



AWARENESS AND UTILIZATION OF E-RESOURCES IN THE UNIVERSITY OF CALABAR LIBRARY

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ABSTRACT

This study examines the electronic resources collection development, awareness, and utilization in the University of Calabar Library. With the growing importance of digital information in academic settings, the researcher explores the library's strategies for acquiring e-resources, the level of awareness among students and faculty, and the extent to which these resources are utilized for academic and research purposes. Data were collected through a mixed-method approach involving questionnaires, interviews, and a review of library records. The findings revealed that while the University of Calabar Library has made significant strides in acquiring a variety of e-resources, challenges such as low level awareness, limited access points, and low utilization rates persist. The study recommends improved promotional strategies, increased training for users, and enhanced technological infrastructure to maximize the potential of e-resources in supporting academic and research activities within the university.

KEYWORDS: Collection Development, Awareness, Utilization, Electronic Resources

INTRODUCTION

University libraries are built to complement mainstream academic exercise and extra curricula activities of the university which include teaching, learning, research and publications, conservation of knowledge and ideas and extension services. They direct their activities towards the actualization of these objectives. One of such activities is the acquisition of information resources. They acquire collections in broad terms of quantity and quality in the form of prints and electronic to support the teaching, learning, research and recreational purposes. Collection development has become a very popular term in library and information centers, as a need for an efficient and balanced collection.

Collection development serves as a foundation upon which other library services are built. It is the systematic building of a library collection based on meaningful data rather than subjective choice. It is the process of accessing the strength and weaknesses in a collection and then creating the plan to correct the weakness and maintain the strength. The process of collection building includes selection of current as well as retrospective materials and the evaluation of the existing collection observed.

Electronic collection Development is the process of planning, selecting and acquiring a balanced collection of library materials in a variety of electronic formats such as e-books, e- journals, media and online resources.

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It is the means by which the library provides high quality information resources of non-print and providing access electronically to meet instructional requirements. These resources include e-books, e-journals, abstracts, audio and video CDs and other electronic resources such as databases, online databases, web resources, which have been introduced by the emergence of Information and Communication Technology (ICT). The proliferation of digital technologies has significantly transformed the landscape of information acquisition, storage, and dissemination in academic libraries globally. The advent of electronic resources (e-resources) has redefined traditional collection development practices, offering unprecedented opportunities for enhancing access to diverse, up-to-date, and high-quality information. In this context, the University of Calabar, Library, like many academic libraries, faces the critical task of integrating e-resources into its collection development strategy to support the institution's academic and research goals. E-resources collection development refers to the systematic acquisition, evaluation, and management of electronic information resources such as e-books, e-journals, databases, and multimedia content. This process requires libraries to assess the needs of their user community, align acquisitions with institutional goals, and negotiate licenses and subscriptions with publishers. The University of Calabar Library subscribes to a number of databases including; African Journal Online (AJOL), Ebscohost (Aggregated Journal library Subscription), Research Life (AGORA, ARDI, GOALI, Hinari, OARE), JSTOR and ProQuest. Access is provided upon registration where a user ID and a password is given. The library state of development interms of infrastructure is low and very poor, with no sufficient trained professional staff. The university approach to e-resources collection development must account to these various factors, including budget constraints, technological infrastructure, and the ever-evolving needs of students, faculty, and researchers. Furthermore, libraries must consider the long-term sustainability of their digital collections, ensuring that licenses are appropriately negotiated to allow perpetual access where possible.

Awareness of available e-resources is crucial to maximizing their utilization. In many academic settings, the full potential of e-resources remains underutilized due to lack of awareness among users. The University of Calabar, Library must implement effective strategies to promote its e-resources, ensuring that students, faculty, and researchers are well-informed about the available resources and how to access them. This may include outreach programs, user education workshops, and the development of online guides and tutorials. The role of librarians in promoting e-resource awareness cannot be under looked. They must actively engage with the university community, providing personalized assistance and

conducting regular training sessions to enhance information literacy skills. By fostering a culture of awareness, the library can significantly increase the visibility and utilization of its e-resources. The utilization of e-resources in academic libraries is influenced by several factors, including ease of access, user competence, and perceived relevance to academic needs. The University of Calabar, Library must ensure that its e-resources are easily accessible through user-friendly interfaces and integrated search tools. Additionally, the library should provide continuous support to users, helping them navigate complex databases and retrieve relevant information efficiently. Empirical studies have shown that user training and information literacy programs are essential in enhancing the effective use of e-resources. The University of Calabar, Library should prioritize such programs, equipping users with the skills necessary to exploit the full range of available digital resources. Moreover, regular feedback from users should be sought to identify challenges and improve service delivery. The development, awareness, and utilization of e-resources are pivotal to the University of Calabar Library's mission to support academic excellence. By adopting a strategic approach to e-resources collection development, promoting awareness, and facilitating effective utilization, the library can significantly enhance its role in the academic and research activities of the university.

STATEMENT OF THE PROBLEM

The University of Calabar, Library, like many academic libraries in Nigeria, is confronted with the challenges of adapting to the rapidly evolving digital landscape. Despite the substantial investment in electronic resources (e-resources), there seems to be a significant gap between the availability of these resources and their actual utilization by the university community. This underutilization raises concerns about the effectiveness of the library's e-resources collection development strategies, the awareness levels among potential users, and the factors influencing the actual use of these digital assets. Several issues contribute to these problems. Primarily, the measures for selecting and acquiring e-resources may not fully align with the specific needs and preferences of students, faculties, and researchers. This misalignment can result in the acquisition of e-resources that are either underused or irrelevant to the academic goals of the university. Furthermore, there seems to be also, insufficient consideration of the technological infrastructure necessary to support unbroken access to e-resources, further hindering their effective utilization. There seems to be also, lack of awareness among users regarding the existence, scope, and benefits of e-resources in the University of Calabar Library which may also serves as barriers to utilization of e-resources.

Many students, departments and faculties seems to be unaware of the wide range of e-resources available to them or may not know how to access and use these resources effectively. This lack of awareness can be attributed to inadequate promotional activities, limited user education programs, and the absence of robust information literacy initiatives that could empower users to fully exploit the library's e-resources. Again, even when users are aware of the available e-resources, various factors may limit their effective utilization. These factors may include limited digital literacy skills among users, difficulties in navigating complex digital platforms, and the perceived irrelevance of the resources to specific academic or research needs. In addition, challenges such as poor internet connectivity, lack of access to necessary devices, and restrictive licensing agreements may further exacerbate the problem, preventing the university community from fully benefiting from the library's e-resources.

OBJECTIVES OF THE STUDY

This paper investigated Electronic-resources Collection Development, Awareness, and Utilization in the University of Calabar Library. Specifically, the study aims to:

- i. Assess the current approaches employed by the University of Calabar Library in the development of e-resources.
- ii. Examine the level of awareness among students, faculty, and researchers regarding the availability and scope of e-resources in the University of Calabar Library.
- iii. Identify the factors influencing the utilization of e-resources by the university of Calabar community.
- iv. Evaluate the challenges faced by users in accessing and utilizing e-resources in the University of Calabar Library and valuable insights for library management, policy-makers, and academic stakeholders in their efforts to optimize the use of e-resources and ensure that they meet the evolving needs of the university community

Research questions

Based on the variables outlined in the objectives, the following research questions were formulated:

- 1. What strategies does the University of Calabar Library currently employ for the collection development of e-resources?
- 2. What is the level of awareness among students, faculty, and researchers regarding the availability and scope of e-resources in the University of Calabar, Library?
- 3. What are the factors influencing the utilization of e-resources by the university of Calabar community.
- 4. What are the challenges users faced in accessing and utilizing e-resources in the University of Calabar, Library?

LITERATURE REVIEW

Libraries and Information centers serve as critical infrastructures that bridge the gap between the information needs of users and the actual information available. Unlike traditional libraries that primarily collect and disseminate documents, digital libraries focus on providing specific information contained within these documents, processing it, and disseminating it in the required format. Digital libraries play a pivotal role in developing a nation's information infrastructure, contributing to its progress and development. The core purpose of digital libraries is to provide instant access to relevant information, thereby supporting academic, research, and developmental activities. Digital libraries today have evolved with technological advancements, enabling 24/7 global access to information through the internet and mobile devices. This transformation has made information more accessible, fostering the sharing of resources among individuals and institutions, thus enhancing the efficiency and effectiveness of information dissemination and use (Onwuchekwa, 2011).

Level of Awareness and Utilization of Electronic Library Resources

Awareness is a crucial factor in the utilization of electronic library resources. According to Akpojotor (2016), awareness refers to the knowledge or perception of a situation or fact, and it significantly influences behavior. In the context of electronic resources, awareness entails the recognition and understanding of the availability and benefits of these resources, which are essential for academic and research purposes. Ani and Ahiauzu (2008), emphasized that awareness is not just about knowing that something exists but also understanding its relevance and application in a particular context. This understanding has become more and more important with the rapid advancement in technology, which has dramatically changed how information is accessed, stored, and disseminated. Akpojotor (2016) posited that academic libraries are presently transitioning from traditional physical collections to digital and electronic formats, offering a wide range of resources, including full-text databases, e-journals, e-books, and multimedia contents. However, the level of awareness among users varies significantly. Akpojotor's (2016) survey on the acceptance and use of electronic library services in universities revealed that a majority of respondents had only limited awareness of e-library resources, with 57.97% indicating that they were somewhat aware, 20.65% were completely unaware, and only 21.38% were fully aware of the available e-resources. This limited awareness directly impacts the utilization of these resources, as user who are not fully aware of the resources available are less likely to use them effectively.

Electronic library resources mostly consulted

Electronic library resources (ELRs) encompass a wide range of digital materials, including e-journals, e-books, full-text databases, multimedia, and online catalogs. Barshev et al. (2015), observed that, ELRs are often referred to as virtual or digital libraries, although there are distinctions between these terms. The term electronic library is generally used to describe libraries that provide both primary information (actual materials) and secondary information (metadata about the materials) electronically through communication networks. The adoption of electronic resources in academic libraries has significantly expanded access to information. Libraries now routinely include electronic databases as integral parts of their collections, offering journals, e-books, and other resources that are crucial for academic and research activities Obiamalu et al. (2021). These resources are available both through subscriptions and as open-access materials, providing users with a wide range of options to meet their information needs. The use of ICT in libraries has further enhanced the accessibility and usability of these resources. Olubiyo (2022), noted that advances in technology have enabled libraries to offer resources beyond traditional print media, incorporating electronic and multimedia formats that can be accessed remotely. This shift has made it possible for users to access information anytime and anywhere, breaking down traditional barriers of time and space. The utilization of electronic library resources is a critical measure of their effectiveness. Utilization refers to the extent to which these resources are used to achieve specific academic or research objectives. According to Yebowaah and Plockey (2017), the utilization of e-resources varies among users, with some accessing them frequently, while others do so only occasionally. This variability is influenced by factors such as awareness, accessibility, and user proficiency with ICT. Bhukuvhani et al. (2012) found that a significant percentage of lecturers regularly use electronic resources for teaching and research, indicating the importance of these resources in academic settings. However, the study also revealed that some users still do not utilize e-resources effectively, often due to a lack of training or awareness of the available services. The integration of ICT in library services has the potential to greatly enhance the utilization of e-resources. Libraries that adopt ICT-based solutions can offer more efficient and effective access to digital information, thereby improving the overall user experience and supporting academic and research activities more effectively (Prakash, 2017 in Yebowaah & Plockey, 2017).

Challenges encountered in accessing electronic library resources

Despite the significant benefits of electronic library resources, users often face challenges in accessing and utilizing these resources.

Omotayo (2010), found that a substantial number of users only occasionally use electronic journals, with many citing lack of time, unfamiliarity with computerized searching, and technical issues as major barriers. Popoola (2008) identified several challenges associated with the use of electronic library resources in African universities, including inadequate funding, lack of strategic planning, and inconsistent training for users. These challenges are compounded by technical issues such as low internet speed, password problems, and limited ICT skills among users (Yebowaah & Plockey, 2017). Furthermore, Aghauche, Udem, and Ogalanya (2018) highlighted issues related to copyright, inadequate user education, and rigid government policies as significant barriers to the effective use of e-resources. These challenges underscore the need for continuous training and support for users, as well as the development of more user-friendly systems to enhance the accessibility and utilization of electronic resources in academic libraries.

METHODOLOGY

The study adopts a descriptive survey research design. The survey design according to Ofem (2022) is a systematic inquiry into a phenomenon in a population that is large using a sample that is representative to generalize the findings appropriately. This design is chosen because it allows for the collection of data from a large population, providing insights into the current state of e-resources collection, the level of awareness among users, and the extent of utilization within the University of Calabar Library. The population of this study comprises all academic staff, postgraduate students, and librarians at the University of Calabar. These groups are targeted because they are the primary users of the library's e-resources and are directly involved in academic and research activities that necessitate access to electronic information resources. As of the time of the study, the population included approximately 1,500 academic staff, 3,000 postgraduate students, and 50 librarians. Given the large population, a multi-stage sampling technique was employed to select a representative sample for the study. In the first stage, stratified random sampling was used to ensure that the sample reflects the various strata within the population, including faculty, department, and academic rank for staff, and faculty and program of study for postgraduate students. In the second stage, simple random sampling is applied within each stratum to select individual respondents, ensuring that each member of the population had an equal chance of being included in the sample. A total of 300 respondents were selected, comprising 100 academic staff, 180 postgraduate students, and 20 librarians.

The primary instrument for data collection was a structured questionnaire designed to gather information on e-resources collection development, awareness, and utilization. The scale was validated by experts in library science, information technology, and Measurement and Evaluation and the reliability of the instrument was established using Cronbach Alpha Reliability Technique and coefficient of the sub scale ranged from 0.79- 0.88. Data collection was carried out over a period of four weeks. The questionnaires were distributed to the selected respondents through

a combination of physical distribution and electronic means, depending on the preference of the respondents. The data collected were analyzed using descriptive statistics and simple and multiple regression analysis and the result was presented appropriately.

Presentation of result

Research question one

What strategies does the University of Calabar Library currently employ for the collection development of e-resources? To answer this research question, simple percentage was used and the result presented in table 1

Table 1: Simple percentage analysis on strategies the University of Calabar Library currently employ for the collection development of e-resources

S/N	Items	SA	A	D	SD
1	The University of Calabar Library has a clear strategy for acquiring relevant e-resources.	61(20.3%)	81(27.0%)	122(40.7%)	36(12.0%)
2	The library involves faculty and students in the selection of e-resources.	41(13.7)	60(20.0)	117(39.0)	82(27.3)
3	The library regularly updates its e-resource collection to reflect current academic needs.	48(16.0)	54(18.0)	102(34.0)	96(32.0)
4	4. E-resources are easily accessible through the library's online portal.	86(28.7)	132(44.0)	47(15.7)	35(11.7)
5	There are adequate awareness campaigns about new e-resources available in the library.	30(10.0)	42(14.0)	126(42.0)	102(34.0)

The data analysis in Table 1 highlights key perceptions of the strategies employed by the University of Calabar Library for e-resources collection development, as viewed by respondents. A notable proportion of respondents (40.7%) expressed doubt about the clarity of the library's strategy for acquiring e-resources. However, a smaller segment (47.3% combined) agreed or strongly agreed that a strategy exists, indicating that perceptions are divided. While some users acknowledge the efforts in place, others felt that the approach to resource acquisition lacked clarity or effectiveness. Respondents overwhelmingly expressed concern about the lack of collaboration in selecting e-resources, with 66.3% disagreeing or strongly disagreeing that faculty and students were involved in this process. Only a small percentage felt included, revealing a significant gap in engagement. Many respondents viewed the library's efforts to regularly update its e-resources as insufficient, with 66.0% expressing dissatisfaction. A smaller group (34.0%) believed updates were happening regularly. In contrast, the accessibility of e-resources through the library's online portal received relatively positive feedback, with 72.7% agreeing or strongly agreeing that access was easy. However, around 27.4% still encountered difficulties, indicating that while progress has been made, there remained room for improvement in making e-resources more universally accessible. Awareness campaigns about new e-resources were widely perceived as inadequate, with

76.0% of respondents disagreeing or strongly disagreeing that the library effectively promoted its new acquisitions. This suggests a need for more proactive and visible efforts to raise awareness among users, such as through workshops, campaigns, or regular communication updates.

Research question two

What is the level of awareness among students, faculty, and researchers regarding the availability and scope of e-resources in the University of Calabar, Library? To answer this research question, simple percentage was used and the result presented in table 2.

The table provides a percentage analysis of awareness and perceptions regarding the availability and access to e-resources at the University of Calabar Library among students, faculty, and researchers. A significant majority (68.3%) of respondents, comprising 14.0% strongly agreeing and 54.3% agreeing, indicated that they were aware of the library's e-resources, including e-journals and e-books. However, a smaller portion of respondents (26.7%) expressed uncertainty or lack of awareness, with 23.7% disagreeing and 3.0% strongly disagreeing. The majority of respondents (76.0%) disagreed (64.0%) or strongly disagreed (12.0%) that the library provided sufficient information on how to access e-resources, highlighting a significant gap in communication.

Table 2: Simple percentage analysis on the level of awareness among students, faculty, and researchers regarding the availability and scope of e-resources in the University of Calabar, Library. (n= 300)

S/N	Items	SA	A	D	SD
1	I am aware that the University of Calabar Library offers e-resources (e.g., e-journals, e-books).	42(14.0%)	163(54.3%)	86(23.7%)	9(3.0%)
2	The library provides adequate information on how to access available e-resources.	6(2.0%)	66(22.0)	192(64.0)	36(12.0)
3	I know how to access e-resources through the University of Calabar Library website.	24(8.0)	234(78.0)	36(12.0)	6(2.0)
4	The library organizes orientations or workshops on how to use e-resources effectively.	50(16.7)	177(59.0)	55(18.3)	18(6.0)
5	The library staff provides sufficient guidance on accessing and utilizing e-resources.	55(18.3)	56(18.7)	148(49.3)	41(13.7)

Only a small percentage (24.0%) felt adequately informed, with 2.0% strongly agreeing and 22.0% agreeing. Most respondents (86.0%) expressed confidence in their ability to access e-resources through the library website, with 8.0% strongly agreeing and 78.0% agreeing. Only a minority (14.0%) were uncertain, including 12.0% who disagreed and 2.0% who strongly disagreed. Regarding orientations or workshops on effectively using e-resources, 75.7% of respondents believed the library provided such programs, with 16.7% strongly agreeing and 59.0% agreeing. However, 24.3% indicated that these efforts were insufficient, with 18.3% disagreeing and 6.0%

strongly disagreeing. Opinions were mixed on whether library staff offered sufficient guidance on accessing and utilizing e-resources while 37.0% agreed (18.7%) or strongly agreed (18.3%) that guidance was adequate, a notable 63.0% expressed dissatisfaction, with 49.3% disagreeing and 13.7% strongly disagreeing.

Research question three

What are the factors influencing the utilization of e-resources by the university of Calabar community. To answer this research question, simple percentage was used and the result presented in table 3

Table 3: Simple percentage analysis on the factors influencing the utilization of e-resources by the university of Calabar community.

S/N	Items	SA	A	D	SD
1	I am certain that e-resources offer reliable and credible information for my academic/research needs.	158(52.7%)	60(20.0 %)	51(17.0%)	31(10.3 %)
2	The availability of relevant e-resources influences my decision to use them.	95(31.7)	122(40.7)	53(17.0)	30(10.0)
3	I am aware of the various e-resources available to me through the University of Calabar Library.	96(32.0)	114(38.0%)	72(24.0)	18(6.0)
4	The library's communication about available e-resources influences my usage of them.	162(54.0)	42(14.0)	48(16.0)	48(16.0)
5	I am not certain that e-resources offer reliable and credible information for my academic/research needs.	36(12.0)	162(54.0)	48(16.0)	54(18.0)

AWARENESS AND UTILIZATION OF E-RESOURCES IN THE UNIVERSITY OF CALABAR LIBRARY 349

The table provides a percentage analysis of factors that influence the utilization of e-resources by the University of Calabar community, focusing on perceptions of reliability, availability, awareness, and communication. A majority of respondents (72.7%) expressed confidence in the reliability and credibility of e-resources for their academic and research needs, with 52.7% strongly agreeing and 20.0% agreeing. However, a smaller portion (27.3%) were either uncertain or lacked confidence, as 17.0% disagreed and 10.3% strongly disagreed. The availability of relevant e-resources significantly affected utilization, with 72.4% of respondents indicating that it influenced their decision to use them. This includes 31.7% who strongly agreed and 40.7% who agreed. A smaller group (27.0%) did not find availability a determining factor, with 17.0% disagreeing and 10.0% strongly disagreeing. Awareness played a crucial role, as 70.0% of respondents indicated they were aware of the various e-resources available through the library,

However, 30.0% expressed a lack of awareness, with 24.0% disagreeing and 6.0% strongly disagreeing. Library communication about e-resources is a key factor influencing usage, with 68.0% of respondents acknowledging that communication impacts their utilization, including 54.0% who strongly agreed and 14.0% who agreed. However, 32.0% were unaffected by library communication, with 16.0% disagreeing and another 16.0% strongly disagreeing. Interestingly, despite the overall positive perception of e-resource reliability, 66.0% of respondents indicated some level of uncertainty, as 12.0% strongly agreed and 54.0% agreed that they lack confidence in the credibility of e-resources. Meanwhile, 34.0% of respondents expressed confidence, with 16.0% disagreeing and 18.0% strongly disagreeing with the statement.

Research question four

What are the challenges faced by users in accessing and utilizing e-resources in the University of Calabar Library. To answer this research question, simple percentage was used and the result presented in table 4

Table 4: Simple percentage analysis on the challenges faced by users in accessing and utilizing e-resources in the University of Calabar, Library

S/N	Items	SA	A	D	SD
1	I experience difficulties accessing e-resources due to poor internet connectivity.	142(47.3)	56(18.7)	54(18.0)	48(16.0)
2	I find it challenging to locate relevant e-resources within the library's digital platform.	128(42.7)	59(19.7)	59(19.7)	54(18.0)
3	The lack of adequate technical support hinders my use of e-resources.	68(22.7)	124(41.3)	63(21.0)	45(15.0)
4	I face challenges in utilizing e-resources due to inadequate computer skills.	110(36.7)	96(32.0)	54(18.0)	40(13.3)
5	I experience difficulties in downloading or accessing full-text articles from e-resources platforms.	72(24.0)	121(40.3)	57(16.7)	50(16.7)

The table provides a simple percentage analysis of the challenges faced by users in accessing and utilizing e-resources in the University of Calabar Library. The responses highlight issues related to internet connectivity, ease of navigation, technical support, computer skills, and access to full-text articles. A significant number of respondents (66.0%) experience difficulties accessing e-resources due to poor internet connectivity, with 47.3% strongly agreeing and 18.7% agreeing. However, a smaller portion of respondents (34.0%) do not consider this a major issue, with 18.0% disagreeing and 16.0% strongly disagreeing. Locating relevant e-resources within the library's digital platform is another challenge, as 62.4% of respondents expressed difficulty, with 42.7% strongly agreeing and 19.7% agreeing. Meanwhile, 37.7% did not encounter this issue, with 19.7% disagreeing and 18.0% strongly disagreeing.

The lack of sufficient technical support was identified as a hindrance to e-resource usage by 64.0% of respondents, with 22.7% strongly agreeing and 41.3% agreeing. In contrast, 36.0% of respondents did not view this as a significant problem, as 21.0% disagreed and 15.0% strongly disagreed. Challenges related to insufficient computer skills were reported by 68.7% of respondents, with 36.7% strongly agreeing and 32.0% agreeing. A smaller group (31.3%) did not face this difficulty, with 18.0% disagreeing and 13.3% strongly disagreeing. Downloading or accessing full-text articles from e-resources was another challenge for 64.3% of respondents, with 24.0% strongly agreeing and 40.3% agreeing. On the other hand, 35.7% did not experience this issue, with 16.7% disagreeing and another 16.7% strongly disagreeing.

DISCUSSION OF FINDINGS

Research question one findings revealed that the University of Calabar Library has made significant strides in building its e-resources collection, yet key challenges remain. These challenges are not unique to the institution but are common across academic libraries, particularly in developing regions. One of the primary issues identified in the study is the presence of gaps in resource acquisition strategies. This mirrors findings from similar studies, such as Olalekan and Ogunbadejo (2019), who observed that many university libraries in Nigeria struggle with inconsistent and inadequate resource acquisition. These challenges are often driven by limited funding and poor planning, resulting in collections that do not fully meet the academic needs of their institutions. A related challenge is the need for regular updates to the library's e-resources collection. Studies such as Uche and Edeh (2021) have pointed out that many academic libraries struggle to maintain up-to-date collections, primarily due to financial constraints and the rapidly changing landscape of academic research. When e-resources are not regularly updated, they lose relevance, and users may turn to other sources, diminishing the impact of the library's efforts. To combat this, the University of Calabar Library could implement a systematic review process that prioritizes updates for high-demand areas, ensuring that the collection remains current and useful to its users. Accessibility and promotion of e-resources also emerged as significant challenges. Similar to findings in other academic settings, such as those reported by Adeyemi and Tijani (2022), many users at the University of Calabar are unaware of the full range of resources available to them. This is often due to inadequate communication and promotion efforts, as well as a lack of user training. Addressing this issue would require more proactive communication strategies, including targeted workshops, social media outreach, and partnerships with academic departments to promote resource awareness. Furthermore, integrating user training into the curriculum could enhance resource utilization, ensuring that both students and faculty members are fully equipped to take advantage of the available e-resources.

Research question two findings from the University of Calabar Library indicate that while there is a general awareness among respondents about the availability of e-resources, there are critical gaps in communication, staff guidance, and orientation programs. This aligns with similar studies conducted in other academic institutions, where awareness does not necessarily translate to effective usage due to a lack of adequate support and guidance. For instance, a study by Okon and Udo (2019) found that despite high levels of awareness of e-resources among university students, many users struggled with

library staff. This suggests that simply making resources available is not enough; active and ongoing communication strategies are essential to ensure that users can fully benefit from the resources provided.

Furthermore, Opeke and Amusa (2021) highlighted that in many Nigerian universities, library orientation programs are often not comprehensive enough, leaving students with only a superficial understanding of how to navigate and utilize electronic resources. This issue is exacerbated by the lack of proactive support from library staff, who are sometimes not adequately trained to assist users effectively. The situation at the University of Calabar mirrors these challenges, as users feel that more robust support and better communication from library staff could enhance their ability to access and utilize e-resources.

Additionally, the need for improved staff guidance is supported by the findings of Ani and Edem (2020), who emphasized the importance of ongoing professional development for library staff to ensure they are equipped to meet the evolving needs of users in the digital age. This continuous training would empower staff to offer more effective assistance, thereby bridging the gap between resource availability and user competency. In synopsis, while awareness of e-resources at the University of Calabar is relatively high, there is a clear need for better communication, enhanced staff guidance, and more comprehensive orientation programs to maximize the utilization of these resources.

The finding from research question three that most respondents view e-resources as reliable but are still influenced by factors such as availability, awareness, and communication from the library aligns with broader research on the utilization of electronic resources in academic settings. This suggests a complex relationship between perceived reliability and actual usage, influenced by multiple factors, including how well the resources are communicated and supported by library services. Studies like those by Ezeala and Yusuff (2018) emphasize that while users generally perceive e-resources as reliable, their effective use is significantly dependent on the level of awareness and the quality of communication from the library. In many cases, even when users recognize the reliability of these resources, gaps in communication can lead to underutilization, as users may not be fully aware of the breadth of resources available or how to access them effectively. Similarly, Adekunmisi, Ajala, and Olatoye (2019) found that in Nigerian universities, the availability of e-resources is crucial, but it is often overshadowed by the lack of proactive communication strategies from the library. This can result in a scenario where users are aware that resources exist but lack the necessary information or confidence to use them efficiently, particularly if they encounter issues related to accessing or navigating these resources.

This reflects the situation at the University of Calabar, where awareness exists but is insufficient to ensure optimal utilization due to communication gaps.

Furthermore, the reliability of e-resources is a significant concern that has been documented in other studies as well. For instance, Ojo and Akande (2020) highlighted that while e-resources are generally perceived as reliable, users often express concerns about their consistency and accessibility. These concerns can be mitigated by improved communication from the library, ensuring that users are not only aware of the resources but also confident in their reliability and the support available if they encounter issues. The University of Calabar Library can address these issues by enhancing its communication efforts and providing more comprehensive guidance on the use of e-resources. This approach is supported by findings from Ugwu and Orji (2021), who argue that libraries need to be more proactive in engaging with users and promoting the reliability of their e-resources through consistent communication and user education programs. While the perceived reliability of e-resources at the University of Calabar is a positive indicator, there are still significant concerns related to awareness and communication that must be addressed to improve utilization. These findings are consistent with broader research, which underscores the importance of proactive communication and support from libraries to fully leverage the potential of e-resources.

The challenges in accessing and utilizing e-resources at the University of Calabar Library, such as poor internet connectivity, difficulty in locating relevant resources, lack of technical support, low level computer skills, and problems of downloading full-text articles, are reflective of broader issues faced by academic libraries in Nigeria and other developing countries. These challenges are consistently highlighted in related studies and underscore the need for comprehensive strategies to enhance user experience and maximize the benefits of e-resources. For instance, similar challenges have been documented in the study by Ani and Ahiauzu (2008), which found that poor internet connectivity is a significant barrier to effective e-resource utilization in Nigerian universities. Without reliable and fast internet access, users struggle to access online databases and digital libraries, which severely limits their ability to conduct research efficiently. This challenge is compounded at the University of Calabar, where users face additional difficulties in downloading full-text articles, a problem that can be directly linked to inadequate bandwidth and inconsistent internet service.

Moreover, the difficulty in locating relevant resources is another critical issue that resonates with findings from other institutions.

Okiki and Asiru (2011) emphasized that the complexity of search interfaces and the lack of user-friendly navigation tools in many e-resource platforms contribute to users' frustration and hinder their ability to find relevant information. This challenge is often exacerbated by insufficient technical support, as noted in the research by Gbaje (2007), which highlighted that many university libraries in Nigeria lack the necessary human resources to provide adequate technical assistance to users. At the University of Calabar, the lack of such support means that users may encounter difficulties without having the means to resolve them, further discouraging them from fully engaging with the available e-resources.

Low level computer skills among users is another pervasive issue that significantly affects the utilization of e-resources. Ajadi and Adetimirin (2020) found that many students and faculty members in Nigerian universities possess only basic computer literacy, which is often inadequate for navigating and utilizing complex e-resource platforms. This lack of proficiency can lead to underutilization of the resources, as users may feel overwhelmed or incapable of effectively using the tools provided. The situation at the University of Calabar is indicative of this broader trend, where users may be aware of e-resources but are not fully equipped to use them effectively due to a lack of necessary skills.

Addressing these challenges requires a multifaceted approach. Enhancing internet infrastructure, providing comprehensive user training programs, and increasing the availability of technical support are essential steps. This is supported by the findings of Adeniran (2013), who suggested that improving user education and technical support services can significantly boost the utilization of e-resources in academic libraries. Additionally, Okoh and Okoh (2017) recommended the development of more intuitive search interfaces and the provision of continuous professional development for library staff to ensure they can adequately support users.

CONCLUSION

The study on the University of Calabar Library's e-resources highlights both the progress made and the significant challenges that remain in effectively utilizing these resources. While the library has succeeded in building a substantial e-resources collection, its full potential is hindered by several persistent issues common to academic libraries in developing regions. These challenges include gaps in resource acquisition strategies, insufficient funding, poor internet connectivity, inadequate technical support, and limited user skills. Additionally, there are critical shortcomings in communication, staff guidance, and orientation programs, which further impact the effective use of e-resources.

The findings suggest that simply providing access to e-resources is not sufficient; ongoing and proactive efforts are needed to ensure these resources are accessible, relevant, and effectively utilized. The perceived reliability of e-resources is a positive indicator, but without addressing the underlying issues of communication, training, and infrastructure, the full benefits of these resources will not be realized.

RECOMMENDATIONS

To enhance the utilization of e-resources at the University of Calabar Library, the following recommendations are proposed to Strengthen Resource Acquisition Strategies, Improve Internet Connectivity, Enhance User Training and Support, Expand Technical Support, Proactive Communication and Promotion, Regularly Review and Update E-Resources as well as Continuous Professional Development for Library Staff. By addressing these recommendations, the University of Calabar Library can significantly improve the user experience, increase the utilization of its e-resources, and better support the academic and research needs of its community.

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