Awareness, Use, and Perceived Influence of Electronic Resources on Studies among Students of Federal University of Agriculture, Abeokuta, Nigeria

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Abstract

Purpose: *This study investigated the awareness, use and perceived influence of electronic resources on studies among the undergraduates at Federal University of Agriculture, Abeokuta, Nigeria. This is in order to address the problem of underutilization of the resources in the university.*

Methodology: *Descriptive survey design was adopted and questionnaire was used to gather data for the study. 1500 students out of 1700 sample drawn from ten colleges of the university responded to the questionnaire. Data obtained through the questionnaire were analyzed using descriptive and inferential statistics.*

Findings: *Data obtained through the questionnaire were analyzed using descriptive and inferential statistics. Analysis of data collected revealed that the commonly used electronic resource among the respondents is the Internet. The respondents considered electronic resources useful to their study and they boost independence in resources searching and use. The analysis further revealed constraints to the use of electronic resources such inadequate search skills, slow internet access speed, irregular power supply and absence of formal training on the use of the resources.*

Implications: *This study has implications on the management of electronic information resources in the library and similar university libraries. This is crucial because electronic information resources play a pivotal role in enhancing education, research development activities and academic performance of students and academic institutions globally.*

Recommendations: *The recommended acquisition of current electronic resources that are subscription based provision of training on the resources, provision of adequate infrastructure necessary for accessing electronic resources, and provision of wireless access for the students.*

Keywords: *Electronic resources, Awareness, undergraduate students, University of Agriculture, Nigeria*

Paper Type: *Empirical*

Introduction

Universities engage in teaching, scholarship, and research, in the various fields of learning and in order to accomplish these objectives, academic libraries play prominent and indispensable roles. Libraries in universities are the nerve centre around which scholarship revolves as they play crucial roles in provision of information resources necessary for that purpose. Technological advances influence the way information is handled in academic libraries and service delivery. The benefits of technological advances are felt by libraries in the area of communication technology, computing technology, and mass storage. There are also some of the areas of continuous development that reshape the way the libraries deliver their services. Prominent among these are electronic resources and services. Electronic resources represent an increasingly important component of libraries. IFLA (2012) described electronic resources as those materials that require computer access, whether through a personal computer, mainframe, or handheld mobile devices, and may be accessed remotely via the Internet or locally. Furthermore, Oyedun (2007) stated that electronic resources are facilities that assist the librarians to offer quick, adequate and efficient services to their patron. This also helps

them to meet the diverse needs of their patrons. Libraries are now being described as traditional, hybrid, digital or electronic due to the influence of electronic resources. The electronic resources utilized by library to provide services to the users are CD-ROM, the Internet, and all web-based resource which offer a variety of reference and literary sources. These electronic resources provide off-line and online access to information by CD-ROM databases, the Internet as well as online databases in various disciplines.

Federal University of Agriculture, Abeokuta has a library which provide bibliotheca supports for its teaching and research activities. The library is named Nimbe Adedipe Library (NAL). Traditional services rendered by the library include, readers services, reference services, reprographic services, current awareness services (CAS), selective dissemination of information (SDI), indexing and abstracting services. The library engages in procurement and organization of relevant text books, e-journals, newspapers and magazines for the use of its users. Information and telecommunication technology (ICT) has impacted and expanded the scope of these services and functions of the library and afforded it veritable means of information delivery. Today the library has electronic library which provides access to various electronic resources; CD-ROMs, electronic books, e-journals, online references, web resources, web-catalogue, online database such as DOAJ, AGORA, TEEAL, HINARI, JSTOR, EBSCOHOST and OARE. These resources are housed in a department, named 'Electronic library' for the use of academic staff, researchers and students. Electronic resources have increasingly become an integral component of library services at Nimbe Adedipe Library (NAL). This owes the increased subscription to online databases, e-journals, electronic books and provision of internet services through WI-FI access all over the colleges.

Awareness of electronic resources indicates the extent to which users have information and knowledge of electronic resources being subscribed to by a library. When users of a library have adequate information on the resources available in the library, they are encouraged to use them as the need arises. From observation, students of the university spend less time on use of the e-resources in the library. This may be because they are not aware of or have less knowledge of the electronic resources that

are available in the library. Other reason may be that they are not aware of the influence the resources may have on their studies, or poor information literacy skills. Without information literacy skills, students may not know what type of information that is available, they may have difficulty in determining the information they need and the quality of it, they are unable to compare and evaluate alternative information.

Libraries can have numerous information resources but if users are not using them, they are worthless and a waste of resources. Consequent upon these, this study investigated the awareness and use of electronic resources as well as the perceived influence of the resources on studies among the students of FUNAAB.

This study is important because it identified the available electronic resources, perceived usefulness of the resources to studies, and suggests solution to challenges being faced by university libraries on the use of electronic resources by undergraduates. The main beneficiary of this study will be the students and staff of FUNAAB and other similar academic institutions facing similar challenges. This study is expected to be helpful to libraries to improve library services, especially the area of electronic resources and services.

Statement of the problem

The migration of knowledge from mainly print resources to both print and electronic resources compelled the Nimbe Adedipe library to think in the lines of adopting technology not only to supplement the already stretched print resources but also to offer more up to date alternative. The field of agriculture, which is the core focus of the University, is ever dynamic and the print resources at times become obsolete as soon as they are printed. This led the university to migrate to electronic resources that are updated almost in real time and available to the users. Federal University of Agriculture has invested in electronic resources as alternatives to the print materials available. These include electronic books, e-journals, CD-ROMs and online databases. Despite the massive investment on the electronic resources, it has been observed that the resource utilization level is still low among the students of the university. This has led to overreliance on the printed materials that are becoming over stretched due to increasing students' population. Hence this study, taking into consideration variables such as awareness,

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use, and perceived influence of electronic resources on studies

Objectives of the study

The study was undertaken to find out the awareness, use and perceived influence of electronic resources on studies among students of Federal University of Agriculture, Abeokuta. Specific objectives of the study are to,

1. to determine the different types of electronic resources available in the library;
2. to find out the level of awareness of electronic resources among the students;
3. to find out frequency of use of electronic resources by the students;
4. to examine the perception of students on the use of electronic resources on their studies and;
5. to identify the challenges of using electronic resources by the students.

Research questions

1. What are the different types of electronic resources available in the library?
2. What is the level of awareness of electronic resources among students?
3. What is the frequency of use of electronic resources among students?
4. How do the students perceive the influence of use of electronic resource on their studies?
5. What are the challenges faced by the students in using the electronic resources in the library?

Literature Review

Technology that is continuously changing in today's digital age has made academic libraries to update and improve their collections and services in order to meet the students demand for information. One of the means is the provision of electronic resources collection. A successful strategy to enhanced exploitation of resources is to ensure users' awareness about the existence of particular services such as the current technologies in libraries which are meant to promote service delivery efficiency and effectiveness. Oduwole (2005) as cited in Adeniji et al. (2015) averred that the introduction of Information and Communication Technology (ICT) into the Nigerian libraries has

brought a great change to the library as a service institution and its adoption has led to a better way in which librarians performed their duties on daily basis. Okolo (2002) cited in Okonedo et al. (2014) buttress these findings that the library needs ICT in order to give efficient services to its users. Not only is the speed of its operation elevated, the degree of its output is equally large.

Abubakar (2012) pointed out that with the introduction of the World Wide Web and graphical browsers in the 1990s, the internet has become widely accessible and many users have grabbed the idea of using it for multifarious purposes and agenda. Students are now having chances of surfing the internet for their studies and research needs. Online Public Access Catalogue (OPAC) which librarian utilized to offer users the opportunity to access the library collections without the usage of catalogue boxes is the answer. OPAC according to Alabi and Inuwa (2010) is the library database where library users can have accessed to the resources of the library through online computer terminals in the library.

In Malaysia, Harun (2006) cited in Bagudu (2013) investigated the use, perceived usefulness and satisfaction with electronic resources among the postgraduate students of Kulliyyah of Islamic Revealed Knowledge (KIRK) and Kulliyyah of Information and Communication Technology (KICT). The author used close-ended and open-ended questionnaire as instruments in collecting data and other information required. The results of the research shows that OPAC was the most regular used one among electronic resources provided by the IIUM library. And the research also discovered that the respondents perceive electronic resources as useful.

In China, WU and Chen (2012) studying how graduate students perceive, use and manage electronic resources in the National University of Taiwan found that the usage varied according to subject background of the student. He found that humanities students perceived the e-resources less important compare to students of other disciplines. In another study, Sinh and Nhung (2012) argue that user's behavior will influence the usage of electronic resources and that factors that influence usage of resources are the purpose of usage, preferred types of materials, ways to learn the search, search techniques, and difficulties and expectation in

using the resources. Thus, in their survey on searching behavior of users of six online databases subscribed to by the Central Vietnam National University in 2011 reported that 87.5% requested for full- text articles as compared with 12.5% who requested for abstracts.

In Uganda, Okello-Obura (2010) found that respondents were not aware of most of the electronic resources provided for them in their respective institutions and therefore affected their usage. In India, the study by Chira and Madhusudhan (2009) on the use of e-journals by doctoral research scholars of Goa University, India, revealed that all (100%) the respondents were aware of the e-journals in their institution and accessed them. Haridasan and Khan (2009) conducted a survey at National Social Science Documentation Centre (NASSDOC) and found out that majority of the users, students, research scholars, and scientists, were aware of most of the electronic resources. Many research scholars consulted e-journals from their departmental laboratories and computer centers, not only for research purposes but also to update their knowledge and skills.

In Iran, Anaraki and Babalhavaeji's (2013) reported that when students are not aware of the existence of electronic resources in their library system, they tend to use general search engines to meet their information needs. They found out that only 16% of the medical students in Iran were well acquainted with the electronic resources of the integrated digital library (IDL) portal provided for them. He et al. (2012) argued that students thought of online academic search engines, such as Google and Cite seers as more important resources than university subscribed electronic resources, EBSCO, Emerald, Pubmed and JSTOR, and that depending on their tasks, they would prefer a particular resource to another. Similarly, Cothran (2011) found that graduate students used Google Scholars a lot because they found it easy to learn, easy to use, and easy to navigate. In addition, the design and interface were user-friendly and it was a useful resource for their research.

In Nigeria, Omosekejimi et al. (2015) reported the usage of electronic information resources by undergraduate students at the Federal University of Petroleum Resources Effurun's library, Warri, Nigeria. The study revealed that the use of electronic resources has tremendous impact on the academic performance of the undergraduate students, and that there are needs for the students

to acquire more skills on the use of electronic information resources. Adeniran (2013) conducted a study to examine the usage of electronic resources by undergraduates at the Redeemer's University library, Nigeria. His study revealed that use of electronic resources has tremendous impact on the academic performance. Egberongbe (2011) had earlier reported the varying degree of frequency and extent of utilization of e- library facilities at University of Lagos is very low.

Corroborating this assertion, Bashorun et al. (2011) reported that frequency of use of electronic resources by academic staff and students of University of Ilorin was low; reasons ascribed for this were lack of awareness to electronic resources provided by the library, power outage, ineffective communication channels, slow network and inadequate searching skills. Relatedly, Eyanfe and Brume-Ezewu (2013) studied the awareness and use of electronic journals by medical students of Delta State University and University of Benin, Nigeria. The findings revealed among others, low level of awareness of e-journals and low computer literacy skills resulting in low level of usage of the electronic journals among the medical students from both institutions. Fasola (2013) examined awareness of and constraints to the use of electronic resources by students and lecturers of Ajayi Crowther University. Oyo, Nigeria. The findings revealed that though there was a high awareness (70.6%) of the available electronic resources, constant power failure (67.6%), slow internet connectivity (56.4%), download delay (52.9%) and unhelpful attitude of library staff (41.2%) were constraints encountered by respondents in the use of the available electronic resources.

Research Methodology

This study adopted a descriptive survey design and questionnaire was used to collect data. The respondents were undergraduate students of Federal University of Agriculture, Abeokuta, Nigeria. The population of the respondents was 17,000 students of 2015/16 session spread across the ten colleges in the university. Ten percentages (10%) of the population, 1,700 was selected for the study. A structured questionnaire consisting of three parts was used to gather relevant information. The first part elicited background information such as gender, level, and college of respondents. The second part elicited information on respondent's level of

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awareness, and use of electronic resources in the library. The third part elicited information on respondent's perceived usefulness on their studies and constraints to the use of electronic resources. One thousand seven hundred copies (1,700) of the questionnaire were administered on undergraduate students from ten (10) colleges that used the library during the period of study. One thousand five hundred (1,500) copies (88%) were retrieved and found usable. The data was analyzed using descriptive and inferential statistics.

Data Analysis

This presents the result of the data analysis in line with the research questions earlier stated in the study.

Table 1: Distribution of respondents by sex

Sex	Frequency	%
Male	761	50.7
Female	739	49.3
Total	**1500**	**100.0**

Table1, above shows the distribution of respondents by gender, it indicates that 761(50.7%) of the respondents were male while 739(49.3%) were female. This shows that the population of female respondents is much close to that of male respondents. Therefore, there is no significant gender difference in response rate.

Table 2: Distribution of respondents by level of study

Level	Frequency	%
100	147	9.8
200	418	27.9
300	288	19.2
400	508	33.9
500	139	9.3
Total	**1500**	**100.0**

Table 2 shows the distribution of respondents by level of study. It revealed that 147(9.8%) of the respondents were 100 level students, 418(27.9%) were 200 level students, 288(19.2%), were 300 level students and 508(33.9%) were 400 level students and the remaining 139(9.3%) were 500 level students. This shows that student at 400 and 200 levels of studies constituted majority of the respondents.

Table 3: Descriptive statistics showing electronic resources use by the students

Electronic resources	Yes		No	
	Freq.	%	Freq.	%
Electronic Journals	405	27.0	1095	73.0
Electronic Books	464	30.9	1036	69.1
CD-ROM resources	93	6.2	1407	93.8
Electronic articles/reprints	190	12.7	1310	87.3
The Internet	1074	71.6	426	28.4
Electronic Mail	282	18.8	1218	81.2
Online Databases	256	17.1	1244	82.9
All of the Above	186	12.4	1314	87.6

Table 3 presents a descriptive statistics of the different types of electronic resources in the library that students make use. From the table, The Internet is the most widely used resources by the students; 1074 respondents (71.6%) indicated this. The Internet is followed by electronic books (e-Granary) 464 respondents, electronic journal 405 respondents, and electronic mail. The least used resources are CD-ROM database, electronic articles reprints and online database. However, 186 respondents (12.4%) made use of all the listed resources, while 1314 respondents (87.6%) did not. These findings revealed that the Internet is the only electronic resources commonly used by the students. Others are being used occasionally.

Table 4: Distribution of respondents by level of awareness of electronic resources in the library

Level of Awareness	Freq.	%
Very Much aware	534	35.6
Aware	719	47.9
Less aware	247	16.5
Total	**1500**	**100.0**

These findings are further presented in the chart below for more clarity.

Figure 1: Bar Chart showing the level of awareness of electronic resources among students
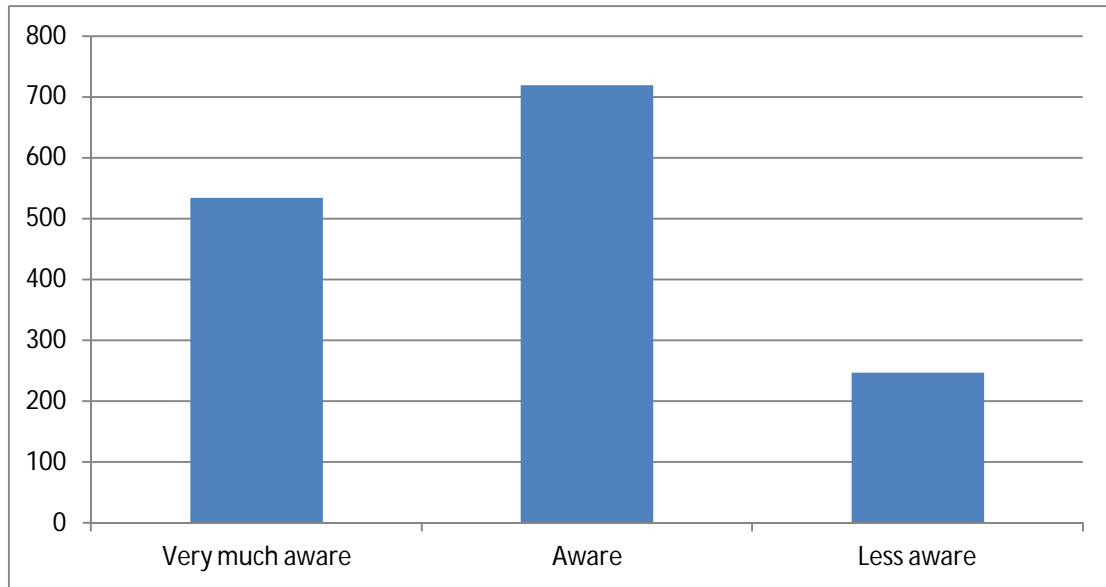

Figure 1 present the level of awareness of electronic resources among the students. The chart above indicated that majority of the respondents (48%) were aware, 534 respondents (36%) were very much aware, and other 247 respondents (16%) were less aware. This indicates that the respondents were significantly aware of electronic resources in the university library.

Table 5: Frequency of use of electronic resources among the Respondents

Frequency of use	Freq.	%
Daily	507	33.8
Weekly	278	18.5
Fortnightly	39	2.6
Monthly	45	3.0
Twice a semester	49	3.3
Occasionally	447	29.8
Not at all	135	9.0
Total	**1500**	**100.0**

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Figure 2: Bar Chart showing the frequency of use of electronic resources among students
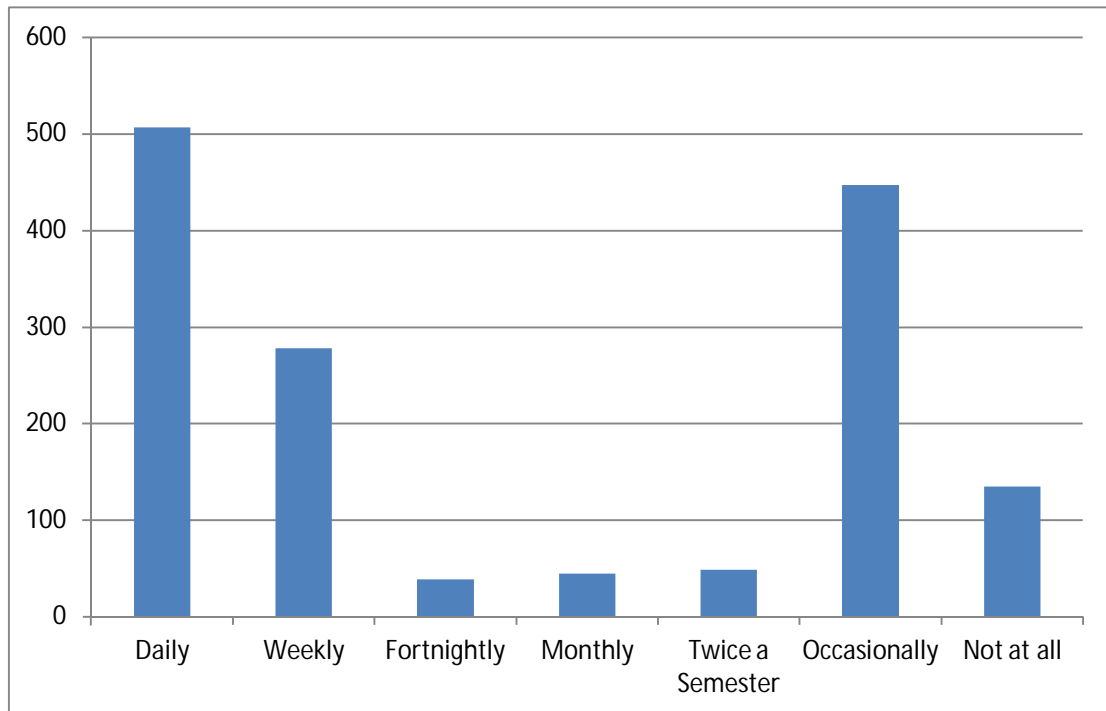
The bar chart above shows the frequency at which the undergraduate students made use of electronic resources in the library. The result of the analysis indicated that majority of the respondents, 34%, made use of electronic resources daily. This is followed by 30% of the respondents who made use of the resources occasionally. 278 respondents, 19%, made use of electronic resources weekly. Other respondents made use of electronic resources twice a semester (3.3%), monthly (3.0%), and fortnightly (2.6%) respectively. 135 respondents (9%) did not make use of library electronic resources at all.

Figure 3: Bar Chart showing the purpose for using electronic resources
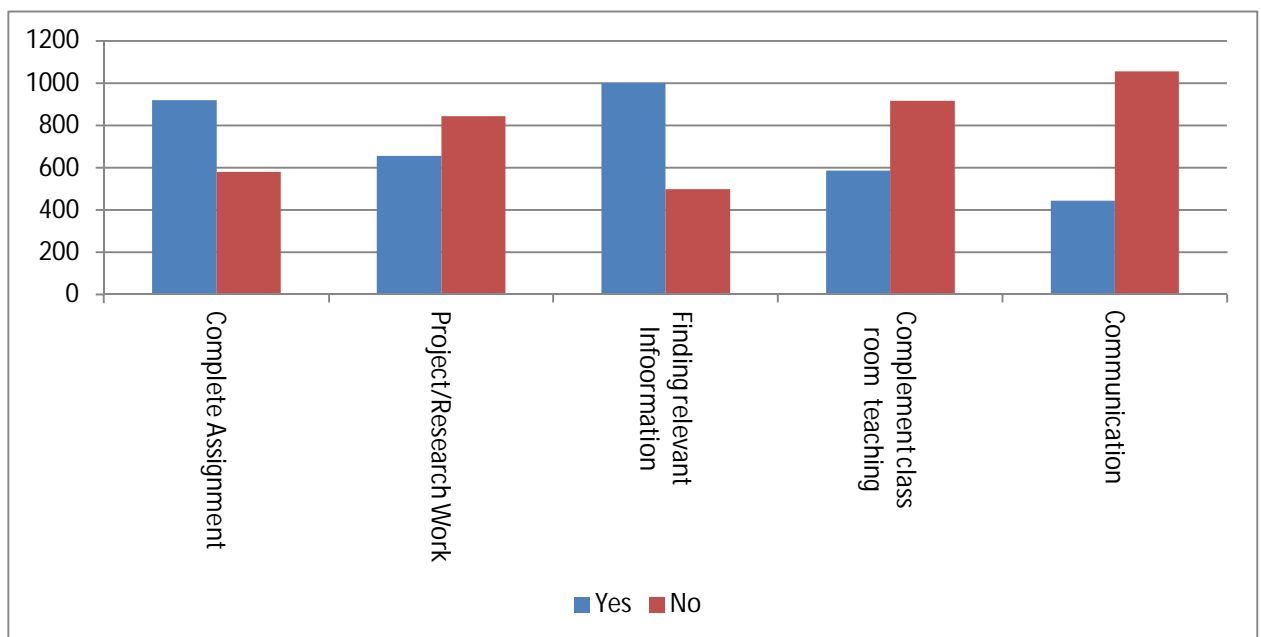
The figure above presents a bar chart showing the purpose of using library electronic resources among the undergraduates. The findings revealed specifically that students make use of electronic resources to find relevant information related to their studies, and to complete assignment.

TABLE 6: Descriptive statistics showing the perceived influence to the use of electronic resources on their study

Parameter	Test value = 2						
	N	df	Mean	SD	t-cal	P-value	Remarks
Search options are helpful	1500	1499	2.803	1.261	24.65	0.000	Significant
It boosts independence in resources searching and use	1500	1499	2.661	1.221	20.94	0.000	Significant
Electronic resources in the library help to improve your performance on studies	1500	1499	2.655	1.358	18.67	0.000	Significant
Electronic resources are authentic information sources	1500	1499	2.361	1.446	9.67	0.000	Significant
Ease of access and navigation	1500	1499	2.44	1.358	12.45	0.000	Significant
Independence and opportunity to study at my own pace	1500	1499	2.69	1.308	20.63	0.000	Significant

The table above presents a one sample test with the test value of 2 showing the perceived influence of electronic resources on the studies of the respondents. The question raised was a 5 likert scale rating (4 = Strongly Agree, 3 = Agree, 2 = Disagree and 1 = strongly Disagree while 0= Neutral). Based on the above, the respondents were asked whether search options are helpful, the means values (2.803) recorded was above the test values with t-value of 24.65 which is significant at 5% level. This indicated that there is a statistical evidence to conclude that search option was helpful. The students were asked whether electronic resources boost their independence in resources searching and use or not. The means values (2.661) recorded was above the test values of (2.00) with t-value of 20.94 and its corresponding p-value of 0.000. This indicated that there is enough evidence to conclude that electronic resources boost independence in resources searching and use. On the statements that electronic resources in the library help to improve students' performance, the means values (2.655) recorded was above the test values of (2.00) with t-value of 18.675 and

its corresponding p-value of 0.000. This indicated that electronic resources in the library when consulted by the students help to improve their performance. Furthermore, on the statements that electronic resources are authentic information sources, it is concluded based on the t-values of 9.67 whose probability close to zero percent that electronic resources are authentic information resources. On the statement that says electronic resources could be used to ease of access and navigation, the mean (2.37) recorded shows statistically that there is a significant outcome with (t= 12.452; p< 0.05). This indicated that it can be used in that regard. Also, on the perceived usefulness that electronic resources in the library bring about independence and opportunity to study at their own pace, the means values (2.69) recorded was above the test values of (2.00) with t-value of 20.64 and its corresponding p-value of 0.000. This indicated that there is enough evidence to conclude that undergraduate students perceived that electronic resources boost independence in resources searching and use.

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Figure 4: Bar Chart showing the major challenges to use of electronic resources by the students
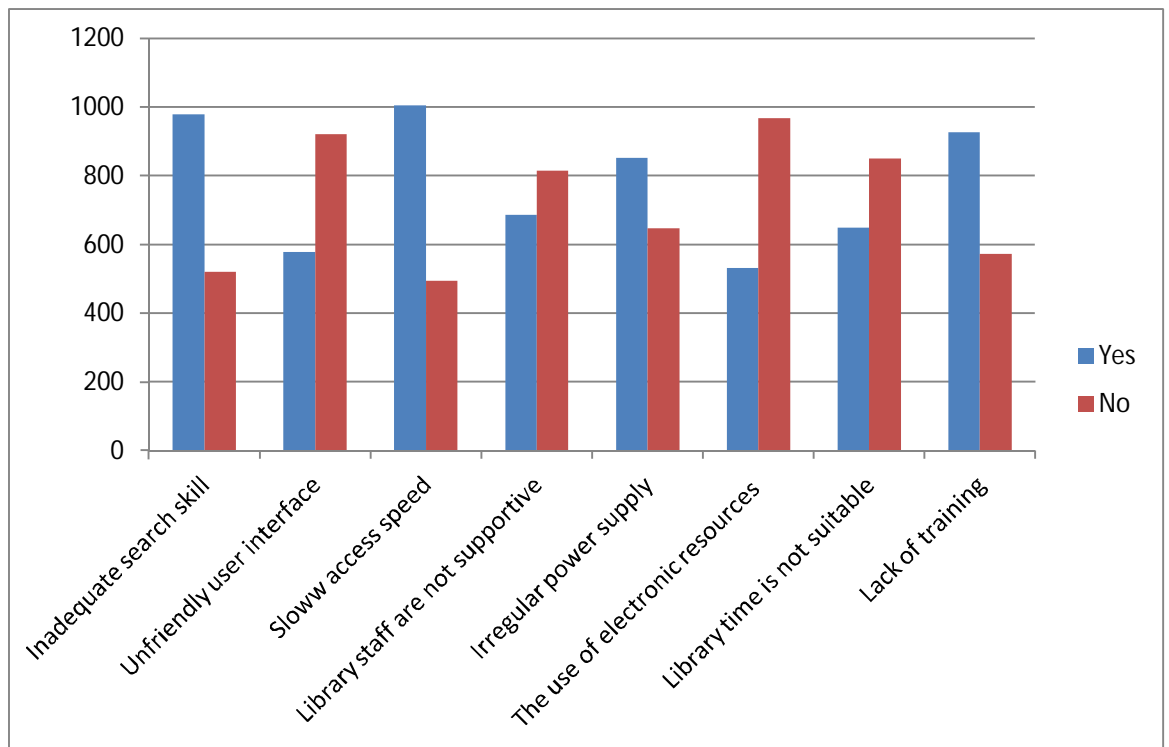
The chart presented above showing the major challenges faced by the students in using the electronic recourses in the library as perceived by the undergraduate students. According to the chart above, lack of awareness, slow access speed, irregular power supply, and lack of training were considered by the respondents to be major challenges they faced while using the electronic recourses in the library.

Discussion of findings

The findings revealed that the students of Federal University of Agriculture, Abeokuta (FUNAAB) were aware of the electronic resources available in the library. This agrees with the study of Chira and Madhusudhan (2009) in a survey on the use of electronic journals by doctoral research scholars of Goa University, India. The study reported that all the respondents were aware of the electronic journals of the consortium and accessed them. The study revealed that the internet is the most commonly used electronic resources among the students for their studies. Less attention is giving to electronic resources like electronic books, e-journals, CD-ROM, online database, electronic mail. Abu Bakar (2012) pointed out that with the introduction of the World Wide Web and graphical browsers in the 1990s, the internet has

become widely accessible and many users have grabbed the idea of using it for multifarious purposes and agenda. Students are now having chances of surfing the internet for their studies and research needs.

The findings of the study indicate that majority of the respondents used electronic resources daily. The findings also gathered that the purposes of using library electronic resources are for finding relevant information and to complete assignment. Omosekejimi et al (2015) reported that usage of electronic information resources by undergraduate students at Federal University of Petroleum Resources Effurun's library, Warri, Nigeria. They further revealed that the use of electronic resources has tremendous impact on the academic performance of the students; use of electronic resources boost their studies; give them independence in studying, resources searching, and use of diverse search options.

Challenges to use of electronic resources by the respondents, identified in the study are inadequate search skill, slow access speed, irregular power supply and lack of training. These findings are in agreement with the earlier study by Fasola (2013) who examined awareness and constraints to the use of electronic resources by students and lecturers of Ajayi Crowther University of Oyo, Nigeria. Fasola's study

revealed that though there was high awareness, 70% of the available electronic resources, constant power failure 67.6%, slow internet connectivity 56.4%, downloading delay 52.9%, and unhelpful attitude of library staff 41.2% were constraints encountered by the respondents in the use of e- resources.

Conclusion

Electronic resources facilitate access to and speedy retrieval of information which go a long way in meeting the information needs of users. It is evident from this study that electronic resources are known to students and considered useful for their studies. A large percentage of the students of the Federal University of Agriculture, Abeokuta were aware of the electronic resources available in their institution's library but they do not use them considerably due to some challenges. Consequent upon this, the library needs to prepare the list of e-resources in its collections and state techniques for retrieving relevant information from everyone of them. The list should be distributed and publicized among the students. In addition to this, there are needs by the university library to institute training programmes for the students on the use of electronic resources in the institution. Challenges inhibiting use of the resources identified in the study should be squarely addressed in order to provide proactive and quality services. This is because when quality services are provided, the library users are encourage and motivated to visit the library again.

Recommendations

Arising from the findings of this study and the need to address the challenges of electronic resources utilization, the following recommendations are proffered:

1. There is a need to invest in electronic resources and encourage its use among students most especially the online databases, e-journals and electronic books.

2. The university library should update facilities available in electronic information resources. Libraries should use education program to sensitize students more on the usefulness of electronic resources to their studies. Assignments requiring the use of electronic resources should be developed and giving to the students.

3. Infrastructure to support electronic resource use such as electricity supply, computers and their accessories, adequate bandwidth subscription and technical assistance to uses should be put in place.

4. Slow access speed was noted as a one of the problem. Patrons cannot utilize the online resources as needed. This is because most of them rely on internet connection. It is recommended that the library should increase its bandwidth or preferably have its dedicated bandwidth for internet connections.

5. Computer skills are critical on usage of electronic resources. It is highly recommended that the university at large conducts crushed programs on ICT skills preferably whenever there is a new intake or as regular as the management may deem necessary.

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