EXPLORING STUDENTS' VIEWS AND UTILIZATION OF DIGITAL RESOURCES AT THE IGNATIUS AJURU UNIVERSITY OF EDUCATION, PORT-HARCOURT, RIVERS STATE, NIGERIA

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Abstract: The study looked at how students at the Ignatius Ajuru University of Education in Port-Harcourt, Rivers State, Nigeria, used digital resources and what their opinions were. Three research questions served as the study's compass, and a descriptive survey design was chosen. The target group consisted of all IAUE undergraduate students. A sample size of 398 students was determined for the study. The recommendations of Fox et al. (2007) and Meyer (1979), who suggested a sample size of 384 for studies conducted within an infinite population range, served as the basis for this sample size justification. The practical difficulty in obtaining the exact number of undergraduate students at the time of the study led to this decision. The tool for gathering data was the questionnaire. Out of the 450 copies of the questionnaire that were given to the students, 398 were recovered and deemed to be functional. The instrument's reliability was evaluated using Cronbach's alpha, and the result was 0.85. The reliability of the questionnaire was established by the obtained coefficient. Frequency counts and straightforward percentages were used to analyze the data, and SPSS was used to calculate the mean. According to the findings, students use digital resources moderately for a variety of purposes and have a positive perception of many aspects of them. The study also found that some of the difficulties with using the internet included bad internet connectivity, insufficient information retrieval abilities, and a lack of time to look for relevant resources. The researchers suggested that the university give priority to enhancing internet connectivity across the campus by forming alliances with dependable service providers in light of these findings. Organizing frequent training sessions or workshops centered on improving information retrieval skills would also enable students to use digital resources more skillfully.

Keywords: students views, digital resources, undergraduate students, Ignatius Ajuru University of Education, Port-Harcourt, Rivers State, Nigeria

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1.0 Introduction

The primary objective of any university library is to gather pertinent information resources that aid and enhance teaching, learning, and research needs of the academic community. University libraries serve as essential hubs of knowledge and information, providing access to a wide range of resources in various formats, including books, journals, databases, multimedia materials, and digital resources. As digital resources have become increasingly prevalent, many university libraries are indeed expanding their collections to include a significant number of digital resources (George et al., 2022). This enables students and faculty to access and utilize current and relevant materials for teaching, learning, and research purposes. Additionally, the inclusion of digital resources in university library collections not only expands access to a wider range of materials but also facilitates remote and flexible learning, catering to the evolving needs of the academic community in today's digital age.

Digital resources encompass any information or data that is stored in a digital format and can be accessed, manipulated, and processed by a computer or other digital devices. Ogunbodede et al. (2022) defined digital resources as those resources that can only be accessed through the use of Internet-connected devices. They are available in various formats such as electronic books (e-books), online journals, online databases, multimedia

materials, web-based applications, and other digital content. These resources can be accessed and utilized remotely, allowing users to retrieve information conveniently from anywhere at any time (Lo et al., 2017). With the advancement of technology, digital resources have become increasingly prevalent in educational settings, providing a wealth of information and expanding opportunities for teaching, learning, and research. The integration of digital resources in education has transformed the learning experience for students.

Digital resources offer numerous benefits such as easy access to a wide range of information, cost-effectiveness, and convenience, but despite its benefits there seems to be low utilization of these important resources in developing countries. Kodua-Ntim & Fombad (2020) stated that students in developing countries underutilized digital resources at university libraries. The low utilization could be attributed to students' lack of awareness of the availability of digital resources, lack of digital skills to use them or inconvenient access due to slow internet speeds, limited access to computers, or a lack of understanding of how to use digital resources. These factors may have collectively contributed to the underutilization of digital resources in university libraries, hindering students' ability to fully leverage the benefits they offer.

In conclusion, the underutilization of digital resources in developing countries remains a significant concern due to factors such as lack of awareness, inadequate digital skills, and limited access to technology. Efforts should focus on addressing these barriers by raising awareness, providing digital literacy training, improving internet infrastructure, and ensuring access to necessary devices. By overcoming these challenges, students can fully leverage the benefits of digital resources and enhance their educational experiences. This study specifically explored students' views and utilization of digital resources at the Ignatius Ajuru University of Education (IAUE), Port-Harcourt, Rivers State, Nigeria, providing valuable insights into the context of digital resource utilization in that institution. The findings of the study can inform targeted interventions and investments to optimize the use of digital resources and justify the financial investment in procuring these resources.

2.0 Statement of the Problem

Digital resources have emerged as a formidable asset within academic libraries worldwide. Countless university libraries have made substantial financial investments in procuring online resources, aiming to enhance the quality of education, foster learning, and facilitate research within their institutions. However, this substantial expenditure and the potential these digital resources hold for improved learning and research have not been fully realized, especially among students in developing nations. The underutilization of digital resources among students in Nigeria is a critical issue. Despite the myriad advantages and promise that digital resources offer, there exists a dearth of comprehension regarding the extent to which Nigerian students recognize and employ these resources for their educational pursuits. This knowledge gap poses a significant impediment to devising efficacious strategies that can encourage the utilization of digital resources, ultimately harnessing their potential to elevate students' learning outcomes. In light of this, the primary objective of this study is exploring students' views and utilization of digital resources at the Ignatius Ajuru University of Education, Port-Harcourt, Rivers State, Nigeria. By examining this specific context, the study aims to shed light on the factors influencing digital resource utilization and offer insights that can inform the development of strategies aimed at maximizing the benefits of these resources.

The study was led by the following research questions:
 i.   What are the students' views of digital resources?
 ii.   What is the level of use of digital resources by students?
 iii. What are the challenges to the effective use of digital resources by students?

3.0 Literature Review

Research on students' perspectives and use of digital resources is scarce. A summary of a few of these studies is provided in this section.Research students' perceptions of the digital library's information resources and challenges encountered during use were investigated by Khan & Asif (2022). Data was gathered via a self-administered questionnaire that was created. 278 research students pursuing M. Phil and Ph.D. programs in the Faculty of Behavioral & Social Sciences and Pure Sciences made up the study's population. The findings demonstrated that respondents had favorable opinions of online information resources and were aware of a variety of online information sources. They had adequate searching abilities. They have received instruction on how to use internet resources for information. They favored receiving information in print, electronic, and digital formats. In a similar study, Hoq & Haque (2018) investigated how students perceived the use of digital resources in the Rajshahi University Library. 180 students received a standardized questionnaire, which 138 of them dutifully filled out and returned. The study reveals that the majority of students accessed e-books, followed by websites and that they had a favourable opinion of the value of digital resources. In Ghana's public university libraries, Frimpong & Addo (2020) examined how students perceived and used digital resources. It was

discovered that the majority of public universities offer an online public access catalogue (OPAC), e-books, databases, and periodicals that are accessible to students.

Ogunbodede et al. (2022) conducted a study at the University of Africa Bayelsa State in Nigeria on students' perceptions and use of digital resources. 409 of the 1420 undergraduate students in the study's population were chosen at random by the researchers, who used a descriptive survey design. The results showed that the students used digital resources extensively and had favorable opinions of themOmeluzor et al. (2016) investigated how Federal University of Petroleum Resources, Effurun, Nigeria, students perceived, used, and encountered difficulties with digital resources. The study employed a descriptive survey research design. Descriptive and inferential statistics were utilized to analyze the collected data, and regression analysis was employed to examine the hypothesis's outcome. The findings showed that respondents use digital resources at varying degrees, with e-journals, e-databases, web OPACs, and repositories showing the highest levels of use. It demonstrates how users' perceptions affect how they use digital resources. Ambrose et al. (2021) looked into how undergraduate Library and Information Science (LIS) students at the University of Benin in Benin City used digital resources. The researchers employed an online questionnaire as the instrument for data collection, and 93 students took part in the survey, which had a descriptive survey design. The results showed that the students primarily used e-books, e-journals, and Internet resources.   However, studies have found that some students still prefer to use print resources over digital resources. For instance, Mizrachi et al. (2018) investigated university students' academic reading behaviour and preferences in 21 countries with over 10,000 participants. The study found that the majority of the students preferred the printed format of academic course materials. In a similar study, Mangen (2013) studied the interest and ability of 75 students to read on screen and print. The results revealed that those who read print performed better than those who read the same book in digital format; thus, they preferred print copies to digital copies. According to Palani (2012), 80% of students prefer reading traditional text in print to reading on screen because it improves comprehension. According to Setiati & Gemilang (2019) & Draffan et al. (2014), those on the other side of the digital divide prefer the traditional print format of hardcopy reading because using digital resources requires some level of computer literacy skills and the ability to afford e-readers. Ogunbodede et al. (2020), noted that the primary reason why users want a print textbook is because they believe that printed materials are more accessible, less distracting, well-known, straightforward to use, and don't need Internet access. Print resources allow for more marking or highlighting of silent points compared to digital resources. It can, therefore, be concluded that the choice of book format depends on the individual student, digital skills, access to digital devices, and the purpose of reading.

The use of digital resources in Africa, however, has significant challenges, according to studies. For instance, in 2013, Gakibayo & Okello-Obura conducted research at the library of the Mbarara University of Science and Technology and discovered that inadequate access to computers, slow internet connectivity, and a lack of information literacy skills all had an impact on how well people used digital resources. Alabi (2021) found that poor connectivity and power outages were the most significant barriers to undergraduates' use of digital resources in private university libraries in southwest Nigeria. Ambrose et al. (2021) stated that the three biggest hurdles to the unsuccessful use of digital resources were an unpredictable power supply, slow internet connectivity, and high data subscription costs. Wiche & Ogunbodede (2021) identified insufficient information literacy skills, low electrical availability, and poor Internet access as some of the barriers to the successful use of digital resources. For effective use of digital resources among students, the government should have a total commitment to education in general by providing adequate funding for infrastructural development.

Overall, the studies suggest that digital resources can be a valuable tool for students in African universities and that students' preferences for digital or print resources were influenced by factors such as individual preferences, digital literacy, access to devices, and the purpose of reading. However, challenges related to infrastructure and digital literacy were identified as significant barriers to effective use of digital resources in African contexts. These challenges need to be addressed in order to ensure that all students have equal access to these resources. To address these challenges, governments and universities need to invest in infrastructure development, provide training on digital literacy skills, and make digital resources more affordable. By doing this, we can ensure that all students in African universities have equal access to the valuable resources that digital can offer. It is important to consider the cultural context when developing digital resources for African universities. For example, some students may prefer to use digital resources in their native language, or they may be more comfortable using resources that are culturally relevant. It is also important to be mindful of these factors when designing digital resources for African students.

4.0 Methodology

A descriptive survey research approach was employed to conduct this investigation. The target population encompassed all undergraduate students at IAUE. The study's sample size was determined to be 398 students.

This sample size rationale was drawn from the recommendations of Fox et al. (2007) and Meyer (1979), who advised a sample size of 384 for studies conducted within an infinite population range. This choice was made due to the practical challenge of accessing the precise number of undergraduate students at the time of the investigation. The questionnaire was the instrument used for data collection. 450 copies of the questionnaire were distributed to the students and 398 were retrieved and found usable. The questionnaires were divided into two parts. Part A elicited the demographic characteristics of the respondent, while Part B were constructed particularly to collect data on based on the research questions. The research questions were developed based on existing literature. Cronbach's alpha was used to assess the instrument's reliability, and the result was 0.85. The value of 0.85 that was obtained suggests a strong level of internal consistency among the items in the questionnaire. This therefore means that the questionnaire is trustworthy based on the obtained coefficient.

The response to each of the items was weighted on a 4-point Likert-type scoring scale. The respondents were free to choose Strongly Agree (SA) = 4 points, Agree (A) = 3 points, Disagree (D) = 2 points, and Strongly Disagree (SD) = 1 point. On the scale, a criterion score of 2.5 was adopted. The criterion score was obtained as follows: Criterion score = (4+3+2+1)/4 = 2.5.

For Research Question 1, the response below 2.5 was adjudged as negative perception, while the mean response of 2.5 and above was adjudged as positive perception. For Research Question 2, a mean response below 2.5 was adjudged low-level usage, while a mean response of 2.5 to 3.0 was adjudged as moderate level usage, and a mean response above 3.1 and above was adjudged high-level usage. Finally, items having a mean score above the criterion score of 2.5 were accepted, while those below 2.5 were not rejected.' Data were analysed with frequency counts and simple percentages, and SPSS version 23 was used to generate the mean and standard deviation.

KEY: SA= Strongly Agree; A=Agree; SD=Strongly Disagree; D=Disagree.

4.1 Results

The findings of the study are presented in the following tables with explanations.

Section A: Demographics Characteristics of Respondents
Table 1: Gender of the Respondents

Gender	Frequency	Percentage (%)
Male	154	39
Female	241	61
Total	**398**	**100**

Table 1 shows that 241(61%) of the respondents were female while 154(39%) were male. This implies that the majority of the respondents under study were female.

4.2 Answering Research Questions

Research Question 1: What are the student's perceptions of digital resources?
Table 3: Student's Perceptions of Digital Resources

S/N	Student's Perceptions of DR	SA	A	D	SD	Mean
1.	DR provides round-the-clock access to information	184	154	48	12	3.3
2.	DR helps in carrying out my academic and research activities	184	154	48	12	3.3
3.	DR provides access to up-to-date information	160	178	56	4	3.2
4.	It provides users the opportunity to share information with others	180	170	34	14	3.2
5.	DR is cost-effective, convenient, and easy to use	120	234	38	6	3.2
6.	DR provides quick access to information	148	176	56	18	3.1
7.	DR provides wider access to information	148	176	56	18	3.1
8.	It provides access to unlimited information from different sources	110	226	54	8	3.1
9.	I prefer digital resources to print	110	226	54	8	3.1

10.	DR provides free quality materials for learning and research	112	216	64	6	3.0
11.	It provides speedy and easy access to information	90	222	82	4	3.0
12.	The quality of digital resources is satisfactory	112	216	64	6	3.0
13.	DR offers the possibility to efficiently manage my time	70	260	60	8	2.9
	Grand Mean					**3.1**

Table 3 shows the student's perceptions of digital resources. All the items in Table 3 have mean values that are above the criterion mean of (2.5). Additionally, the grand mean (3.1) is greater than the criterion mean (2.5). Overall, the "Grand Mean" of 3.1 suggests that, on average, students have a positive perception of various aspects of digital resources. The results imply that students value the accessibility, usefulness, and convenience of digital resources in their academic pursuits.

Research Question 2: What is the level of use of digital resources by students?
Table 4: Use of Digital Resources

S/N	Use of Digital Resources	SA	A	D	SD	Mean
1.	I use DR as an alternative to print textbooks	164	188	42	4	3.3
2.	I use DR as supplements to classroom lectures	180	170	34	14	3.2
3.	I use DR to carry out my research activities	148	176	56	18	3.1
4.	I use DR to learn and share knowledge with my friends and it assists me in my professional growth	112	216	64	6	3.0
5.	I use DR to update my knowledge	114	144	110	30	2.8
	Grand Mean					**3.0**

Table 4 reveals the level of usage of digital resources by students. Table 4, therefore, shows that all the items listed have mean values that are above the criterion mean of (2.5). More so, the grand mean (3.4) is greater than the criterion mean (2.5). Overall, the "Grand Mean" of 3.0 indicates that, on average, students use digital resources moderately for the various purposes listed in the survey. The results imply that students find digital resources useful for a range of activities, including learning, research, and knowledge-sharing. The relatively positive perception of digital resources in terms of their use for different purposes suggests that these resources are indeed contributing to students' academic and professional pursuits.

Research Question 3: What are the challenges to the effective use of digital resources by students?
Table 5: Challenges to the Use of Digital Resources

S/N	Challenges to the Use of DR	SA	A	D	SD	Mean
1.	Poor Internet connectivity	120	234	38	6	3.2
2.	Inadequate information literacy skills in using digital resources	148	176	56	18	3.1
3.	Lack of time to look for suitable resources	110	226	54	8	3.1
4.	Poor electricity supply	90	222	82	4	3.0
	Grand Mean					**3.1**

Table 5 shows the students' responses to the challenges of the use of digital resources. All the items in Table 5 have mean values that are above the criterion mean of (2.5). More so, the grand mean (2.6) is greater than the criterion mean (2.5). Overall, the "Grand Mean" of 3.1 indicates that, on average, students perceive these challenges to be moderately significant in their use of digital resources. The results suggest that addressing issues related to Internet connectivity, information literacy skills, time management, and electricity supply could lead to a more efficient and effective utilization of digital resources among students. The findings underscore the importance of infrastructure development, education in digital literacy, and measures to mitigate challenges to ensure that students can fully benefit from the resources available to them.

5.0 Discussion of Findings

The study explored students' views and utilization of digital resources at the Ignatius Ajuru University of Education, Port-Harcourt, Rivers State, Nigeria. The study shows that students have a positive perception of various aspects of digital resources. The finding that students have a positive perception of various aspects of digital resources implies that students generally view digital resources as valuable tools in their educational and academic pursuits. This positive perception suggests that students recognize and appreciate the benefits and advantages offered by digital resources. On the level of digital resource use, the study also discovered that the students use digital resources moderately for the various purposes listed in the survey. The finding that students use digital resources moderately for the various purposes listed in the survey suggests a balanced and diversified engagement with these resources. This implies that students are utilizing digital resources, but the extent of their usage might not be at its maximum potential. The moderate level of digital resource use suggests a positive direction toward integrating modern tools into education. It also highlights the need for institutions and educators to continue supporting students in developing digital literacy skills, addressing challenges, and fostering an environment where students can fully leverage the benefits of digital resources. On the challenges to the use of digital resources, the study observed that poor internet connectivity, inadequate information retrieval skills, lack of time to search for suitable resources, and poor electricity supply were some of the major challenges to the effective use of electronic information resources. These identified challenges has several implications for both students and the educational institution. These challenges can significantly impact students' ability to fully leverage the benefits of digital resources. This finding is in agreement with the findings of Wiche & Ogunbodede (2021), who also found that inadequate information retrieval skills, poor Internet connectivity, and others were some of the major barriers to the use of digital resources in higher education, especially in developing countries.

6.0 Conclusion and Recommendations

This study explored students' views and utilization of digital resources at the Ignatius Ajuru University of Education, Port-Harcourt, Rivers State, Nigeria. Firstly, the study revealed that students held positive perceptions of digital resources and engaged with them extensively. However, certain challenges impeded their optimal utilization. Chief among these challenges were poor internet connectivity, which hindered seamless access to online materials, and inadequate information retrieval skills. Based on the findings, the researchers recommended that the university should prioritize improving campus-wide internet connectivity through partnerships with reliable service providers. Additionally, implementing regular workshops or training sessions that focus on enhancing information retrieval skills would empower students to navigate digital resources more effectively. This effort can contribute significantly to their ability to access and evaluate online information efficiently. The university should introduce strategies to help students manage their time effectively, enabling them to better integrate research activities into their schedules. The persistent problem of poor electricity supply calls for innovative solutions. Installing alternative power sources, such as generators or solar power systems, in key study areas can ensure uninterrupted access to digital resources. Lastly, promoting awareness of available electronic resources is crucial. The creation of accessible guides, tutorials, and information materials will inform students about the diverse array of digital resources at their disposal.

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