
USING ELECTRONIC INFORMATION RESOURCES TO ENHANCE LEARNING AMONG UNDERGRADUATES IN FEDERAL UNIVERSITIES IN NORTH-EAST NIGERIA

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ABSTRACT

The research work investigated the use of Electronic Information Resources (EIR) to enhance learning among undergraduates in Federal University, Wukari. The research design used for the study was descriptive study. The purposive sampling techniques were used to collect data with a sample of three hundred and twenty-two (322). Three research questions guided the study. Observation checklist and questionnaire were used to collect data. Data obtained were analysed using descriptive and internal statistics. The major findings include that all the nine forms of EIR checked were available in the university library studied. The findings further revealed that students make use of EIR to a low extent. The hindrances encountered by students were poor power supply, infrastructural facilities, lack of adequate technical skills, lack of adequate access to EIR and inadequate EIR. Implication were pointed out and some recommendations were made; which are the university library is yet to build a user accepted digital library, this then means that the university should comply with the NUC statutory 10% allocation to their libraries.

Keywords: Electronic Information Resources, Learning, Use and Enhance

INTRODUCTION

The concept "E" which stands for electronic has become a global phenomenon which emerges as a result of advancement in Information and Communication Technology (ICT) that brought about information technology revolution. Abubakar (2010) observed that the growing interest shown in recent years on issues related to electronic information, electronic resources, electronic books, electronic learning, electronic journals, as well as electronic archives among others is overwhelming and has permeated all segments and sectors of the society.

The twentieth century library was shaped by sweeping changes in communication technologies. The emergence and use of information technology is the century's most significant

development affecting scholarly communication. The application of computers to information processing has brought several products and services to the scenes such as electronic books and electronic journals.

Libraries have witnessed great metamorphosis in recent years both in their collection development and in their services structure. These libraries are using technology to improve the management of scholarly information to strengthen and speed up access to scholarly information not held locally. Over the years significant transformation has been noticed in collection development policies and practices. Print medium is increasingly giving way to the electronic form of materials (Sharma 2009). Ani (2008) quoting Tsakonas and Papa Theodorou (2006) states that "the transition from print to electronic

medium apart from resulting in a growth of electronic information, has provided users with new tools and applications for information seeking and retrieval. Electronic information resources are invaluable research tools that complement the print-based resources in a traditional setting.

Furthermore, the advent of Information and Communication Technology has accelerated availability and usage of electronic information resources in the modern time. This global development has posed challenges to libraries and information institutions in their attempt to meet information needs of users in the digital era. Libraries are now investing heavily on electronic resources especially academic libraries where users are exposed to various electronic resources such as electronic books and journals via internet. This may be due to changes and pressures on information needs. However, there has been tremendous development and changes in libraries to meet the growing demand for information.

This development is noticeable with the developed nations of the world. Also African countries and other developing nations are still struggling to bridge the digital divide that is preventing them the full benefits of the electronic era. To this end, different efforts have been made to launch African universities into the digital society with different initiatives by both national and international bodies towards providing the required networked infrastructure that would enable them have access to free or heavily discounted journals and database through programmes like Access Global Online Research in Agriculture (AGORA), Access Research in Health (HINARI) and Pharmaceutical Education and Research Institute (PERI) (Rosenberg, 2005). In Nigeria, the federal government through the National Universities Commission (NUC) initiated various programmes designed to inch Nigerian universities into information global society. Among the projects according to Nok (2006) include automation of

university libraries using Management Information System (MIS) and Nigerian Universities Network (NUNET). NUNET was aimed at developing a viable local and area network in each institution. Nigeria virtual library initiative for instance, is another step by Federal Government of Nigeria to provide higher institution access to relevant and current information resources (Fabunmi, 2009). These efforts are target at repositioning university libraries for efficient service deliveries using technology as a driving force.

Libraries in institutions of higher learning are central to the attainment of effective teaching and learning institutions. The effectiveness of any library depends to a great extent on the quality and quantity of the resources at its disposal. In order to facilitate access to information by all users within the university, Federal Ministry of Education, Nigeria (2000) introduced the virtual library project, which pulled together resources electronically, connecting all academic libraries in Nigeria to the hub at National University Commission. It is not yet clear if Federal University, Wukari library is queuing up with others in providing these resources for its teeming undergraduates' students to aid learning. The study is poised to determine the use of electronic information resources to enhance learning among undergraduates in Federal University Wukari, Nigeria.

Purpose of the Study

1. Identify the electronic information resources available to enhance learning in Federal University Wukari library
2. Find out the extent to which students use electronic information resource to enhance learning in Federal University Wukari library
3. Identify the hindrances to the use of electronic information resources to

enhance learning among undergraduates' students in Federal University Wukari library

METHODOLOGY

This study adopted the descriptive survey design. The descriptive survey aims at collecting data and describing the data in a systematic manner (Nworgu 2006). The design features a fact about a given population. This design is considered appropriate for the study because it will collect data and describe it in a systematic matter on the availability and extent of use of electronic information resources.

The population of this study consists of all undergraduates in Federal University Wukari; the total number of student is 1,468. The data was obtained from the academic planning unit of the university.

A total of three hundred and twenty-two undergraduates from Federal University Wukari consisted the sample for the study. Purposive

sampling technique was employed in this study. This technique is considered appropriate because it involves sampling the population to satisfy a predetermined criterion. The researcher sampled 20% of the students' population from each department, this was appropriate for the study. The instrument that is used for data collection is a checklist and questionnaire. Data generated for the study was analysed using the mean and standard deviation.

DATA ANALYSIS

Research Question 1: *What are the available Electronic Information Resources available for learning among undergraduates in Federal University, Wukari?*

The result of the response to find out the available Electronic Information Resources in Federal University, Wukari

Table 1: Electronic Information Resources available in Federal University, Wukari

S/N	EIR	FUW	REMARK
1	Online Indexes	✓	Available
2	E-Book	✓	Available
3	E-Journals	✓	Available
4	E-Catalogues	✓	Available
5	E-Statistical Sources	✓	Available
6	E-Sound Recordings	✓	Available
7	Image Database	✓	Available
8	E-Magazine	✓	Available
9	E-Reference Sources	✓	Available

Key: EIR = Electronic Information Resources, FUW: Federal University Wukari

The result shows that Federal University Wukari had all the nine forms of electronic information resources.

Research Question 2: *To what extent do students make use of Electronic Information Resources (EIR) in Federal University Wukari?*

The result of the response to find out the

extent of students use of Electronic Information Resources to enhance learning among undergraduates in Federal University Wukari is presented in Table 2.

Table 2: Mean scores (x) and standard deviation of extent of students' use of Electronic Information Resources (EIR) to enhance learning among undergraduates in Federal University Wukari.

S/N	EIR	MEAN	SD	DECISION
1	Online Indexes	2.35	1.35	Low Extent
2	E-Books	1.74	1.86	Low Extent
3	E-Journals	2.47	1.46	Low Extent
4	E-Catalogues	2.54	0.89	High Extent
5	E-Statistical Sources	2.54	0.88	High Extent
6	E-Sound Recordings	3.06	0.68	High Extent
7	Image Database	2.93	1.18	High Extent
8	E-Magazine	2.99	1.09	High Extent
9	E-Reference Sources	3.20	1.11	High Extent

Research Question 3: *What are the hindrances to the use of Electronic Information Resources (EIR) to enhance learning among students in Federal University, Wukari?*

The result of the students' response on hindrances to the use of EIR are presented in Table 3

Table 3: Mean scores (x) of students' response on hindrances to the use of EIR

S/N	HINDRANCE	MEAN	SD	DECISION
1	Poor Power Supply	3.13	0.88	Accepted
2	Poor Infrastructural Facilities	3.47	0.72	Accepted
3	Lack of adequate technical skills	2.73	1.44	Accepted
4	Unavailability of electronic information resources	3.53	0.50	Accepted
5	Lack of adequate access to electronic information resources	2.73	1.24	Accepted
6	Inadequate electronic information resources	2.74	1.23	Accepted

The result presented in Table 3 shows that the students agreed that poor power supply, poor infrastructural facilities, lack of adequate technical

skills, lack of adequate access to electronic information resources are hindrances to the use of electronic information resources in the university

library having means of 3.13, 3.47, 2.73, 3.53, 2.73 and 2.74 and standard deviation of 1.23 respectively. While the respondents strongly agreed that unavailability of electronic information resources with mean score of 3.53 and standard deviation of 0.50 was the major hindrance to the use of EIR in Federal University Wukari library.

DISCUSSION OF FINDINGS

Extent of use of electronic information and the hindrance to the use of Electronic Information Resource (EIR) by students, electronic information resources available to the university library. The result of the study that e-books, e-journals, online indexes, e-catalogues, e-statistical sources, e-sound recordings, image database, e-magazine and e-preference sources were available in Federal University, Wukari.

The findings on the extent of use of EIR by students that make use of the attributed to e-books, e-journals, online indexes, at a low extent could be attributed to lack of infrastructure and lack of ICT skills to exploit the EIR

The finding that the hindrances to the use of EIR in Federal University, Wukari library include poor power supply, poor infrastructural facilities, lack of adequate technical skills, unavailability, lack of adequate access and inadequate EIR could be attributed to the fact that the entire university community experience unsteady power supply and also to the fact that the university is new and is still struggling to put up the structures.

CONCLUSION

Considering the result of the survey of using electronic information resources to enhance learning among undergraduates in Federal University Wukari library, EIR is available in Federal University Wukari library and various forms of EIR are being used by students for their research as to a very high

extent. Poor power supply, poor infrastructural facilities, inadequate technical skills, lack of adequate access to EIR and inadequate EIR were challenges which hindered students from using EIR in Federal University Wukari.

RECOMMENDATIONS

Based on the findings of the study, the following recommendations are made:

- I. The university and library management should continue to sustain the provision of EIR. Learning and research. By so doing, the institution will not exclude themselves from the global village of information access and use.
- II. The university should implement the policy of the statutory 10% allocation to libraries to enable them procure EIR facilities.

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