



# AVAILABILITY AND UTILIZATION OF ELECTRONIC RESOURCES BY POSTGRADUATE STUDENTS IN THE UNIVERSITY OF CALABAR LIBRARY

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## ABSTRACT

This study examines the availability of electronic resources in the University of Calabar (Unical) Library and their utilization by postgraduate (P.G) students. To accomplish the research purpose, five research questions and a single hypothesis was formulated to guide the study. Descriptive survey was adopted for the study and the population of the study was two thousand, seven hundred and twentysix, while a sample of four hundred postgraduate library users were selected through stratified sampling: two hundred postgraduates each from Faculty of Education and Faculty of Science. Questionnaire was the main instrument used for data collection. The instrument used for data collection. Pearson Moment Correlation Coefficient ( $r$ ) was the statistical analysis technique adopted to test the hypothesis under study at 0.05 level of significance. Three hundred and eightytwo dully filled questionnaires were retrieved giving an overall response rate of 95.5 per cent. The result of the analysis revealed that electronic resources were available in Unical Library and P.G students utilized them, however, online databases were underutilized. The University Library has e-journals, e-books and have access to databases and internet resources. E-Journals were the most often used electronic resources. Lack of computer skills, slow internet network, inconsistent internet connectivity, power outage and massive irrelevant information were the problems postgraduate students encountered while accessing and using electronic resources in Unical Library. Based on the findings, the following recommendations were made that adequate budgetary allocation should be given to the University Library for subscription to online databases, acquisition of more relevant and current electronic books open access databases should be made accessible to users, creation of awareness on the available electronic resources in Unical Library, installation of inverter and battery system in the e-Library, as well as organizing users education for better use of electronic resources in Unical Library.

**KEYWORDS:** Availability, Utilization, Electronic resources, Postgraduate students, University of Calabar Library.

## INTRODUCTION

Information and communication technology (ICT) has become a global name for all activities we engage in. These ranges from sending and receiving messages, teaching and learning and even accessing information resources. In the 21<sup>st</sup> century, accessing information resources with the use of ICT has changed the information seeking behavior of students and researchers globally. In recent times, electronics resources have been identified as the major sources of information resources in the universities especially for researchers.

In academia, electronic resources are dominating the research activities of researchers; who have realized the importance of such resources (Hadagali and Kumbar, 2011). Electronic resource provides timely information, especially for postgraduate students to advance their learning and intellectual growth (Ukpebor, 2012).

The goal of postgraduate study in any university is for further development of graduate students with the spirit of acquiring knowledge through training and research in an atmosphere of intellectual independence and individual creativity with a strong sense of group cooperation

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(Lateef, Omotoso & Owolabi, 2013). Ndubuisi and Udo (2013), in a study of motivation, challenges and strategies in the use of electronic information resources by postgraduate library users in South-East Nigerian Federal Universities, revealed that postgraduate students were motivated to use electronic resources in their university libraries because they found them to be more informative, easy to access and use, save time, more useful and less expensive.

Assessment of electronic services by postgraduate students and research scholars, according to Ramana (2006), showed that a large majority of students use online journals for writing theses/ dissertation. This shows that postgraduate students, irrespective of their fields of work; have information needs in their various levels of studies and research.

Studies have shown that availability of electronic resources in universities have greater benefit to university education and effective utilization by postgraduate library (Ndubuisi & Udo, 2013). In a study conducted by Ojo and Akande (2005), it was concluded that the level of usage of electronic information resources among students was low.

In recent times, it is very common to find electronic resources in most university libraries. However, their availability does not necessarily equates their utilization. Availability and utilization of electronic resources is the totality of their being at hand when needed and their being able to meet the information need of those who are using them. The above situation establishes some doubts, in spite of enormous literature review about the availability and utilization of electronic resources in academic libraries. This research would examine the availability of electronic resources in the University of Calabar Library and their utilization by postgraduate students. According to Graham (2003) the term "electronic resources" is also referred to as electronic information resources (EIR) and electronic library resources. Digital resources, digital materials and soft library resources are other terminologies used for electronic information resources.

Electronic resources according to Sharma (2009) are library information materials that are in electronic form which include electronic books (e-books); electronic newspapers (e-newspapers); electronic journals (e-journals) as well as Internet resources. E-resources also consist of databases, magazines, archives, theses, conference papers, government papers, scripts and monographs in an electronic form (Deng, 2010). Electronic database include; MEDLINE, ScienceDirect, AGORA (Access to Global Online Research in Agriculture), HINARI, OARE (Online Access to Research in the Environment), LexisNexis, EBSCOHOST (Ani, 2013).

The importance of electronic resources to students and academic libraries cannot be over emphasized. They offer postgraduate students the chance to access relevant and current information from different subject areas. The emergence of electronic resources, according to Ani and Ahiauzu (2008), has tremendously transformed the handling and management of information in Nigeria academic environments and university libraries in particular.

The benefits of availability of e-resources include; accessibility at any time of the day, hyperlinks to other resources, huge information reservoirs, quick access to information, various search options, easy citations, ease in uploading and updating, ease in storage and dissemination, flexibility, ease of archiving among others (Dalve, 2012). Also, electronic resources reduce pressure on academic libraries for physical storage space for books and journals and provide unlimited access to users (Norris, 2004).

#### LITERATURE REVIEW

A lot of researchers have been carried out in the area of availability and utilization of electronic resources in Nigerian universities. (Rehman and Ramzy 2004, Ozoemelem (2009, Egberongbe, 2011, Komolafe-Opadeji 2011, Okiki & Asiru 2011, Tyagi 2011, Hadagali, Kumbar, Nelogal & Bachalapur 2012, Ibrahim, Yahaya & Usman, 2013, Ndubisi and Udo, 2013).

Rehman and Ramzy (2004) investigated the awareness of electronic resources among health academics in Kuwait University with the assumption that low awareness and poor skills were among the primary reasons for under-utilizing electronic resources. The study showed that although electronic resources were available, time constraints, lack of awareness, and low skills levels were among the primary constraints experienced. The respondents proposed a variety of measures including formal orientation and training to become more effective users.

Investigating the use of electronic resources by postgraduate students of the Department of Library and Information Science in Delta State University, Ozoemelem (2009) noted there was a high level of usage of electronic resources by postgraduate students.

A study on the use and impact of electronic resources in the University of Lagos showed that lectures and research scholars were aware of e-resources. Awareness of e-resources was defined as user knowledge of the availability of the e-resources and that they made use of them (Egberongbe, 2011).

Komolafe-Opadeji (2011) investigated the used of internet and electronic resources among postgraduate students of a Nigeria private university and discovered that postgraduate students regularly access the Internet and preferred using the online resources from Google and Wikipedia to subscribed online data bases like HINARI, EBSCO Host, JSTOR, Questia and High Beam.

Studying the use of electronic information sources by postgraduate students of six universities in South West region of Nigeria, Okiki & Asiru (2011) reported that more male (55.82%) than female (46.18%) used electronic information sources, it was also reported that Master's programme students were the majority in the use of electronic information sources. Majority of the respondents expressed high confidence in their search skills. The strongest reason for utilizing electronic information sources was the need to carry out research.

In a study conducted by Tyagi (2011) at IIT Roorkee, India on the use and awareness of electronic resources using questionnaire-based survey methods along with observations and informal interviews revealed that library users had knowledge about the availability of electronic journals at the institutions.

Hadagali, Kumbar, Nelogal & Bachalapur (2012) researched on the use of electronic resources by postgraduate students and found out that most of the respondents (postgraduate students) utilized electronic resources and that most often; they used the electronic resources to search for bibliographical information.

An explorative study on availability and utilization of internet resources by postgraduate students in Business Education, Ahmadu Bello University Zaria showed that the school Authority invested heavily on Internet resources and their students had access to them (Ibrahim, Yahaya & Usman, 2013).

A study carried out by Ndubisi and Udo, (2013) in the South-East Nigeria Universities, revealed that students were motivated to use electronic information resources in their libraries.

**STATEMENT OF THE PROBLEM**

It has been reported that Nigerian universities are lagging behind their counterparts in western countries in terms of research productivity (Adams, King & Hook, 2010). Part of the problems has been attributed to inadequate modern ICT infrastructural facilities in Nigerian Universities leading to the low levels of availability and utilization of electronic information resources by postgraduate students.

However significant investments have been made toward the provision of electronic resources in the University of Calabar Library (Lawal, 2014). It is important to find out their extent of availability and utilization.

If some electronic resources are not being used or underused, it may be important to know this in order to make recommendation regarding possibilities of improving usage of the resources or cancelling subscription to reduce waste.

Availability and utilization of electronic information resources is key to the success of postgraduate studies in any institution and the library plays the central role in making information available and accessible. It was in the light of the above reasons, that the researcher examined the available electronic resource in the University of Calabar Library and how they are used by the postgraduate students.

**RESEARCH QUESTIONS**

The following research questions were used to guide the study.

1. To what extent are electronic resources available at University of Calabar Library?
2. To what extent do postgraduate students utilize electronic resources in the University of Calabar Library?
3. What are the reasons for the utilization of electronic resources?
4. What problems do postgraduate students encounter while accessing and using electronic resources in the University of Calabar Library?
5. What strategies can encourage postgraduate students use of electronic resources in the University of Calabar Library?

**STATEMENT OF HYPOTHESIS**

As a guide to the study, a single hypothesis was raised.

**H<sub>0</sub>:** There is no significant correlation between availability and utilization of the electronic resources in the University of Calabar Library by postgraduate students.

**SIGNIFICANCE OF THE STUDY**

Awareness of electronic resources postgraduate students

This study will raise the level of awareness of postgraduate students on the availability and the need to utilize electronic resources. Thus, this study will create the level of awareness of the availability of electronic resources.

Basis of problem solving by postgraduate students  
It provides the basis towards proffering solution to the problem of non-utilization of electronic resources in the University of Calabar Library.

Benefits of postgraduate in any area of study:  
It is also beneficial to academics, students and professionals who are interested in this area of study. It can be useful to all research work.

Service productivity by postgraduate students  
It guides the University Library to improve her services. This study, will enhance service productivity in the library and also make the electronic resources available for utilization by users of the library.

### METHODOLOGY

Descriptive survey was considered to be most appropriate for this study because of its flexibility which permits the use of variety of data collecting techniques such as questionnaire, interview and observation (Ndubuisi & Udo, 2013). The area of study is the University of Calabar Library which is located in Calabar, Cross River State, Nigeria. With the vision of being a comprehensive ICT driven library system, the University of Calabar Library provides dynamic and innovative library and information services for effective learning, learning and research. The library is rich with diverse information resources. The University Central Library building is a massive and purpose built four floor H-shaped structure with a usable floor area of 2,700m<sup>2</sup>, seating capacity of 3,000 readers and other physical facilities like computer systems, 200KVA generating set, ventilators, fire extinguisher, etc. In the University of Calabar Library, electronic resources can be accessed at the Electronic Library or the Graduate School Digital Library. The Library is equipped with computer systems and Internet facilities. With the help of a WIFI enabled system, the electronic resources can also be accessed via Internet.

With a population of about three thousand (3000) postgraduate students in the University of Calabar, the sample size for this study was calculated to be four hundred (400) postgraduate students at  $\pm 5\%$  precision level (sampling error), using proportional sampling of 10% of the population size. The sample size was calculated using Yamane (1967:886) formula below:

$$n = \frac{N}{1 + N(e)^2}$$

Where n= Sample size

N= Population size

e= Level of precision

However, it was the opinion of the researchers to use a sample size of four hundred (400) postgraduate students: two hundred (200) postgraduate students from the Faculty of Education and two hundred (200) postgraduate from the Faculty of Science. The larger

the sample size, the better the accuracy/precision of the research result (Welman, Kruger and Mitchell, 2005).

Questionnaire was the research instrument used for gathering data from postgraduate library users in the University of Calabar. The researchers administered questionnaires to postgraduate students randomly at the research unit, electronic library and post graduate digital library seeking their consent to participate in the survey. Respondents were administered questionnaire one-on-one and collected immediately after completion but where necessary, respondents were allowed to complete the questionnaire at their own time. The researcher also visited the Electronic Library and Graduate School Digital Library where observation were made with regards to the availability and utilization of electronic resources by postgraduate students.

Data collected were analysed using descriptive statistics such as simple percentage and frequency counts. The Hypothesis was tested with Pearson Correlation Coefficient (r) at 0.05 level of significance with the help of SPSS (Statistical Package for Social Sciences).

### RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

#### Distribution of Respondents

A total of four hundred (400) questionnaires were administered randomly to postgraduate library users to collect primary data, three hundred and eighty two (382) copies representing (95.5%) were returned and found useable. Statistics of sampled faculties showed that faculty of Science had the highest response rate of (50.79%)

Table 1 below shows the distribution of respondents according to their gender, age range, degree of study and faculties. Majority of the respondents were male constituting 63.87% while the remaining 36.13% of the respondents were female.

From the age range of respondents, majority of them (52.62%) were within the age range of 30-39 years. Next to the majority were respondents within the age range of 20-29 years and the least were respondents that were above 39 years of age.

There was no respondent below 20 years of age.

Distributions of respondents according to their degree of study showed that majority of them (63.09%) were M.sc students followed by respondents (25.92%) were PGD students respectively. Ph.D students were the least among the respondents. Out of the two sampled faculties, Faculty of Science had majority of the respondents (50.79%) while faculty of Education had (49.21%) respondents.

**TABLE 1: Distribution of Respondents**

Items	Variables	Frequency	Percentages (%)
GENDER	Male	247	63.87
	Female	135	36.13
AGE RANGE	20 –29	160	41.88
	30 –39	201	52.62
	Above 39	21	5.50
DEGREE OF STUDY	Ph. D	42	10.99
	M.Sc/M.Ed	241	63.09
	PGD	99	25.92
FACULTY	Education	188	49.21
	Science	194	50.79

**Research Question 1: To what extent are electronic resources available at University of Calabar Library?**

Results from table 2 revealed the respondents' opinion on the availability of electronic resources in the University of Calabar Library and the types of electronic resources available as majority of the respondents, from faculty of science (87.11%), indicated that electronic resources were available in the University of Calabar Library.

On respondents' opinion of the types of electronic resources available in the University library, majority of them (43.65%) indicated that e-journals were available in the University of Calabar Library. The respondents also indicated that of internet resources (29.65%), e-books (19.52%) and online databases (7.18%) were available to meet the needs of students in the University library. Respondents had the option of checking more than one electronic resource.

**TABLE 2: Availability of electronic resources in the University of Calabar Library**

Items	Variables	Frequency	Percentages
Respondents opinion of the type of electronic resource available in the University of Calabar Library	e-Journals	237	43.65
	e-Book	107	19.52
	Internet Resources	161	29.65
	Online Databases	39	7.18

**Research Question 2: To what extent do postgraduate students utilize electronic resources in the University of Calabar Library?**

Respondents were asked how frequent they used electronic resources. The results from table 3 shows that majority of the respondents (57.07%) often made use of electronic resources at least once in a week. This was followed by respondent that made use of

electronic resources not very often (28.01%), very often (8.90%) and rarely (6.02%). Majority of the respondents (60.53%) also indicated that they often made use of e-journals. This was followed by 23.37% of the respondents who indicated that they often made use of internet resources. The rest of the electronic resources, e-books and databases were comparatively less used.

**TABLE 3: Extent of Utilization of Electronic Resources by postgraduate Students in the University of Calabar Library**

Items	Variables	Frequency	Percentages
Electronic resources often used	e-Journals	158	60.53
	e-Book	33	12.63
	Internet Resources	61	23.37
	Online Databases (open access, journals)	9	3.45
Frequency of using electronic resources	Very Often	34	8.90
	Often	218	57.07
	Not very often	107	28.01
	rarely	23	6.02

**Research Question 3: Reasons for utilization of electronic resources by post graduate students in the University of Calabar**

Table 4 below shows the reasons why respondents made use of electronic resources. Respondents had the option of checking more than one variable. The reasons they indicated are: quick information (8.01%),

easy to use (4.88%), easy citation (6.45%), less expensive(6.45%), aid academic performance (7.81%), current information (9.37), relevant information (6.45%), ease of storage (17.81%), search options (8.01%) and huge information reservoir (8.01%)

**TABLE 4: Reasons for using Electronic Resources**

Variables	Frequency	Percentages
Quick information	48	9.37
Ease of access	41	8.01
Saves time	48	9.37
More informative	41	8.01
Easy to use	25	4.88
Easy citation	33	6.45
Less expensive	33	6.45
Aid academic performance	40	7.81
Current information	48	9.37
Relevant information	33	6.45
Ease of storage	40	7.81
Search option	41	8.01
Huge information reservoir	41	8.01

**Research Question 4: What problems do postgraduate students encounter while accessing and using electronic resources in the University of Calabar Library?**

Table 5 shows the challenges faced by respondents while using electronic resources:

Even with the enormous reasons for using electronic resources, postgraduate students still face some challenges in the use of electronic resources. The challenges as shown in table 5 ranged from lack of

computer skills (31.54%), slow network (29.05%) inconsistent internet service (17.28%), power outage (11.20%) to irrelevant electronic information resources (10.37%). No respondent identified insufficient computer. This proves that the university library had enough computers to cater for their users. However, (63.09%) of the respondents had no training skills which may have been responsible for identifying lack of computer skills as a challenge by majority of the respondents.

**TABLE 5: Challenges faced while using electronic resources**

S/N	Items	Percentages
1	Power outage	11.02
2	Slow Network	29.05
3	Lack of computer skills	31.54
4	Massive irrelevant information	10.37
5	Inconsistent presence of internet	17.28
6	Insufficient computer	0.00

**Research Question 5: What strategies can encourage postgraduate students’ use of electronic resources in the University of Calabar Library?**

Respondent were asked to suggest strategies for encouraging the use of electronic recourses in the University of Calabar Library. Below were their suggestions:

The strategies for encouraging the utilization of electronic resources in the University of Calabar Library as shown in table 6 ranged from creating awareness on available resources (34.17%), acquiring more electronic resources (25.83%), having stable electrical backup (18.34%), improving internet connectivity (13.33%), subscription to more online databases (8.33%)

**TABLE 6: Utilization of electronic resources in the University of Calabar Library**

S/N	Items	Percentages
1	Create awareness on available resources	34.17
2	Acquire more electronic resources	25.83
3	Have stable electrical backup	18.34
4	Improve internet connectivity (bandwidth)	13.33
5	Subscription to more online databases	8.33

**Hypothesis 1:** There is no significant correlation between availability and utilization of electronic resources in the University of Calabar Library by postgraduate students. The analysis of hypothesis 1 revealed a Correlation Coefficient (r) of 0.998 and a P-Value of 0.043. The result indicated that there was a strong positive correlation (or relationship) between the availability of electronic resources and utilization of the electronic resources in the University of Calabar Library i.e. the strength of association between the variables was very high. The implication was that an increase in the availability of electronic resources in the Library would lead to an increase in their utilization. The correlation between the availability and utilization of electronic resources in the University of Calabar Library was significant at 0.05 level.

Because of sufficient evidence in the sample (i.e.  $P \leq 0.05$ ) in favour of H1, Ho was rejected. It was therefore concluded that there was a significant correlation between availability and utilization of electronic resources in the University of Calabar Library by postgraduate students.

**SUMMARY**

The study was undertaken to examine the availability and utilization of electronic resources by postgraduate students in the University of Calabar Library with the aim of determining availability, identifying types, ascertaining usage and the problems associated with the usage of the electronic resources.

Four hundred postgraduate students from the Faculty of Education and Faculty of Science: two hundred each were sampled for the study, out of which three

hundred and eightytwo dully filled in questionnaire were retrieved and found useable.

Five research questions were raised and descriptive survey was adopted for the study. Questionnaire was the main instrument used for data collection. The instrument was subject to validation by the supervisor and expert in measurement and evaluation.

**Table 6: Correlation Analysis between Availability and Utilization of Electronic Resources**

		Availability	Utilization
Availability	Pearson correlation	1	.998*
	Sig. (2 tailed)		.043
	N	3	3
Utilization	Pearson correlation	.998*	1
	Sig. (2 tailed)	.043	
	N	3	3

#### Data analysis yielded the following findings:

1. Electronic resources were available in the University of Calabar Library.
2. The University Library had e-journals, e-book and access to databases and electronic resources.
3. Databases that were accessible at the time of this research were: Science Direct, Nigerian Virtual Library, **HINARI, OARE, OAPEN, OAJSE, AJOL, SAGEOPEN**, Springer Open and **TEEAL**.
4. Majority of postgraduate students in the University of Calabar often made use of the electronic resources in the University Library. However, online databases were underutilized.
5. Electronic journals were the most often used electronic resources by postgraduate students.
6. The problems postgraduate students encountered while accessing and using electronic resources were: Lack of computer skills, inconsistent internet connectivity, power outage and mass of irrelevant information.

#### CONCLUSION

It is the researcher's view that the study has succeeded in answering its research questions. Several electronic resources were available in the University of Calabar Library, Postgraduate students were aware and utilized them. The use of electronic resources was up to the worth in comparison to the investment made in electronic resources. However, the awareness and utilization of online databases was significantly very low among postgraduate students in University of Calabar. Unfamiliarity with electronic resources and lack of computer skills were the major reasons that discourage some postgraduate students from effective utilization of electronic resources in the University of Calabar Library.

#### RECOMMENDATION

In view of the findings of the study, the following recommendation were made to improve on the availability of electronic resources and their utilization in the University Library.

- a. Adequate budgetary allocation should be given to the University Library for subscription to online databases and acquisition of electronic books.
- b. More relevant open access databases such as Academic Journals ([Http://academicjournals.org/journals.htm](http://academicjournals.org/journals.htm)) and arXiv ([Http://arxiv.org](http://arxiv.org)) should be made accessible to postgraduate students.
- c. The Library management should create awareness on the electronic resources available in the University Library and its importance to postgraduate studies. Users should be made to understand that even if they cannot use a computer system, staff would assist them to meet their information needs.
- d. Inverter and battery systems should be installed in the Electronic Library to ensure regular power supply.
- e. User education should be organized for postgraduate students for better use of electronic resources in the University Library.

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