

UNDERGRADUATE ACADEMIC ACTIVITIES IN A LIBRARY WITHOUT BOOKS: EXPERIENCE OF A NIGERIAN NEWLY ESTABLISHED UNIVERSITY

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ABSTRACT

This paper examined the usage of an e-library by Undergraduates students of a newly established Nigerian University vis-à-vis the relevance or otherwise of the available e-resources to their different programmes of study. It was discovered that the Undergraduates use the e-library mainly for carrying out their assignments as well as writing of term papers/seminars, while the major e-resources consulted by them are e-databases, e-journals, www.internet and e-mail respectively. Recommendations were given to the University Management to seek for government intervention in terms of funding to enable her address the challenges of inadequate number of computers as well as the poor internet facility as presently experienced by the Undergraduates.

KEYWORDS: Undergraduate, Academic Activities, Library, Books, Nigeria, University

1. INTRODUCTION

Oyelude¹ (2003) sees a Library as a vital part of the world's system of education and information storage and retrieval. They make books, journals, films recordings and other media of knowledge available to people in an organized manner. Library services are designed for different segments of people in the society. There are some established for education at all levels, these are school and academic libraries; some are established to serve the specialized interest of

people, (special libraries); some are established to provide for the education and information of the public, (public and national libraries). Some wealthy individual in the society also have libraries for their private and personal use, these are called private libraries. However, a library that is of specific interest and benefits to an undergraduate is ACADEMIC LIBRARY, regarded as “the heart of an academic institution” Aina² (1981).

One of the major roles expected of an academic library as pointed out by Lynch³ (1987) is to “promote and facilitate effective use of recorded information in all formats by all the library’s clientele”. All these could not be adequately achieved as Adetimirin⁴ (2007) observed that many university libraries in Nigeria are under-funded and therefore unable to acquire sufficient information materials for their students and other library users.

With the advent of electronic libraries otherwise known as virtual libraries, users have the opportunity to access several databases, discussion groups and other resources available through major networks. Okarafor and Iheaturu⁵ (2002) summed this up by saying:

This is an era when electronic computer technology and other communication devices have or are taking over many human functions. For the library, this is a period when electronic distribution processes are being used to transmit information, deliver messages and documents and most libraries depend on database.

From the above discussion on the issue of library and electronic resources use, it is obvious that e-resources due to their qualities and advantages over printed information sources may be of interest to undergraduates. Consequently,

the focus of this study is on investigating the academic activities and information needs of undergraduates in an academic library without books. The academic library of interest however, is that of Ondo State University of Science and Technology, Okitipupa.

2. BRIEF HISTORY OF ONDO STATE UNIVERSITY OF SCIENCE AND TECHNOLOGY (OSUTECH) OKITIPUPA – NIGERIA

Higher education plays a crucial role in the modern world as the economy is changing, with knowledge supplanting physical capital as the source of present and future wealth. Higher education research is also a key source of ideas and invention. Nigeria in particular, needs to bridge the gap separating her from the industrially developed world. The impetus for growth in the new economy comes from increasing the knowledge base of the economy, including research, education and skills fostering technological innovation.

The Ondo State University of Science and Technology (OSUTECH) Okitipupa open its gate to students on 10th January, 2011 by the Ondo State Government to constitute a focused new concept designed to bring about a radical participation in twenty-first century science to advance local technologies to the world-class level as to seek to forge new links between scientists and laypersons, merging scientific and social values. In fact, the University which was sited on an expanse of land of about 152.7 hectares seeks to prepare a generation of students with versatile and up-to-date qualifications in Science and Technology who will be able to play leadership roles in their profession by utilizing their general university experience and specialized knowledge in science and technology.

The University was established to produce qualified graduates in the fields of Science, Engineering and Information and Communication Technology. Presently, the University operates a single Faculty covering the science oriented programs under four different department namely, Biology, Chemical, Mathematical and Physical Sciences with the University's first set now in their 300 level of study.

3. STATEMENT OF THE PROBLEM

The pride of libraries world over, especially those in the advanced world is to render information services to their users wherever they may be in as much as they could have access to the internet. Hence, it is a common knowledge today, to see users staying back at home to utilize resources of an e-library which right of access must have been granted to them.

With the series of human error associated with the traditional method of information provision, the third world countries academics libraries, especially those operating in Nigeria, had equally continued to strive hard towards tapping valuable and most current information from diverse origin for the benefits of their numerous students population.

It is in the light of this that the study examines how undergraduates of Ondo State University of Science and Technology, Okitipupa- Nigeria, access and use electronic information resources in the pursuit of their academic goals.

4. OBJECTIVES OF THE STUDY

The general objective of this study is to find out the academic activities and information needs of undergraduates in an academic library without books with specific attention placed on undergraduates of Ondo State University of Science and Technology Okitipupa –Nigeria.

However, specific objectives of this study are:

- To identify the various reasons of using E-library by the undergraduates.
- To find out whether the available E-resources are adequate to meet their academic information needs;
- To find out challenges militating against the respondents use of e-resources if any;
- To review the development of electronic resources and articulate how it can aid undergraduate's academic activities.

5. REVIEW OF RELATED LITERATURE

With the realization of libraries as an indispensable agent of education, an undergraduate will have no choice than to make judicious use of library facilities available in his university and beyond them. To achieve this, Loho⁶ (1992) opined that users and their needs must be understood in order to provide effective service. Corroborating this view, Obajemu⁷ (2001) is of the opinion that libraries clientele get satisfied when information materials which are of greater value are delivered without much delay.

Dean⁸ (1999) posited that academic libraries should be operated at such level and relevance that can facilitate research especially when research as an important aspect of teaching is regarded as including enquiry, looking information and drawing certain conclusion. Supporting this view, Nkiko⁹ and Ilo (2006) argued that effective and efficient library services must be entrenched and treasured for Nigerian academics to continually aspire and sustain world class standards in their intellectual pursuits. ALA¹⁰ (2006) on its part stipulates that the Library should provide varied authoritative and up-to-date resources that support its mission and the needs of undergraduates, postgraduates, and faculty staff.

However, Akinade¹¹ (2000) affirms that usage of electronic database aids easy access and reduces the time spent while searching for materials compared to traditional service method. Also, Elaturoti¹² (2007) opined that development in science and technology has revolutionized the concept of learning and the learning environment. Hence Corbett and Williams¹³ (2002) posited that students' use of technology in education is expected to improve educational outcomes, increase skills in the use of technology and decreases inequalities between groups.

According to Oyekanmi¹⁴ (2002), a virtual library otherwise known as electronic library is a computerized system which provides multiple accesses to entire collections of a library by means of electronic media. Daniels¹⁵ (1999) on his part notes that this new resolution has affected the routine work of information processing by exploring the vast potential capabilities of the computer as a tool or an information resource. According to him, these combinations of technologies

have resulted in vast storage capability, fast data processing, storage and retrieval of information and variety of format.

Adebisi¹⁶ (1998) claimed that libraries all over the world have embraced electronic resources because it is a major step towards creating desktop access to information and provision of the much desired electronic libraries which will facilitate greater capabilities of bringing vast and useful information directly to users. While Oketunji¹⁷ (2002) asserts that the internet is the greatest utility ever available to libraries. Giving credence to this assertion, Ukodie¹⁸ (2004) writes that it has been commonly accepted and proven that ICT is the engine of the 21st century and beyond.

6. METHODOLOGY

The population for this study comprise the entire (420) students population of Ondo State University of Science and Technology Okitipupa. They are drawn from the four existing departments under the university pioneer Faculty of Science i.e. Biology, Chemical, Mathematical and Physical; Science Department.

In order to obtain reliable, valid and guided response(s) from the respondents, a structured questionnaire is thus adopted for this study. Out of 420 questionnaires administered on the respondents, 367 representing (87%) a response rate was achieved.

7. FINDINGS AND DISCUSSIONS

Data collected are presented, analyzed and discuss using simple percentage.

List of available resources in the E-Library

- ❖ E- Journal
- ❖ E- Books
- ❖ E- Databases
- ❖ E- Mail
- ❖ www. (Internet)
- ❖ E- Newspapers

Table 1; Distribution of Respondents According To Their Level of Study

Variable	Frequency (N = 420)	Percentage (%)
Level		
100	228	54
200	109	26
300	83	20
Total	420	100

Above table shows that fresh undergraduates in their first year of study constituted the majority of the studied University's students population with 228 (54%) of the entire students population. Those in the second year constitute 26%

of the entire population while those in the third year which is presently the highest level of studied in the studies University, is the least with 83 (20%) of the student population .

Table 2: Purpose of using E-library by the undergraduates

Purpose	Frequencies (N=367)	Percentage (%)
Class work	88	24
Assignment	143	39
Term Paper/seminars	129	35
Leisure	7	2

As enumerated by the above table, majority of the undergraduates 143 or (39%) do make use of the E-library in order to carry out their various giving assignments by different lecturers while 129 or (35%) also indicated writing of term papers as well as seminar papers as the reasons behind their E-library visit,. 88 or (24%) others admitted using the E-library to aid their class work with 7 (2%) undergraduates using the E-library for leisure.

Table 3; Consulted E-Resources By The Undergraduates

E-resources	Frequencies N= (367)	Percentage (%)
E- Journals	26	17
E- Books	41	11
E-Thesis	-	-
www.Internet	53	14.5
E- Mail	53	14.5
E- Databases	149	40.5
E-Newspapers	9	2.5

Table 3 clearly shows the acceptability of databases and E-journals by Ondo State University of Science and Technology, undergraduates with 149 (40.5%) and 62 (17%) respectively admitting the adequate usage of the two resources. 41 (11%) of the population on their part do make use of E-books while internet, E-mail and E-newspapers are the e-resources consulted by others.

Table 4: Number of Hour(S) Spent Per Week in the E-Library

Hours spent per week	Frequencies N= (367)	Percentage (%)
1-2 Hours	94	26
3-5 Hours	203	55
6-10 Hours	66	18
10 Hours and above	4	1

As shown in this table, most of the undergraduates spent average of 5 hours per week in the E-library, which translate into minimum of an hour per each working day. This is grossly inadequate for efficient use of an e-library. However, 66 (18%) of them and 4(11%) do spent between 6-10 hours as well as 10hours and above per week in the library respectively.

Table 5: Importance of E-Library To Undergraduate Studies

Importance	Frequencies N = (367)	Percentage (%)
More Accurate /Up to date Information	111	30
Less Stressful To use	9	2.5
Can be Access from Different Locations	117	32
Improved Quality of Learning	92	25
It Saves Users time	38	10

To 117 (32%) undergraduate's students of the studied university, the fact that the e-library can be access from any location provided there is internet connectivity is one of the major importance the e-library serves. 111(30%) believes the e-library afford them the opportunity of having access to more accurate and up to date information that assist in the pursuit of their academic programmes. Other importance of the e-library as provided by the undergraduates students are improved quality of learning and the less stressful nature of e-library.

Table 6: Constraint(s) Of Using E –Library

Constraints	Frequencies N = (367)	Percentage (%)
Poor Internet Facility	71	19
Inadequate Number of Computers	183	50
Inadequate Opening Hours	105	29
Lack of Access to Very Current E-Resources	6	1.5
Unwillingness of the E-Library Staff to assist Users	2	0.5

If there is any major constraint hindering the effective use of the e-library by the undergraduates, it is the inadequate provision of computers to aid their learning activities. This was shown by the responses of 183 (50%) of the respondents with 105 (29%) others complaining of inadequate opening hours. 71 (19%) complaint was on poor internet facility while only 2 (0.5%) of the undergraduates were bitter over unwillingness of the e-library staff to assist them whenever in need of such assistance.

8. CONCLUSION AND RECOMMENDATIONS

Undergraduates in this part of the globe need to take advantage of the e-library introduction by availing themselves with the e-resources opportunity to

complement their rigorous academic pursuit which will enable them contribute their quota to national development.

There is need to further educate the undergraduates about benefit attached to the use of an e-library, as its importance to their studies goes beyond what they presently utilized it for. To achieve this however, they need to create more time to visit the e-library, for it is only then, they can make judicious use of the facilities therein.

The University management should seek for government intervention in terms of adequate funding to enable it address the challenges of inadequate number of computers as well as the poor internet facility as experienced by the undergraduates. This when properly taking care of, will facilitate effective service delivery via excellent academic goals of the undergraduates.

Information provision is the stock in trade of all libraries be it traditional or e-libraries. As such, rendering assistance to users that are in need of help by the e-library staff is very important. This is because once a user is able to accomplish his task in a particular library, he will always like to come back and by so doing, the essence of the library establishment will be fulfilled

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