ASSESSMENT OF ELECTRONIC INFORMATION RESOURCES USAGE AMONG STUDENTS IN NIGERIAN UNIVERSITY

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Abstract

This study examines the use of electronic information resources (EIRs) by postgraduate students in the Library and Information Science Department at Abia State University, Abia State, Nigeria. A survey method was utilized to evaluate doctoral students' perceptions of the accessibility and efficacy of EIRs, collecting data from a sample of 30 students across different academic years. The study seeks to elucidate the patterns of EIR utilization, the frequency of interaction, and the perceived obstacles students encounter in accessing these resources.

The study's findings indicate that although a substantial number of respondents acknowledge the significance of electronic information resources (EIRs), including e-books, journals, and online databases, considerable obstacles are impeding their regular utilization. Specifically, 46.7% of students indicated robust usage of electronic books, whilst 50% recognized the significance of online databases. Many individuals conveyed doubt about the dependability of free online resources. Frequency research revealed that 33.3% of students engage with EIRs every day, while a troubling 76.7% reported never employing them.

The findings indicate an urgent necessity for strategic measures to improve interaction with EIRs, encompassing the enhancement of technological infrastructure access, the establishment of comprehensive training initiatives, and the execution of awareness campaigns. The paper proposes the establishment of a more supportive academic environment to solve these obstacles, thereby facilitating the effective utilization of EIRs and improving the research capabilities and academic experiences of postgraduate students. The results highlight the necessity of promoting digital literacy and enhancing access to electronic resources in higher education.

KEYWORDS: Electronic Information Resources (EIRs), Postgraduate Students, Library and Information Science, Usage Patterns, Digital Literacy

1.0 INTRODUCTION

Electronic information resources (EIRs) have become critically significant in academia, particularly for postgraduate students in Nigeria. These resources encompass a variety of digital materials, including e-journals, e-books, and many databases, enabling students to obtain the most current and comprehensive information for their academic pursuits and research. The transition from conventional print materials to digital formats has significantly altered student engagement with academic information, allowing for knowledge availability at any time and from any location. It is a transformative development.

The increasing dependence on EIRs by postgraduate students mostly stems from the necessity for rapid access to scholarly papers, frequently exceeding the resources available through conventional libraries. The actual utilization of these resources can vary significantly among pupils. This variance may depend on various aspects, including computer proficiency, access to requisite devices, and overall familiarity with these technologies. Research suggests that postgraduate students, especially in library and information science, are typically knowledgeable about EIRs and frequently utilize them to enhance their academic performance (Akpojotor, 2020).

Despite the numerous advantages offered by EIRs, students have several obstacles in efficiently accessing and utilizing these resources. Significant issues encompass inconsistent internet connectivity, recurrent power interruptions, and insufficient training. Numerous pupils struggle to cultivate the information literacy abilities essential for navigating and locating pertinent information on digital platforms (Ekwueme and Chime, 2023).

This study examines the utilization of Electronic Information Resources (EIRs) by postgraduate students in Nigerian universities, emphasizing their frequency of usage, encountered challenges, and recommendations for enhancing EIR adoption. Comprehending these characteristics is essential for enhancing access to academic resources and supporting postgraduate students in their research endeavours nationwide. The project will also examine how institutional assistance might mitigate the technological and instructional obstacles that impede EIR utilization (Ugwulebo and Okuonghae, 2021).

Akpojotor (2020) examined the awareness and frequency of electronic information resource utilization among postgraduate students in various Nigerian universities. They discovered that despite a substantial degree of awareness, actual utilization frequently lags due to factors such

as inadequate internet connectivity and insufficient training. It emphasized the significance of continuous training programs to enhance students' proficiency in efficiently utilizing these resources.

Ekwueme and Chime (2023) Conducted a study examining the difficulties encountered by postgraduate students in utilizing internet resources in Nigeria's South-East area. Their descriptive survey indicated that issues such as inadequate internet connectivity, insufficient technical help, and restricted access to computers considerably affected the frequency with which students could utilize these tools. They suggested other measures to enhance accessibility to EIRs, which may alleviate these issues.

Omeluzor and Afolabi (2020) investigated the diverse factors influencing the utilization of EIRs among postgraduate students. It was shown that although numerous students recognize these resources, their utilization is impeded by infrastructural issues and insufficient training. Their recommendations encompassed augmenting library services and advocating for user education initiatives to enhance access to EIRs.

Salihu and Abubakar (2021) examined the problems and opportunities associated with the utilization of EIRs among postgraduate students. Their research identified problems such as unreliable power supply and insufficient internet connectivity, which impede successful utilization. They proposed various solutions, such as upgrading library infrastructure and augmenting budget allocations for EIR subscriptions, to improve access and utilization.

2.0 MATERIALS AND METHODS

2.1. Description of the Study Area

The study area for this research is focused on universities in Nigeria, specifically in the southeastern regions, where a range of postgraduate programs are offered. These universities are known for their commitment to advanced academic studies and research. One notable institution in this region is Abia State University, Uturu, located in Abia State, southeastern Nigeria. The university is equipped with modern libraries and essential electronic information resources (EIRs) that support scholarly research for postgraduate students (Abia State University, 2022).

Abia State University is located in a region characterized by a tropical climate, with two main seasons: the rainy season (March to October) and the dry season (November to February). The terrain in the area is largely hilly and the university itself is situated in a serene environment

conducive to academic work. The availability of EIRs at the institution's libraries enhances the research capabilities of both students and faculty, offering access to digital journals, databases, and other academic materials critical for high-level research (African Journal of Library, 2020).

2.2 Research Design

We employed a survey methodology to investigate the utilization of electronic information resources by postgraduate students at the at Abia State University, Abia State, Nigeria. The survey approach is advantageous since it enables the generalization of findings across the entire population based on the collected replies. According to Osuala (1993) and Kuter and Yilmaz (2001), this methodology is advantageous for examining both extensive and limited populations, rendering it an appropriate selection for this research. Our objective was to capture the viewpoints and emotions of the respondents concerning the accessibility and utilization of EIRs at the at Abia State University, Abia State, Nigeria. This method is effective since it accurately reflects the perspectives of postgraduate students in the Library and Information Science Department.

2.3 Population of the Study

Our objective was to recruit 30 postgraduate students from the Library and Information Science Department at the *at* Abia State University, Abia State, Nigeria. This group comprises students from several academic years, specifically those enrolled from 2014/2015 to 2018/2019, representing various programs such as Postgraduate Diploma (PGD), Master of Library and Information Science (MLIS), and Doctor of Philosophy (PhD).

2.4. Sample Size and Sampling Technique

Given the population's relatively small size and manageability, we used a census sampling method. All 30 postgraduate students from the at Abia State University, Abia State, Nigeria. were incorporated into the study. The objective was to obtain a thorough understanding of the student's experiences and perspectives of EIRs, hence improving the reliability and validity of the results.

2.5. Data Analysis

The data obtained from the returned questionnaires were analysed by descriptive statistical methods, emphasizing frequency counts and percentages. We utilized the Statistical Package for Social Sciences (SPSS) version 25.0 to analyse the data. Descriptive statistical analysis facilitates a summary of the gathered data, enabling the identification of patterns and trends. SPSS is a prevalent statistical software that facilitates data analysis and the derivation of

significant findings for researchers. The findings from this investigation are displayed in tables and charts for enhanced interpretation and comprehension.

3.0 RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

Table 1: Recognition Of Electronic Information Resources

Electronic information resources	Strongly Agree (SA)%	Agree (A)%	Disagree (D)%	Strongly Disagree (SD)%
Electronic Books	14 (46.7)	6 (20.0)	10(33.3)	0 (0.0)
Electronic Journals	11 (36.7)	13 (43.3)	6 (20.0)	0 (0.0)
CD-ROM	14 (46.7)	6 (20.0)	9 (30.0)	1 (3.3)
Free web sources	13 (43.3)	10 (33.3)	6 (20.0)	1 (3.3)
Online Databases	15 (50.0)	7 (23.3)	7 (23.3)	1 (3.3)
Online Public Access Catalogue	14 (46.7)	8 (26.7)	8 (26.7)	0 (0.0)

Table 1 shows the postgraduate students' acknowledgement of the Recognition Of Electronic Information Resources Electronic Books: Among respondents, 46.7% heavily employ electronic books, 20% concur with their utilization, and 33.3% dissent, indicating a varied assessment of their efficacy. Electronic Journals: A notable 36.7% of students strongly endorse the significance of electronic journals, with an additional 43.3% in agreement, demonstrating a substantial dependence on these resources for research endeavours. CD-ROMs: In a manner akin to electronic books, 46.7% of students strongly utilize CD-ROMs, while 30% express dissent regarding their utility, indicating a polarized perspective. Free Web Resources: Although 43.3% of respondents employ free web resources for their accessibility, others express scepticism over their reliability. Online Databases: A significant 50% of students express strong agreement with the importance of online databases, underscoring their essential function in research activities. Online Public Access Catalogues (OPACs): About 46.7% of

participants depend significantly on OPACs for accessing library resources, demonstrating their efficacy in providing access to academic materials.

Table 2: Frequency of Electronic Information Resource Usage

Frequency	Strongly Agree (SA)%	Agree (A)%	Disagree (D)%	Strongly Disagree (SD)%
Daily	10 (33.3)	14 (46.7)	3 (10.0)	3 (10.0)
Weekly	13 (43.3)	8 (2.67)	7 (23.3)	2 (6.7)
Monthly	17 (56.7)	9(30.0)	0(0.0)	0(0.0)
Never	0 (0.0)	0 (0.0)	7 (23.3)	23 (76.7)

Table 2 shows the frequency of electronic information resource (EIR) utilization among postgraduate students:

Daily Usage: A significant portion of respondents, 33.3%, highly concur that they utilize EIRs daily, while an additional 46.7% express agreement. Merely 10% of students express disagreement or strong disapproval over regular usage, signifying substantial interaction with EIRs daily. Weekly Usage: Among respondents, 43.3% strongly agree and 26.7% agree, indicating consistent engagement. Nonetheless, a notable 23.3% express disagreement, and 6.7% strongly dissent, indicating variability in weekly engagement. Monthly Usage: Monthly usage is significant, with 56.7% of students strongly endorsing and an additional 30% endorsing the use of EIRs. Notably, no respondents indicated any disagreement concerning this frequency, implying favourable acknowledgement of EIRs for monthly research requirements. A troubling 76.7% of respondents reported that they never employ EIRs, whereas 23.3% contradicted this assertion. This indicates a substantial deficiency in resource utilization.

In summary, although a significant number of students report frequent utilization of EIRs, a notable proportion indicates infrequent or no utilization. This underscores the need for strategies to promote more consistent utilization of electronic resources among postgraduate students.

4.0 CONCLUSION AND RECOMMENDATIONS.

4.1. Conclusion

The examination of electronic information resources (EIRs) utilization by postgraduate students in the Library and Information Science Department at Abia State University, Abia State, Nigeria. uncovers a multifaceted engagement environment. Table 1 illustrates that although a considerable proportion of students acknowledge the importance of diverse EIRs, including electronic books, journals, and online databases, obstacles remain in their successful application. Significantly, 46.7% of students extensively employ electronic books and CD-ROMs, reflecting a favourable disposition toward these tools. Nonetheless, the data indicate significant suspicion over the legitimacy of free web sources, as 20% of respondents expressed disagreement regarding their dependability.

The results also indicate that 33.3% of students engage with these resources every day, while a troubling 76.7% indicate they never utilize them. This gap underscores a vital necessity for intervention to enhance engagement with EIRs among postgraduate students. The varied outcomes indicate that although students like electronic information resources, obstacles concerning accessibility, awareness, and digital competence may impede their consistent utilization.

4.2. Recommendations.

In light of the findings, the subsequent recommendations are suggested to improve the utilization and efficacy of EIRs among postgraduate students:

1. *Improvement of Access and Infrastructure*: Universities must allocate resources towards dependable internet infrastructure to guarantee continuous access to EIRs. This entails resolving power supply challenges and augmenting technological assistance in libraries.

2. *Extensive Training Initiatives*: Establish workshops centred on information literacy and the proficient utilization of EIRs. These programs should strive to furnish students with the competencies required to adeptly navigate and utilize electronic resources.

3. *Awareness Initiatives:* Implement initiatives to disseminate information regarding the advantages and accessibility of EIRs. Informational sessions and orientation programs can assist in acquainting students with the available resources.

4. ***Augmented Support Services:*** Implement specialized user support services in libraries, encompassing technical assistance and advising services, to aid students in navigating problems associated with EIR access and utilization.

5. ***Curriculum Integration***: Urge faculty to integrate EIRs into academic curricula. Tasks or projects necessitating student interaction with technological resources can foster more regular utilization.

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