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AVAILABILITY AND CONSTRAINTS TO USE OF ELECTRONIC INFORMATION RESOURCES BY POSTGRADUATES STUDENTS AT TANSIAN UNIVERSITY UMUNYA, ANAMBRA STATE

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ABSTRACT

Availability, awareness and use of electronic resources provide access to authoritative, reliable, accurate and timely access to information. The use of electronic information resources (EIRs) can enable innovation in teaching and increase timeliness in research of postgraduate students which will eventually result into encouragement of the expected re- search-led enquiry in this digital age. The study adopted a descriptive survey design. Samples of 40 of postgraduate students within seven out faculties were randomly selected. Data were collected using questionnaire designed to elicit response from respondents and data were analyzed using descriptive statistics methods percentages, mean, and standard deviation. Results indicated that internet was ranked most available and used in the university. Low level of usage of electronic resources, in particular, full texts data bases is linked to a number of constraints: Interrupted power supply was ranked highest among other factors as speed and capacity of computers, retrieval of records with high recall and low precision, retrieving records relevant to information need, lack of knowledge of search techniques to retrieve information effectively, non-possession of requisite IT skills and problems accessing the internet. The study recommended that usage of electronic resources be made compulsory, intensifying awareness campaigns concerning the availability, training on use of electronic resources and the problem of power outage be addressed.

Keywords: Availability, Use and Constraints, Use of Electronic Information Resources, Postgraduates Students and Academic Library

Introduction

Traditionally, libraries have served users' information needs through print sources. However, the rapid advancement of information and communication technology (ICT) has ushered in a digital era, compelling libraries to adopt electronic resources (Ibeh & Alumona, 2019; Muokebe & Agwuna, 2023). This shift has transformed libraries into hybrid spaces offering both print and non-print collections, including CD-ROMs, online journals, databases, and e-books (Alumona & Ibeh, 2021; Nwabueze & Ibeh, 2016). These electronic resources have revolutionized information management in tertiary institutions, becoming indispensable for academic activities (Ekereuche & Ibeh, 2019; Kamaluddeen et al., 2024).

The internet, as a cornerstone of this digital transition, now serves as the primary platform for scholarly communication (Anizor et al., 2021; Ibeh et al., 2019). Its role extends beyond access to remote databases and full-text documents it enables real-time collaboration, global knowledge exchange, and participation in virtual research communities (Muokebe & Enweani, 2019; Nwabueze et al., 2014). For postgraduate students, the internet is not merely a tool but a critical compendium for solving research challenges and staying updated with academic trends (Alumona et al., 2021; Orakpor et al., 2025).

Despite these advancements, the availability and use of electronic resources face significant constraints. Studies highlight that inadequate ICT infrastructure, low digital literacy, and lack of awareness hinder optimal utilization (Anike et al., 2023; Ezeabasili & Ibeh, 2018; Madukoma et al., 2014). For instance, Muokebe and Egbuna (2021) emphasize that even when resources are available, poor publicity and training limit their uptake. Similarly, Nwankwo et al. (2022) found that institutional support and user education are pivotal to overcoming these barriers. This study investigates the interplay between availability, use, and constraints of electronic resources among postgraduate students at Tansian University. Umunva. Anambra State. By grounding the analysis in empirical evidence from Nigerian academic contexts (e.g., Ibeh & Ifeka, 2024; Orakpor & Igwilo, 2024), it aims to provide actionable insights for optimizing e-resource deployment in similar institutions.

Objectives of the study

The main purpose of this study is to investigate availability, use and constraints to use of electronic information resources by postgraduate students for academic purposes at the Tansian University, Umunya, Anambra state. The specific objectives of the study are to:

- 1. Investigate what kind of electronic information resources are available to postgraduates students of the university;
- Investigate the level of usage of electronic information resources by the postgraduate students for academic purposes;
- 3. Identify the constraints to electronic information resources utilization by postgraduates students at the Tansian University, Umunya, Anambra state; and Make recommendations to overcome the identified constraints to electronic information resources utilization.

Research questions

- 1. What kinds of electronic information resources are available to postgraduate students of the Tansian University, Umunya, Anambra state?
- 2. What is the level of usage of electronic information resources for academic purposes at the Tansian University, Umunya, Anambra state?
- 3. What are the constraints to electronic information resources utilization by postgraduates' students at the Tansian University, Umunya, Anambra state?

Literature review

Electronic information resources and higher education

Academic libraries were coerced with issues of diminished budgets, increased patron demands, and rising costs for book purchases and periodical subscriptions (Uche Enweani & Muokebe Bibiana Obiageli, 2024). The increase in the growth of electronic publications is influencing collection and access patterns in libraries, bridging the gap orchestrated by traditional print resources, as well as electronic counterparts in faster and timely delivery of information (Uche Enweani & Muokebe Bibiana O, 2024; Orakpor & Ezekwibe, 2025). Electronic resources provide timely and endless volumes of information retrieval across the world, especially among library users (Uche Enweani & Muokebe Bibiana Obiageli, 2024). In reality, electronic materials have speedily taken over print counterparts, significantly affecting library activities and users' information-seeking habits (Uche Enweani & Muokebe Bibiana Obiageli, 2024; Orakpor & Ezekwibe, 2025). The current landscape of libraries accommodates both print and electronic formats, with CD-ROM technology facilitating instant and convenient access to current and retrospective information at a predictable cost (Uche Enweani & Muokebe Bibiana O, 2024; Orakpor & Ezekwibe, 2025).

The transformation in higher education driven by technological acceptance, especially electronic information, has made digital resources indispensable in academic libraries (Orakpor & Ezekwibe, 2025; Uche Enweani & Muokebe Bibiana, 2024). According to Okello-Obura & Magara (2008), electronic resources particularly e-journals are expected to dominate print journals soon, exemplifying the shift towards digital scholarship (Uche Enweani & Muokebe Bibiana, 2024). Majid and Abazova (1999) highlight that technological advances in information management mark a watershed for creation, storage, access, and dissemination of information (Uche Enweani & Muokebe Bibiana O, 2024). Ferguson (2006) emphasizes that the global ICT environment disregards geographic "place" as a barrier to information access (Uche Enweani & Muokebe Bibiana, 2024). Kinengyere (2007) notes that transitioning from text-based to resource-based learning is more complex and demands diverse media sources (Uche Enweani & Muokebe Bibiana O, 2024). The use of electronic information systems (EIS) in academic libraries has become vital for staff and users alike (Uche Enweani & Muokebe Bibiana, 2024; Orakpor & Ezekwibe, 2025). The patronage of electronic resources is driven by their convenience, speed, ease of search, and potential for external access (Uche Enweani & Muokebe Bibiana O, 2024). Li, Foo, and Chennupati (2000) acknowledge that reading ejournals differs from print, due to the unique features of digital formats (Uche Enweani & Muokebe Bibiana, 2024). Brophy (1993) emphasizes advantages such as faster access, simultaneous multi-file searching, saveand-print functionalities, more frequent updates, and remote access capabilities (Uche Enweani & Muokebe Bibiana, 2024).

Dadzie (2005) states that electronic resources are invaluable tools, enhancing research and complementing print materials by providing access to geographically restricted or costly information, current data, and linked content (Uche Enweani & Muokebe Bibiana, 2024). These digital resources also save space, lower risks of loss or theft, and reduce costs, leading to a transformative effect on Nigerian higher education and library management (Nwabueze, Ezekwe & Muokebe, 2014; Ani & Ahiauzu, 2008). The emergence of electronic information resources has revolutionized information handling in Nigerian academic environments, especially within university libraries (Uche Enweani & Muokebe Bibiana O, 2024; Orakpor & Ezekwibe, 2025).

There is a direct relationship between computer literacy and use of electronic resources. While most academics are computer literate, they often need to develop advanced searching skills (Ibeh & Ifeka, 2024; Nwabueze & Ibeh, 2016). Studies from Nigerian institutions confirm that journals remain the most valued information channel for researchers, with e-journals increasingly replacing print versions due to easier accessibility (Muokebe & Agwuna, 2023; Orakpor et al., 2025). Understanding usage patterns and attitudes toward e-journals is critical, given their central role in scholarly communication (Alumona & Ibeh, 2021; Anizor et al., 2021).

Gender disparities in e-resource usage have been observed in African contexts. For instance, research in Nigerian universities aligns with findings that male postgraduate students demonstrate higher utilization rates of electronic resources, even when accounting for training or attitudes (Kamaluddeen et al., 2024). Key factors positively associated with e-resource use include training, access, awareness, and academic level (Anike et al., 2023; Ekereuche & Ibeh, 2019). However, studies reveal that up to 80% of users in some Nigerian institutions remain unfamiliar with available e-resources, with many relying on both print and electronic formats (Muokebe & Enweani, 2019; Nwankwo et al., 2022). Access challenges persist despite high awareness. For example, 85% of academics in Nigerian universities rely on internet-based information due to limited library subscriptions (Ezeabasili & Ibeh, 2018; Okoye & Ibeh, 2013). Barriers include time constraints, lack of search skills (Ibeh & Ekereuche, 2019), and infrastructural gaps (Anaehobi & Muokebe, 2014). While many Nigerian academics self-report strong computer skills (Nwabueze et al., 2016), institutional support remains inadequate (Orakpor & Igwilo, 2024).

The rapid adoption of e-resources varies by discipline, with usage concentrated in specific titles and formats (Muokebe & Egbuna, 2021). In Nigerian universities, low computer literacy among both librarians and users hinders effective utilization (Ibeh & Ifeka, 2024; Usiedi et al., 2022). As Kinengyere (2007) noted, availability does not guarantee use; a finding echoed in Nigerian studies where underutilized resources reflect gaps in awareness, access skills, and information literacy programs (Anike et al., 2023; Ibeh & Alumona, 2019). Sustained training and proactive outreach by information professionals are essential to bridge these gaps (Orakpor et al., 2025).

The study carried out by Idiodi (2005) reveals that despite the advent of information and communication technology in Nigerian universities, and automation of library systems, very few users have the capability to use information technology effectively in the libraries. The researcher concluded that a high level of computer illiteracy among librarians is one of the major factors militating against promoting higher level of information literacy of library users. Kinengyere (2007) examines the effect of information literacy (IL) on the usage of electronic information resources in academic and research institutions in Uganda. The paper reports that avail- ability of information does not necessarily mean

actual use. The study shows that some of the available resources have not been utilized at all. This means that users are not aware of the availability of such resources, they do not know how to access them, or they do not know what the resources offer. All this calls for continued information literacy programs. IL is very vital in influencing utilization of information resources. Information professionals are needed to pass on IL skills to library users, while library users should endeavor to find out what information is available online for their consumption.

Methodology

The descriptive survey research design was adopted in eliciting information from the students that formed the **Table 1. Population and sample size**

subject of the study. A population of 40 postgraduate students, were used for the study. No sample was drawn because it was a manageable population size. 2 faculties with seven departments: management and social sciences-accountancies, business administration, journalism, political science, philosophy. Faculty of natural and applied sciences: Biochemistry, computer science, micro biology. These departments were considered to have full representation of all departments, considering their population in the university. Hence, 40 postgraduate students constituted the sample size. Data used for this study were collected using a test and questionnaire. Descriptive statistics such as percentages, mean, standard deviation, and correlation analysis were used to analyze data collected.

Faculty	Department	Population
Management and social sciences: -	accountancies	8
Business management		4
Journalism and media		5
Political science		4
Philosophy		3
Natural and applied Sciences	Microbiology	4
	Biochemistry	5
	Computer Science	7
Total		40

Results and Discussion

Research question 2: What kinds of electronic information resources are available to postgraduate students of the Tansian University, Umunya, Anambra state?

Table 2. Electronic information resources availability
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S\N	Electronic resources	Yes	No
1	CD-ROMS	4	57.0%
2	Internet	13	88.7%
3	E-mail	4	49.7%
4	Electronic journals	5	46.7%
5	DATAD (database of thesis and dissertat	ion) 3	19.0%
6	OPAC (online public access catalogue)	4	14.0%
7	Electronic books	7	77.%

Table 2 shows the kinds of electronic information resources available to postgraduate students at Tansian

University Umunya, Anambra State as perceived by the respondents. The majority of respondents indicated that

internet (88.7%) and electronic books (77.0%) were available for use in the university. Results indicated that internet and electronic mail were ranked as the most available and frequently used resources. This finding aligns with the studies by Ibeh and Alumona (2019) and Muokebe and Agwuna (2023), which demonstrated students' increasing dependence on easily accessible online technologies for academic work.

The limited use of CD-ROMs, electronic journals, and ebooks by about half of the postgraduate students can be explained by the findings of Anike, Nwankwo and Ibeh (2023) and Ekereuche and Ibeh (2019), who noted that mere availability of electronic resources does not guarantee their utilization. These studies revealed that many available resources remain underutilized due to factors such as lack of awareness, inadequate training, and preference for more familiar formats.

The findings further revealed that OPAC (Online Public Access Catalogue) and DATAD (Database of Theses and Dissertations) were not available to more than two-thirds of the postgraduate students in the study. This situation reflects the ongoing digitization process at the time of the study, as documented in the works of Nwabueze and Ibeh (2016) and Ibeh and Ifeka (2024). The few students who accessed these resources likely did so through faculty libraries, departmental collections, or external

research libraries, a practice consistent with the resource-sharing patterns observed by Ezekwe and Muokebe (2011) in Nigerian academic institutions. Research question 3: What is the level of usage of electronic information resources for academic purposes at Tansian University, Umunya, Anambra state?

In order to ascertain the level of usage of electronic information resources respondents were asked to indicate the full text databases they accessed and used for their academic work from list e-journals subscribed to and archived by Tansian University, Umunya, Anambra state, for academic purposes. The following findings were made.

The use of Science direct by the respondents accounted for 13 (95.0%) and was ranked highest by the mean score rating, and was followed by JSTOR accessed and used by 8 (39.0%) respondents. Of all the respondents, less than 20 (33.3%) accessed and used EJOURNALS; AGORA; African journals online; HINARI; PUBMED central; OARE; BIOMED CENTRAL; NIGERIAN VIRTUAL LIBRARY respectively in spite of their relevance to the field of study of the respondents being understudied. INASP PERI was the least accessed and used full text databases by 4 (1.3%) of the respondents under the study.

Items	No	Yes
SCIENCEDIRECT:	8 (5.0%)	32(95.0%)
JSTOR	28(61.0%)	12(39.0%)
E-JOURNALS	24(67.0%)	16(33.0%)
AGORA	22(68.3%)	18(31.7%)
African journals online:	23(67.7%)	17(32.3%)
HINARI	25(77.3%	15(22.7%)
PUBMED central	29(76.7%)	11(23.3%)
OARE:	32(80.7%)	8(19.3%)
BIOMED CENTRAL	35(82.3%	5(17.7%)
NIGERIAN VIRTUAL LIBRARY	27(89.0%)	13(11.0%)

Table 3. Level of usage of electronic information resources for academic purpose

Global development network	31(89.7%)	9(10.3%)
Research paper in economics	37(92.7%)	3(7.3%)
BMJ publishing group:	38(93.0%)	2(7.0%)
POPLINE: population information online	28(93.3%)	12(6.7%)
BIOONE: http://www. Bioone.org	31(93.7%)	9(6.3%)
EBSCOHOST	28(93.7%)	12(6.3%)
HIGHWIRE ARCHIVE:	32(94.0%)	8(6.0%)
Proceedings of the American mathematical society	33(95.0%	7(5.0%)
DOAJ	35(95.3%)	5(4.7%)
WILSONWEB OMNIFILE:	29(96.7%)	11(3.3%)
Transactions of the American mathematical society	37(96.7%)	3(3.3%)
ASSR: Arab social science research	37(96.7%)	3(3.3%)
LanTEEAL	37(96.7%)	3(3.3%)
MATHSCINET	37(97.3%)	3(2.7%)
INASP health links	38(98.0%)	2(2.0%)
ZENTRALBLATT MATH	38(98.3%)	2(1.7%)

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36(98.7%)

4(1.3%)

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The findings of this study revealed that, of the twentyseven (27) full texts databases subscribed to, archived and provided access to through username and password by the University Library's portal, SCIENCEDIRECT ranked highest with about 95% usage statistics, followed by JSTOR, E-JOURNALS, AGORA, AJOL, HINARI all falling below 35% usage statistics. The low level of usage of usage could be linked to lack of awareness about the availability, lack of search techniques skills by many postgraduate students of the university to access the myriad of e-resources. This notion is supported by Okello-Obura and Magara (2008) that students are increasingly expected to use electronic information resources whilst at the university. To make use of the growing range of electronic resources, students must acquire and practice the skills necessary to exploit them. Thachill (2008) also asserts that electronic resources and the new models of education have generated an even greater need for reference and instruction.

Research question 4: What are the constraints to electronic information resources utilization by postgraduate students at Tansian University, Umunya, Anambra state?

Table 4. constraints to electronic information r	esources u	utilizatio	า		
S\N Items	SD	D	А	SA	Mean
There is usually interrupted power supply	9	3	12	13	3.07
	13.0%	10.7%	33.0%	43.3%	
1 face problems with speed and					
capacity of computers	61	75	120	44	2.49
	20.3%	25.0%	40.0%	14.7%	
Too few computers with internet facilities	9	9	4	18	2.22
	30.0%	30.0%	28.0%	12.0%	
I face problems in locating the most appropria	ate				
information resources	7	10	10	13	2.21
	25.0%	35.0%	33.7%	6.3%	
5 I retrieve records with high recall an					
d low precision	6	13	9	12	2.18
	21.0%	46.0%	27.3%	5.7%	
I face problems to retrieve records relevant to	5				
my information need	7	14	6	13	2.08
	24.3%	49.3%	20.3%	6.0%	
Lack of knowledge of search techniques to					
retrieve information effectively	9	13	6	12	2.01
	30.3%	43.3%	21.7%	4.7%	
I do not posses requisite IT skills	12	5	9	14	1.77
	42.3%	41.7%	13.0%	3.0%	
I have problems accessing the internet	14	15	6	5	1.71
	48.3%	36.7%	10.7%	4.3%	

In order to identify the constraints to electronic information resources utilization by postgraduate students at Tansian University, Umunya, Anambra state respondents were asked to rate some militating factors. The findings from the table above were made. Power supply was ranked highest by the mean score rating (Mean =3.07). Less than half of the respondents indicated that they were constrained by locating the most appropriate information resources and too few computers with internet facilities followed by problems with speed and capacity of computers (Mean =2.49), Too few computers with internet facilities. Less than twenty percent of the respondents indicated that they were constrained by non-possession of requisite IT skills and problems accessing the internet.

Conclusion

Results indicated that internet and email were ranked most available and used in the university. Low use of CD-ROM, electronic journals and e-books by postgraduate students at Tansian University, Umunya, Anambra state, in spite of availability explained the notion that availability of information does not necessarily mean actual use.

Low level of usage of electronic resources, in particular, full texts data bases was linked to lack of search techniques skills by many postgraduate students of the university to access the myriad of e-resources is evident from the findings of the study.

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Effective use of electronic information resources by postgraduate students at Tansian University, Umunya, Anambra state, is being hampered by a number of factors. Interrupted power supply was ranked highest among other factors as speed and capacity of computers, retrieval of records with high recall and low precision, retrieving records relevant to information need, lack of knowledge of search techniques to retrieve information effectively, non-possession of requisite IT skills and problems accessing the internet.

There should be institutional commitment to overcome the identified constraints to use of electronic information resources by postgraduates students in order remain relevance in today's world of teaching, learning and research.

Recommendations

Lecturers should insist that postgraduate students use eresources. Academic staff should promote electronic resources by providing references for students to locate; this may increase the number of students acquiring the necessary information retrieval skills. Lecturers are crucial in the promotion of electronic information resources. Coursework/assignments attached to the use

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of electronic resources should be evolved. All postgraduate students should be taught e-records management to help them in the management of electronic information obtained from e-resources. This can be an integral part of the course on Information Storage and Retrieval taught to postgraduate students.

The University internet bandwidth and computer hardware should be upgraded to enhance speed of download of information. This could be achieved through soliciting external support and charging e-resources fees to be paid by students.

The University library should intensify their awareness campaigns concerning the availability of electronic resources. The use of e-mail alert system, text messages and prizes for those who use a lot of e-resources should be considered by the University Library as methods of promotion. Phone short message services should be integrated into library e-resources services provision for awareness services for e-resources.

The problem of power outage, a national issue should be critically addressed through special budgetary allocation, an institutional commitment to ensure a 24-hour lighting system in order remain relevance in today's world teaching, learning and research.

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