there from.

### **Statement of the Problem**

It has been thought that using online information resources and applications to supply different services in libraries throughout the world will provide and ensure access to databases kept on distant computer systems globally. It has been observed that this operation in libraries today in particular, public university libraries contributes to the efficient delivery of services through computers, telecommunications, and other connectivity-related devices. Public university librarians are increasingly using online/online information resources to deliver efficient services, which is altering how university libraries deliver services.

Professionally, the goal of all library services is to satisfy users (service recipients) and to advance the careers of librarians (service providers) (s). The extent to which all public university librarians agree on the use of online information resources (OIR) for efficient service delivery in the public university libraries does not appear to have been empirically established in the South-East of Nigeria, in the opinion of this paper, based on observations, and at that point can only be a mere assumption. Therefore, the purpose of this study is to determine how much consensus there is among public university librarians in South-East Nigeria regarding the effective use of online information resources (OIR).

## **Objective of the Study**

This study's goal is to find out how much public university librarians in South-East Nigeria are in favour of using OIR to deliver services in their libraries in an efficient manner.

## **Research Question**

What level of consensus has the public university librarians in the South-East of Nigeria reached regarding the usage of online/online information resources for efficient service delivery to library users?

## **Hypothesis**

There is no significant difference between the mean responses and ratings of the public university librarians (both federal and state university libraries).

## **Literature Review**

### **Information**

Information is a word that is consistently used in day-to-day, on-the-spot talks or discussions between people. It could be used in any situation that its user(s) deems appropriate in all aspects of life. The term "information" is used widely since it cannot simply be associated with one industry or field of work. Information may be conveyed using signs, symbols, vocal forms, etc (Reitz, 2004). Information, in general, refers to any thoughts or knowledge that is transmitted and received. It helps to dispel questions about people's mental agitations, decision-making, and action taking so that individuals, institutions, and organisations do not veer off course from obtaining intended goals (Amadi, 2021). It informs, promotes, and enlightens, which may cause responses (changes) in people or organisations.

### **Online**

According to this study, the term "Internet" can refer to anything online and can be used synonymously and interchangeably with other ICT-related terms. Therefore, this paper uses the online format to express electronic/electrical process(es) of harnessing information materials that have been lifted in the "cloud" and what are gotten from it from any location on the planet, with good speed, timely, and timelessly; in any required quantity; and their utilisation for effective service delivery in the public university libraries. Online and Internet information sources come in a wide range of formats and are also used to expand the library's collection of books and other resources. Reitz (2004) stated that online refers to the accessories or devices that are physically

separate from, but directly connected to, and under the control of a central processing unit (CPU) and ready for interactive use in real time. Online is defined as the connection of computers to the Internet via telecommunication links, as opposed to a standalone system. It was described as "direct real-time connection with the central processor of a computer via terminals or different computers" by Kennan and Johnstone in 2000. According to Reitz (2004), the terms "online" and "automated, computerised, e-resources, network electronic information resources (NEIR), digital system, and world wide web (www)" are used interchangeably in libraries.

## **Resources**

A resource is anything or group of things that can be used to achieve a purpose. Usually, this is done to learn more about or gain expertise about a particular subject (Amadi, 2021). Books, newspapers, libraries, databases, computers, and other media with their corresponding staff members, including radio, television, and other media that provide information to instructors, students, and others, are just a few examples of informational resources (Hornby, 2010). According to Pattar (2017), resources are things that are easily usable whereas sources are the areas from which things are received. It is a common misconception that resources and sources have the same definition thus according to English (2017), a source is the location where something originates. This definition supports the position of Pattar (2017).

As a result, in the context of this paper, "online information resources" (OIRs) refer to all such information products that are lifted in the cloud (networks) and searched for pertinent information, as well as resources that are utilised in various ways and for various purposes of business and service delivery. Computers and linked peripherals are used as the tools for manipulating them. According to Nwosu and Opara (2019), online (electronic) resources are materials that require computer mediation in order to access and use them or make them available for use if necessary. As a result, the delivery of online information and information resource services is electronic and is carried out electronically. Additionally, Nwosu and Opara (2019) claimed that this category encompasses all resource goods that a library offers electronically through the use of computer networks or connectivity, including both online and offline information material resources like CD-ROMs. According to Quadri, Adetimirin, and Idowu (2014), Online Information Resources (OIRs) are defined to mean those information materials and tools (data and/or programmes) that are appropriate, pertinent, and encoded for manipulation by

computerised devices either in a Local Area Network (LAN) or Wide Area Network (WAN). This definition is adopted for this paper.

While Arms (2000) defines online information resources as "a managed collection of information, with associated services, where the information is stored," Vasishta (2008) claims that the term "online information resources" (OIR) is broader and includes abstracting and indexing services, full-text by materials like newspapers and reference books, electronic journals, and offerings of electronic "aggregators." However, Bertroit (2004) believes that in libraries, online-based services and resources can come in a variety of forms or formats, such as searching library holdings, placing holds on or recalling library materials, requesting materials through interlibrary loan, licencing online databases, e-journals, and e-books for patron access, digitising library collections for online access, offering well-organized web pages that direct users to library and non-library content, and offering real-time information.

According to Mritunjay (2006), online information resources may therefore contain the following three categories of networked information systems: (a) Local Area Network Systems (LAN): These are Systems that use local area networks (LAN) and have file servers that are stocked with databases and other microcomputer-based applications. All workstations powered by microcomputers are connected to one or more file servers to exchange a variety of programmes and data. LAN is a distributed network system as a result. (b) Integrated Library Management Systems (ILMS): Online integrated library management systems (ILMS), sometimes known as INTERNET, perform customary library tasks such circulation, interlibrary loan, cataloguing, acquisition, serial control, and online public access catalogue (OPAC), which are also discussed in this paper. (c) Wide Area Network (WAN) Systems are systems connected through a wide area network, such as Gopher, the World Wide Web, Wide Area Information Servers, and other Internet Index Tools, can communicate with the Internet. E-books, E-Journals, CD-ROMs, Online databases, Internet resources, electronic links, and web publishing are all examples of online information resources (e-resources). Other off-line electronic information resource versions, such as e-data-archives, e-manuscripts, e-maps, e-magazines, e-theses, e-newspapers, e-emails, e-research reports, and e-bibliographic databases, which are also accessible through electronic machine systems' ways, patterns, and protocols, are credited and ascribed to online information resources in this paper (Vasishta, 2008). In order for librarians to effectively provide services to their diverse clients, these enhance and enrich libraries' collections.

## **Services**

Services are duties that a person or group of people perform for members of society, organisations, or businesses in a professional or unprofessional capacity that the service recipients find helpful in meeting their needs. Services are also worthwhile actions, deeds, or endeavours carried out to meet needs or requests (Hornby, 2020). Either free or paid services are offered. However, this is dependent on the institution or group in question. Services are essentially acts of giving something to someone or doing something for someone. The ability of librarians to professionally process and organise information resources (both online and traditional) made available, and the ability to use them in meeting the overall information needs, queries, and demands of library users, constitute the concept of services delivery with regard to libraries in the context of this paper (Olanlokun, 2013).

There are internal library services as well as outreach programmes. While in-house services are provided at the library, outreach library services are delivered to clients at their homes or places of business. Both internal and external library services can be delivered effectively by using online information resources. Effective service delivery in this paper is defined as timely, timeless, quick, accurate, simple, and easy supply of a wealth of online information resources that satisfies library customers' information needs. Regardless matter where the clients are located, services of this kind can be provided with or without a one-on-one interface.

## **University**

Due to the regular studies, researches, teaching, and learning along with other community functions that take place in and around academic institutions, notably universities worldwide, they are upheld as purveyors of information. Okezie (2015) argues that universities are knowledge factories that seek to transmit information from one generation to the next through the defined functions of research, teaching, and public services. Universities are "an institution of the highest level of education where you can study for a degree and conduct research," according to Hornby (2010). Given the aforementioned claims, any university's institution draws various other arms and components, of which the university library is a significant one. Together, these elements genuinely make up a comprehensive university structure.

## **University Libraries/Librarians**

These types of libraries and librarians are designed slightly differently in terms of their interest in and commitment to sustaining the information assets and knowledge bases of university



faculty, staff, and students for research, teaching, and learning. They support the colleges or faculties of the universities because they are unique academics. University (academic) libraries and librarians today provide a variety of difficult library services. Select, organise, and facilitate access to information in a variety of formats; keep up with technological advancements and develop strategies to take advantage of them; plan, implement, and administer computer-based systems electronic databases; consult with individual library users in analysing, identifying, and satisfying their information needs; create campus-wide information literacy programmes and deliver classroom instructions to strengthen information literacy skills Create and manage websites, interact with instructional designers and computer-savvy classroom staff, support productive teamwork among co-workers, and take part in publicity campaigns to raise awareness and money.

All of these activities, according to Ozioko (2007), take place in and around the library since academic libraries at universities have historically been the go-to places for researchers, faculty members, and students looking for pertinent information. Furthermore, according to Ozioko (2007), academic libraries act as both a clearinghouse for published information and a middleman for acquiring materials from all over the world. University education's primary and vital department of service delivery is the university library, which was created to address students' demands for information resources for study, research, and instruction (Pandey, 2015). In order to do this, librarians should apply or incorporate online information resources for efficient service delivery in university libraries. Nobody, however, can give what they do not possess.

### **Utilisation**

All items or resources connected to a university library are available for use. Although Hornby (2010) defines utilisation as the act of using something but Duranceau (2008) defines it as the extent to which people use a system or product to successfully complete a task for which it was employed. In the context of libraries, use refers to the use of various tools or facilities to fulfil objectives or expectations for efficient service delivery. Utilization is defined by Uhegbu (2007) as the practical application of gained knowledge. In order to deliver services in university libraries effectively, online information resources are used as materials. Utilising internet information sources is consistently appropriate in this paper.

The effective service delivery in university libraries is enhanced by librarians' use of online information resources. Additionally, the term "utilisation" in the context of this study refers to the



use of a variety of information resources that have been generated and uploaded to the Internet, respectively, as a result of connectivity and computer network manipulation. Depending on customer needs, the degree of ICT settings in the specific library, and other factors, the usage of online information resources and the efficient delivery of services varies from one library to the next. It is unusual or surprising to see a university library and its librarians not completing and effectively completing their service delivery without using online information resources in the current age of information explosion and utilisation. Utilisation is defined as "to utilise the available service resources at the individuals' disposal" by Hornby (2010). Therefore, use is a complex behavioural process linked to availability. When used carefully and properly for effective library services delivery, that is; satisfying the information demands of university library users, online information resources become more valuable.

## **Methodology**

The research was carried out in South-East, Nigeria. Data collection was done using a structured questionnaire. To analyse the data and determine the response to the research question, standard deviation and population mean ( $\bar{x}$ ) statistics were used. By adding all the rating values ( $1+2+3+4=10$ ) and dividing by 4 to get 2.50, the cut-off score for decision making was determined. Any mean value ranked 2.50 or higher was positive, indicating agreement, while anything below was negative, indicating disagreement. The actual limit of numbers was utilised to interpret the items with response modes of very high extent, high extent, low extent, and very low extent: 1.0-1.49 (Very low extent), 1.50-2.49 (Low extent), 2.50-3.49 (High extent), and 3.50-4.00. (Very high extent). The t-Test statistical technique was used to examine the differences between the variables and test the null hypothesis. The null hypothesis was accepted if the t-Test computed value was smaller than the t-Test table value at the 0.05 level of significance, which indicates that there was a significant difference between the two variables.

The instrument's reliability index was calculated by giving the questionnaire to thirty (30) librarians in a few universities in South-South, Nigeria, who were not included in the study region but shared some characteristics based on their education, line of work, and working conditions. Using Cronbach Alpha statistics, the internal consistency coefficient was calculated based on their responses. The obtained dependability coefficient was 0.94. The instrument was regarded as dependable because of the extremely high coefficient.

## Results

**Table 1: University librarians Agreement on the extent of the utilisation of OIR for effective services delivery in the public university libraries South East, Nigeria.**

*Where X=mean, SD=Standard deviation, LE=Low Extent, HE=High Extent*

S/N	Items	$\bar{X}$	State SD	$\bar{X}$	Federal SD	Grand X	Remarks
1.	It helps to advance the library profession	3.75	.449	3.47	.514	3.62	HE
2.	It helps to promote library and information services	3.54	6.37	3.35	.606	3.45	HE
3.	It facilitates collaboration among librarians	3.71	.460	3.41	.507	3.56	HE
4.	It facilitates effective library and information services delivery	3.57	.573	3.41	.618	3.49	HE
5.	It facilitates effective communication between university libraries/librarians and patrons	3.57	.573	3.24	.664	3.41	HE
6.	It helps libraries to keep updated on current trends	3.57	.634	3.41	.507	3.49	HE
7.	It helps marketing of library and information services	3.57	1.02	3.35	.686	3.46	HE
8.	It lowers the cost of disseminating information	3.50	.970	3.24	.781	3.37	HE
9.	It facilitates quick and ready access to information	3.57	.910	3.29	.985	3.43	HE
10.	It helps library to provide customized library services	3.50	.962	3.41	.849	2.75	HE
11.	Helping librarians to get quick feedback from users that would be used to improve the library services	3.46	.576	3.29	.849	3.38	HE
	<b>Grand mean</b>	<b>3.19</b>	<b>.629</b>	<b>2.88</b>	<b>.697</b>	<b>3.03</b>	<b>HE</b>

The evidence in Table 1 demonstrates that all 11 item statements testing librarians' level of agreement on the relative consequences of using online information resources received high ratings. The main points that the librarians agreed upon include: it helps to advance the library profession; it facilitates collaboration between librarians; it facilitates the effective delivery of library and information services; it aids libraries in staying up to date with current trends; it aids in the marketing of library and information services; it also aids in the promotion of library and information services. Accordingly, the respondents concurred that the use of OIR was successful for providing services in federally and state-owned colleges.

**Table 2: T-test analysis of mean difference between librarians in federal and states-owned public universities' libraries on the extent the librarians agree on relative effects of the utilisation of online information resources for effective service delivery**

Variable	N	$\bar{X}$	SD	Df	t	Sig	Decision
Federal	122	52.12	23.72	172	1.498	0.22	Accept Ho
State	52	51.23	23.83				

*\* Significant at  $P < 0.05$*

The outcome in Table 2 showed that the t-calculated value at  $df = 172$  was 1.498 and that  $p > 0.05$ . This shows that the amount of OIRs used by librarians in federal and state-owned public university libraries in South East, Nigeria to effectively deliver services does not significantly differ from the mean score of librarians in either type of library. The null hypothesis was therefore accepted. The amount of the public university librarians' agreement on the relative effects of the use of online/online information resources for effective service delivery is implied by this, suggesting that federal and state university librarians share the same viewpoint.

## Conclusion

According to the study's findings, both states and federal public university librarians indicated extensive use of OIR, with grand means of 3.19 and 2.88 for both types of libraries, respectively, and a global grand mean of 3.03. The respondents also concur that effective service delivery in South-East Nigeria is ensured by the use of online information resources (OIR).

## Recommendation

For the effective delivery of services in the South-East of Nigeria, it is hereby recommended that librarians should properly direct the usage of online information resource (OIRs) materials on users (service recipients) of public university libraries

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