

Access And Utilization Of Online Information Resources By Sandwich Students Of Benue State University Makurdi

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Abstract: Online information resources are the most current sources of information for academic work. The study was set to determine the level of access and use of online resources by Sandwich students in Benue State University Makurdi. The study adopted a descriptive survey research design. The population of the study was 37 and a total of 37 sandwich students representing the entire population of sandwich students in contact, two and three in the department of library and information science, Benue State University, Makurdi that constitute the sample. Data were collected through questionnaire and analyzed with the use of frequencies, percentages and mean. Results show that Sandwich students of LIS are aware of online resources to a high extent. They access the resources through handsets or mobile, their personal laptops and cybercafé. The resources are highly accessed and used for the purposes of being current, background information on topics, course assignments, prepare for examination, and learning. However, access and use of online information resources is hiccapped by lack of computer skills, lack of access to some online journals and online books, power failure and high cost of subscription, network failure and poor internet services.

Keywords: Library and Information Science, Access, Use, Online Information Resources, Sandwich Students

I. INTRODUCTION

Librarianship is a profession dedicated to teaching, learning and practice of information selection, acquisition, organization, management, dissemination and use. Library and information science was introduced as a professional to be chosen and studied by those who may wish to study and practice it in the year 2008, and granted a departmental status in 2015. Before then, Library and Information Science was a unit in the department of Educational Foundations. Since then the department is admitting and graduating students in librarianship with better opportunities to work in libraries and information centres, be self employed most especially in the areas of indexing and abstracting, library software development, consultancy services, Current Awareness

Services (CAS), Selected Dissemination of Information (SDI) networking, compilation of bibliographies among others.

Learning processes of the profession require information resources in different formats and one of such formats is that of digital format. It is a way of documenting information contents on digital or electronic devices and electronically or digitally accessing and using them. With this development, digital information resources are gradually taking over the manual or traditional means of information access and use. Online information resources are those information resources that can be generated, stored, managed, accessed and used electronically with the use of computer network. They are also described by Odiri (2016) as made easy resources or media for storing, retrieving, manipulating, transmitting or receiving information electronically in a digital form. Online information resources are identified by Osuji (2002) as data,

information of personnel, subject, and faculties, organizations stored in an electronic media or materials. Online learning resources are now one of the most important and used sources of information for students in general and sandwich students in particular worldwide due to their currency of information provision. According to Dadzie (2007) "electronic resources are invaluable research tools that complement the print-based resources in a traditional library setting. They also increase access to information that might be restricted to the user due to geographical location or finances, access to more current information and provision of extensive links to additional resources related content" while Odiri (2016) concludes that the use of e-resources will increasingly be part of the normal work experience of many students and scholars.

Considering the importance of online information resources to students learning, there is therefore, need for sandwich students of Benue State University, Makurdi to access and use these resources. Sandwich students are those groups of people studying in the universities on part-time to obtain a diploma, bachelor degree, master degree or doctoral degree certificate. There are two categories of sandwich students; undergraduate and postgraduate students but this study will specifically deal with undergraduate students. Undergraduate sandwich students are those university students studying on part-time for their first degrees. This is to say that their programmes range from Bachelor of Arts (B.A); Bachelor of Education (B. Ed); Bachelor of Engineering (B. Eng); Bachelor of Science (B. Sc) etc. They are characterized by dedication, commitment as well as willingness to embrace the value of their programme which is aimed at achieving higher performance only if they judiciously utilize the resources of the university libraries.

Accessibility according to Aina and Adekanye (2013) refers to resources being effectively and independently reached and utilized. In the context of this work, accessibility simply means the ability of the online learning resources provided by the university library to get to those who need them. Utilization on the other hand is the extent to which people are making use of whatever resources that is already available in the community or in an organization (Onah, 2013). In the context of this work, utilization of online information resources is the extent to which sandwich students are able to access online learning or information resources and make extensive use of them for the fulfillment of their educational information needs. Access and utilization of online information resources is one of the most important activities of an academic process as it will help sandwich students to improve on their academic development.

Consequently, it has been observed that sandwich students of Benue State University Makurdi may not be accessing and utilizing online information resources provided by the library for the reasons best known to them. It is based on this backdrop that the study of access and use of online information resources by sandwich students in Benue State University Makurdi attract the attention of the researcher.

A. STATEMENT OF THE PROBLEM

University library occupy a strategic position in the provision and dissemination of information to the academic

community. It keeps the academic community informed of the new trends in their areas of research. Access and use of library resources such as online information resources will enable sandwich students to develop their social and academic capabilities.

Sandwich students who do not make use of library resources such as online resources may lack the current information materials and intellectual development. This may affect their academic development which relies heavily on access and use of quality information that is provided and organized for use by the university library.

However, it has been observed that sandwich students of the university may not know the benefits of engaging in the use of library in relation to their academic development and may not be making use of the library and its information resources for reasons best known to them. The question then is: what are the factors affecting utilization of online resources by sandwich students in Benue State University Makurdi? This is the question that bothers the mind of the researchers to delve into an investigation of this kind so as to proffer solutions to the problem.

B. PURPOSE OF THE STUDY

The purpose of this study is to determine the level of access and use of online resources by sandwich students in Benue State University Makurdi. Specifically, the study will seek to:

- ✓ Find out the level of library and information science sandwich students awareness of online resources in Benue State University Makurdi;
- ✓ Determine how sandwich students of LIS of the institution access online resources;
- ✓ Assess the level of online information resources access by LIS sandwich students;
- ✓ Assess the extent to which sandwich students use of online resources;
- ✓ Determine the purpose of LIS sandwich students' use of online resources;
- ✓ Determine the problems associated with LIS sandwich students' access and use of online resources.

C. RESEARCH QUESTIONS

- The following research questions will guide the study
- ✓ What is the level of library and information science sandwich students' awareness of online resources in Benue State University Makurdi?
 - ✓ How do the sandwich students of LIS access online resources?
 - ✓ To what level do sandwich students of LIS access online resources?
 - ✓ What kinds of online resources are used by library and information science sandwich students' in Benue State University Makurdi?
 - ✓ What is the purpose of library and information science sandwich students' use of online resources in Benue State University Makurdi?

- ✓ What problems are associated with library and information science sandwich students' use of online resources in Benue State University Makurdi?

II. LITERATURE REVIEW

A number of studies have been conducted on use of electronic resources by different categories of users such as students, lecturers etc in academic institutions. However, very few of them shall be considered to avail readers the opportunity to look into the subject matter of this study as it progresses. Though this study concerns access and use of online resources as the title depicts, other leaning resources shall briefly be attended to since knowledge is not isolated. In their study of awareness and use of online information resources by medical students of Delta State university in Nigeria, Baro, Endouware and Obogu (2011) reported that majority of the students are not aware and do not use the online information resources such as MEDLINE, HINARI, CINAHL databases, NUC virtual library as sources of information to retrieve materials related to medical literature. Egberongbe (2011) investigating the awareness, level of use of electronic resources, the perceived impacts of use of electronic resources on the academic productivity of teachers and problems faced by researchers while using electronic resources in the university of Lagos (UNILAG) library adopted. Findings show that majority of respondents who used electronic resources were aware and have become familiar with electronic resources.

Online information resources can be accessible in many ways.

Online information resources are accessible in different channels or ways. Isiakpona and Ifijeh (2012) evaluate the accessibility of electronic resources for service provision in university libraries in Ogun State, Nigeria. Results show that university libraries have electronic databases; however, the most common of the databases was Agora while IEE was the least common. The major challenge involved in the provision of electronic resources among university libraries was electricity power outage. While the study found out that there was no significant relationship between availability of databases and effective electronic provision, the study also found out that there is a significant relationship between the availability of basic infrastructures and effective electronic resources provision.

Online information resources can be used for different reasons. In response to this, Ozoemelem (2009) in a study of use of electronic resources by postgraduate students of the department of library and information science of Delta State University Abraka revealed that there is a low level of skillfulness in the use of ICT among postgraduate students of the department of library and information science, Delta State University Abraka. The study also reported that the level of electronic resources usage by postgraduate students of the department of library and information science, Delta State University Abraka is high while there is a high frequency of usage of electronic resources by both male and female postgraduate students of the department of library and information science, Delta State University Abraka. Chikezie,

Ossai-Onah, and Emuchay (2012) in their study reported that students made use of online resources when the need arose, relevance and currency of online resources account for the reason of students' use of online resources. Electronic books (e-books) were mostly utilized as against e-journals and e-thesis, while mobile phones and cybercafé remains the channel used in accessing online resources. The study therefore identified incessant power supply, slow internet connectivity and lack of time to access the information resources as problems affecting students' use of online resources in the area. This means that online resources are predominant feature in academic environment in the contemporary society therefore even with the problems students encountered with the use of online resources, they still made use of them.

Online information resources can be used for different reasons. Odiri (2016) in his student's utilization of electronic resources in tertiary institutions in Delta State revealed that students of Delta State University, Abraka Campus rely and use the internet heavily to get relevant information to meet their needs, than any other e-resources. The main reason for the poor use of others is inadequate access and lack of necessary skills to use them. The findings showed that students of Delta State University, Abraka Campus use electronic resources always because of its fast nature. Daramola (2016) assess the perception of undergraduate students of the Federal University of Technology library, Akure on the use of e-resources in the library. Findings reveal that undergraduate students that visited e-resources unit of the library were relatively young and male students visited the e-resources more than the female students. The e-resources in FUTA library are mainly used by male students that cut across the most of the schools in the university. The major reason for utilizing the e-resources was for assignment and research purposes. The e-resources frequently used were the e-journals, e-books and e-magazines. Although the students have positive perception of the e-resources, the most significant challenge faced by the students was insufficient computers in the e-library.

III. RESEARCH METHODS

The design of the study is a descriptive survey. The design is suitable for the study because the researcher's aim was to collect data on the opinions of Sandwich Students concerning the utilization of online resources with the use of suitable instrument that was administered on a representative sample of the population. The area of this study is Benue State University Makurdi. Benue State University is located in Makurdi, the state capital of Benue State. It is located on the coasts of River Benue along Makurdi Gboko road. The total population of all sandwich students in the department of library and information science, Benue State University Makurdi who are duly registered with the university library by the 2014/2015 academic session was used for the study. Specifically, all the sandwich students of the Department of Library and Information Science with the total population of 37 comprising of 17 sandwich students in contact 1 and 20 sandwich students in contact 2 was used as the population. The total population of 37 sandwich comprising of contact 1

and contact 2 who are registered with the Department of Library and Information Science by the 2014/2015 academic session was used for the study. This is because the number of students is small. Data was collected through questionnaire entitled "Utilization of Library Resources Questionnaire" (ULRQ) which was formulated by the researcher. The data collected for the study was analyzed using frequencies, percentages and means. Frequencies, percentages and mean were used to analyze data respectively. The frequencies of respondents and mean were used for the calculation of items 1-10 in (research question 1) and items 28-35 (research question 4) on the extent of Sandwich students' awareness of online information resources and extent of online resources use by sandwich students of library and information science, Benue State University Makurdi while frequencies of respondents and percentages were used for calculating items 11-27, 36-49 of research question 2, 3, 5 and 6. Items 1-10 and 28-35 of research question 1 and 4 are opinion based with response options of VHE = Very high extent, (HE) = High extent, LE = Low extent VLE/NE = No extent. The researcher considered the average mean of 3.25-4.00 as VHE, 2.50-3.24 as HE, 1.75-2.49 as LE and 1.00-1.74 as NE. This means that only means of 2.50 and above was acceptable while the mean below 2.50 is not acceptable.

IV. RESULTS

A total of 37 copies of questionnaire were administered to respondents out of which 37 representing 100% were filled and returned to the researcher and were found usable for the study.

S/N	ITEMS	VHE	HE	LE	VLE	\bar{X}	Remark
1	Online reference resources e.g dictionaries, abstract	12	10	0	2	3.33	VHE
2	Online newspapers	6	17	0	0	3.26	VHE
3	Online books	13	4	2	4	3.13	HE
4	Online Journals	9	7	3	3	3.00	HE
5	Online thesis and dissertations	11	3	8	2	2.95	HE
6	Online magazines	7	9	3	3	2.90	HE
7	Online government publications	9	9	4	0	2.81	HE
8	Online archives	9	6	4	5	2.79	HE
9	Online databases (EBSCOHOST, OCLC)	5	9	9	2	2.79	HE
10	Websites/blogs	10	12	1	1	2.76	HE

KEY: VHE=Very High Extent; HE=High Extent; LE= Low Extent; VLE= Very Low Extent

Source: Fieldwork, 2016

Table 1: Extent of Sandwich Students' Awareness of Library Resources in Benue State University Makurdi

Table 1 presents the extent of Sandwich students' awareness of online resources in Benue State University Makurdi. Data reveals that Sandwich students are aware of online reference resources with 3.33, online newspapers with 3.26, online books with 3.13, and online journals with 3.00 to a very high extent. Others are aware of online thesis and dissertations with 2.95, online magazines with 2.90, online government documents with 2.81, online archives with 2.79, online databases with 2.79, websites/blogs with 2.76 to a high extent.

S/N	Item	YES	%	NO	%
11	I access online resources through my handsets or mobile phones	15	65.2	8	34.8
12	I access online resources through my through my personal laptops (PC)	13	59.1	9	40.9
13	I access online resources through my cybercafés	13	59.1	9	40.9
14	I access online resources through my ipad	9	37.5	15	62.5
15	I access online resources through my institution network	9	34.6	16	64.0
16	I access online resources through my institution virtual library	6	24.0	19	76.0
17	I access online resources through my institution repositories	2	8.33	22	91.7

Source: Field Work 2016

Table 2: Mean Responses on Sandwich Students Access to Online Resources

Results in Table 2 show that sandwich students of Library and information science, Benue State University Makurdi access online resources through their handsets or mobile phones with 15 (65.2%), their personal laptops with 13 (59.1%) and cyberface with 13 (59.1%) while ipad with 9 (37.5%), institution network with 9 (34.6%), institution virtual library 6 (24.0) and institution repositories 2 (8.33%).

S/N	Item	High	%	Low	%
18	Online newspapers	22	91.7	2	8.3
19	Online magazines	16	83.2	13	15.8
20	Online thesis and dissertations	15	65.2	8	34.8
21	Online databases	12	54.5	10	45.4
22	Online reference resources e.g dictionaries, abstract	13	54.2	11	45.8
23	Websites/blogs	14	56.0	11	44.0
24	Online archives	14	60.9	9	39.1
25	Online government publications	11	44.0	14	56.0
26	Online books	9	39.1	14	60.9

27	Online Journals	2	8.3	22	91.7
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Source: Field Work 2016

Table 3: Mean Responses on the Level of Online Information Resources Access by LIS Sandwich Students

Table 3 presents data on the level of online information resources access by LIS sandwich students of Benue State University Makurdi. It reveals that 22 (91.7%), 16 (83.2%), 15 (65.2%), 14 (60.9%), 12 (54.5%), 13 (54.2%) and 14 (56.0%) representing online newspapers, online magazines, online thesis and dissertations, online databases, online reference resources, websites/blogs and online archives are highly accessed by LIS sandwich students while the level of online government documents, online books and online journals with 11 (44.0%), 9 (39.1%) and 2 (8.30%) is low.

S/N	Resources	VHE	HE	LE	NE	X	Remark
28	Online reference resources	67	11	10	2	3.58	VHE
29	Online journals	50	29	10	0	3.41	VHE
30	Online books	27	48	6	0	3.25	VHE
31	Online magazines	19	33	26	3	2.83	HE
32	Online newspapers	18	37	23	7	2.77	HE
32	Online thesis/project	32	13	26	18	2.66	HE
34	Websites	29	6	48	3	2.58	HE
35	Online government documents	4	20	39	26	2.25	NE

KEY: VHE=Very High Extent; HE=High Extent; LE= Low Extent; VLE= Very Low Extent

Source: Field Work 2016

Table 4: Mean Responses on the Extent of Online Resources Use by Sandwich Students

Results in Table 4 reveal that sandwich students of LIS Benue state University Makurdi used online resources such as online reference resources, online journals and online books are used to a very high extent with mean responses of 3.58, 3.41 and 3.25 while online magazines, online newspapers, online thesis/projects as well as websites/blogs are used to a high extent with mean responses of 2.83, 2.77, 2.66 and 2.58 whereas online government documents are rejected.

S/N	Strategies	YES	%	NO	%
36	I used online resources for current affairs	22	91.7	2	8.3
37	I used online resources for background information on topics	16	83.2	13	15.8
38	I used online resources for my course assignments	15	65.2	8	34.8
39	I used online resources for examinations preparation	12	54.5	10	45.4
40	I used online resources for learning	13	54.2	11	45.8
41	I used online resources for pleasure/leisure	11	44.0	14	56.0
42	I used online resources for project work	9	39.1	14	60.9

Source: Field Work 2016

Table 5: Purpose of Sandwich Students Use of Online Resources in Benue State University Makurdi

Data presented in table 5 shows that the major purpose of sandwich students' use of online resources is current affairs with 22 (91.7%). Others include background information on topics with 16 (83.2%), course assignments with 15 (65.2%),

prepare for examination with 12 (54.5%), and learning with 13 (54.2%) while pleasure/leisure and project are rejected with 11 (44.2%) as well as 9 (39.1%) as purposes of sandwich students use of online resources in the institution.

S/N	Problems	YES	%	NO	%
43	Lack of computer skills	22	95.6	1	4.3
44	Students lack of interest	17	80.9	4	19.1
45	Power failure	18	78.3	5	21.7
46	High cost of subscription	14	63.6	8	36.4
47	Network failure	15	62.5	9	37.5
48	Lack of access to some online journals and online	13	56.5	10	43.5
49	Lack of students awareness of e-resources	9	42.8	12	57.1

Source: Field Work 2016

Table 6: Mean Responses on Problems Affecting Students Use of Electronic Resources

Results in Table 6 reveals that the major problems of students use of e-resources in Benue State University Makurdi is lack of computer skills, lack of access to some online journals and online, power failure, high cost of subscription, network failure and poor internet services with 22 (95.6%), 17 (80.9%), 18 (78.3%), 14 (63.6%) and 15 (62.5%) and 13 (56.5%) while 9 (42.8%) representing lack of students awareness of e-resources are rejected as the problem.

V. DISCUSSION OF RESULTS

The results of this study are discussed in line with the four research questions that guided the study. Based on this, the study revealed that majority of Sandwich students of library and information science, Benue State University Makurdi are aware of online resources such as online reference resources, online newspapers, online books, and online journals to high extent. Others are aware of online resources such as online thesis and dissertations, online magazines, online government documents, online archives, online databases, websites/blogs to a high extent. The findings are in disagreement with those of Baro et'al (2011) who found out that majority of the students are not aware of online information resources and do not use online information resources such as: MEDLINE, HINARI, CINAHL databases, NUC Virtual Library as sources of information to retrieve materials related to medical literature.

The study also revealed that sandwich students access online resources in the university through their handsets or mobile, their personal laptops and cybercafé. This agreed with the findings of Columbia University (n.d) which revealed that most of the students access internet through computer or laptop at home, an Ethernet connection and phone line and the findings of Ozoemelem (2009) and Chikezie et'al (2012) who revealed that the internet and cybercafé and mobile phones remains the major facility used to access electronic resources in the areas

The study further revealed that online newspapers, online magazines, online thesis and dissertations, online databases, online reference resources, websites/blogs and online archives are highly accessed by LIS sandwich students. The study also recorded a high level of online resources usage such as online reference resources, online journals, online books, online

magazines, online newspapers, online thesis/projects as well as websites by sandwich students of LIS Benue state University Makurdi. This concurred with the finding of Ozoemelem (2009) who found out that the level of electronic resources usage by postgraduate students of LIS, Delta State University, Abraka is high.

The study also revealed the major purpose of sandwich students' library and information science use of online resources in Benue State University Makurdi as current affairs. Others include background information on topics, course assignments, prepare for examination, and learning. This supported the findings of Egberongbe (2011) and Daramola (2016) who recorded that a large number of users were using electronic resources for research and study and for keeping abreast with new developments in the areas of interest, quick access to information, searching for new things, writing term paper, doing course assignments, quality of resources, currency of information, assisting others to get materials, pressure and less expensive.

The study however revealed that the access and use of online resources by sandwich students of library and information science in Benue State University Makurdi is hiccupped by lack of computer skills, lack of access to some online journals and online, power failure and high cost of subscription, network failure and poor internet services. This is in agreement with Chikezie, et'al (2012) who identified incessant power supply, slow internet connectivity and lack of time to access the information resources as problems affecting students' use of online resources in the area.

VI. SUMMARY AND CONCLUSION

Access and use of online resources is very important because it enhances students' academic development. It is in view of the contribution of access and use of online information resources that conclusion could be drawn that Sandwich students are aware of online information resources in Benue State University Makurdi. However, it is obvious from the forgoing discussion that sandwich students of LIS Benue State University Makurdi are require computer skills and ICT facilities to access and use online resources. Although, there is an indication of high level access and use of online resources among LIS sandwich students without computer skills or knowledge of web surfing among others, sandwich students still find their way to access and use the resources with hiccups because of the importance of online information resources that they perceived.

A. RECOMMENDATIONS

Based on the findings of the study, the following recommendations were suggested by the study

- ✓ More online information resources be provided by the institution for sandwich students
- ✓ Functional virtual library be set up in the institution for sandwich students
- ✓ Sandwich students should learn about online government documents, Online Computer Library Catalogue (OCLC)

etc to increase their level of access and use of the resources

- ✓ Sandwich students should also access and use online information resources for their project writing
- ✓ Adequate ICT or digital training should be given to sandwich students so as to access and use online information resources better.

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