

**THE ELECTRONIC LIBRARY SERVICES AND ITS PATRONAGE AMONG  
UNDERGRADUATES IN THE FACULTY OF HEALTH SCIENCES, OSUN STATE  
UNIVERSITY, OSOGBO, OSUN STATE, NIGERIA**

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**ABSTRACT:** *The role of Electronic Library Services in any academic institution, most especially in human life cannot be overemphasised in this 21<sup>st</sup> century as they are technological advancement which has increased the role of information as a result of social progress and vigorous development in science and technology. However, the new and emerging technology changed the traditional process of learning, teaching, research and the way education is managed. The pace of change brought by these new technologies has had a significant effect on the way people live, work and play in the world. The study seeks to determine what the use of these electronic library services in Osun State University will mean to the undergraduates in the faculty of Health Sciences in relation to their studies. The population of the study consists of all undergraduates in the faculty of Health Sciences of Osun State University, Osogbo. The faculty has a total number of 1369 undergraduates. A stratified random sampling technique was used in selecting 200 undergraduates in the aforementioned faculty. 144 total number of respondents was used for the study. Both sexes from the various departments were also included in the study. They were well analysed and used to prepare the tables.*

**KEYWORDS:** Information, Electronic Library Services, Faculty of Health Sciences, Osun State University, Nigeria,

**BACKGROUND TO THE STUDY**

Information is a strategic resource and increasing the life blood of organisation and nations. Information is clearly seen as one of our most important resources, vital in nearly every aspect of our personal and working lives. Libraries have, traditionally being among the foremost repositories of *Information* materials. Accessorial activities in the libraries are concerned with acquiring, storing, organising and managing of the stock with a view to making information contained within, easily retrievable so as to satisfy the information needs of the users. Information is essential for business. All organisations, whatever their size is, need information on markets, products, competitions, legislation and a host of other subjects. Second attribute of information societies is the growing impact of information on human activities. It is therefore obvious that an increasing number of professionals and researchers continue to focus on the different aspects of information.

Moreso, in the present age of information, library and information professionals are faced with challenge of managing information with the aid of computers and telecommunication techniques to enable them to handle their business for their own benefit and survival. The following are important characteristics of information:

- i. An important characteristic of information is that, though it is resource and consumer product, yet like most other resources and consumer products it does not diminish by use; rather it is lost when not in use.
- ii. Information discourages and delimits unintentional parallel research, which is also necessary to accelerate the pace of development.
- iii. Information is infinite and ever-growing.
- iv. Information is a promoter of the development and generator of knowledge.

The new information age in which we now live is a revolutionary period; it has become the most strategic resource that is transforming the world economy. The internet, e-mails, CD-ROM, e-books and e-journals etc are the current facilities that are changing the way we work and internet with one another.

In our world today, the weight is no longer heavy on money but on information which is the primary strategic resources. No individual can hope to keep pace with even a small fraction of his/her information requirements without the help of library and information professionals, because users to *get relevant information only, in minimum time and cost* without being overweighed by the huge amount of irrelevant information. Information explosion has now-a-days reached such a stage that “automation” which was talk of the town a decade ago has now become child’s play in developing countries and issues of discussion now are global village and e-learning society in developed countries. The World Wide Web (www) is a powerful platform for providing access to multimedia information. Hence, the WWW has been used as the platform for the development of digital libraries (DLS).

The concept of digital library refers to collections of electronic resources consisting of text, audio, visual, graphics and animations in nature that are accessible through the aid of digital technologies. Impeccably, a digital library should provide users access to electronic information resources via electronic means. However, this definition as well includes electronic resources such as (database on standalone PCs, information on CD-ROMs, etc.) that may not be accessible through the internet or other networks. Digital library collections may be born (digital oriented or through the process of digitization from existing print materials).

### **Objective of the Study**

The specific objectives of this study are:

- i. Ascertain the frequency of use of the electronic library services by the undergraduate students.
- ii. Find out the purpose of which the undergraduate students in the faculty of Health Sciences of Osun State University, Osogbo, use the electronic library.

- iii. Investigate the opportunities presented by the electronic library services to undergraduate students of the Faculty of Health Sciences of Osun State University, Osogbo.

#### **PURPOSE OF THE STUDY**

The purpose of the study is to adjudge the use of e-library services by the undergraduate students of Osun State University, Osogbo, Nigeria and to substantiate the level of use and for what intention.

#### **Significant of the Study**

Delving into this study is very germane, in the sense that it shows how well or not, the departments in this faculty of Health Sciences are using the learning resource facilities provided by the Uniosun management to support learning, teaching and research. Similarly, the study will help the departments, faculty and the university as a whole to appraise needs and identify the opportunities that the department has presented to the academic community.

#### **The Study Setting**

The empirical setting of this study was limited to Osun State University, where its main campus is located at Osogbo and branch campuses in each of the six (6) geopolitical zones of Osun State in Nigeria to ensure that quality university education is decentralised and taken as close to all parts of Osun State in Nigeria as possible. The locations enjoy felicitous and robust climate with its aesthetic atmospheric condition. The towns are accessible by road from all part of the country. There is regular road transportation among the towns and all parts of Osun State. The university was established by the law passed by the State House of Assembly in December, 2006 and signed into law by the then state governor, His Excellency, Prince Olagunsoye Oyinlola.

#### **LITERATURE REVIEW**

It is disheartening to note that the various governments in Nigeria have not shown adequate interest in the development of libraries in the country. Their negligence in this regard has been a major contributing factor to the low standard of education in most Nigerian Schools at present. In the present day Nigeria and indeed on most African countries, libraries are still regarded as a luxury and therefore not given the priority attention they deserve. Each successive government is preoccupied with the economic, industrial and sometimes political development and as such little attention is paid to the provision of libraries.

Consequently, there has been inadequate funding for libraries. This in turn negatively affects development. According to Singh Gurdev (2013), electronic or digital information sources are those sources which are available in electronic or digital form. A number of electronic sources are available on CD-ROMs and on the internet. These sources include e-books, e-journal etc. He affirms that a purely digital library should be in a position to lend reference books without restriction and may treat a reference book as an e-book, like any other book. In addition, has opine by Aiyebelehin (2002) the term library has metamorphorphosed and assumed different shapes and names such as Virtual Library, Hybrid-Library, Library 2.0 (libraries that operate electronically with the aid of internet facilities), Digital Library and E-Library, etc.

Each of the aforementioned libraries has peculiar functions they perform within the environment of operation but central to their role is information dissemination. This entails the traditional definition of library which was purely place where books are kept for preservation role has changed. This signifies that the word preservation still forms part of the over-all roles played by library in any given society. The new roles of libraries will be to move from solely providing access to knowledge to acting as a platform for the storage and dissemination of information within the global context created by twenty-first century digital technologies (Gobinda, 2006). The world has turned to global village; hence, information network via the state- of –the art technology is the order of the day.

If the libraries impact is to be felt, there is need to be turned to the changes that has engulfed processes is imperative by moving from the traditional libraries to libraries 2.0. Libraries 2.0 will provide effective and efficient service required in this era of technology in the 21<sup>st</sup> century. The issue is not with Nigeria or developing countries alone, but rather it is a global phenomenon. In the developed world like the United Kingdom, efforts are made on how to deliver facilities on the web. Nigeria and other developing nations are not different and therefore, should seek for communication. As stated by Ifidon (2003), students and researchers can no longer complain of non-availability of adequate resources in their libraries since there are plenty of materials on the internet in all fields of knowledge.

Also, the digital age has brought about a completely different way of providing library services in relation to the development of new services. The use of electronic library information services by students or library users has improved tremendously over time; there is growth in usage within a relatively short period of establishing the electronic library for catalogue is found to be no longer the key to the library gateways and links. The study identifies a relationship between students' progression and retention of electronic information services and usage. Considering electronic library as a collection of library resources in electronic format at various locations which can be accessed and used with great ease using computer and telecommunication technology for the purpose of teaching, studying, researching, learning, leisure and decision making (Daniel, 2003).

Ramayah (2006) asserts that an electronic/digital library can be visualized as a computer based system for storing, acquiring, organising, searching and distributing digital materials for end users access. The virtual library has been greatly promoted by digital/electronic library that has assisted users to access needed information irrespective of t5he time and location. When a digital library is confined within any building, it is said to be an electronic library and when it is not located within a building it is said to be a virtual library, it is more or less in space. Similarly, Hauwa and Mohammed (2017) state that electronic information resources and services in university libraries are geared towards organisation, storage, retrieval and dissemination the community users.

Various scholars in the field of library and information science have discussed how electronic resources have positively boosted the timely and accurate provision of information to users

without delay. According to them, they affirmed that the Online Dictionary of Library and Information Science (ODLIS, 2004), electronic information resources can be defined as material consisting of data and/or computer programme(s) encoded for reading and manipulation by a computer, by the use of a peripheral device directly connected to the computer, such as a CD-ROM drive, or remotely via a network, such as the Internet Category includes software applications, electronic texts, bibliographic databases, institutional repositories, Web site, e-books, collections of e-journals etc. Digital/Electronic has an opportunity to address the scarcity of teaching and research materials in the libraries of institutions of higher education in Nigeria. It does allow institutions and indigenous researchers to share their own research outputs with the global community as well as ensuring the preservation of Nigeria cultural heritage (Ya'u, 2003).

In addition, Ojedokun (2000) pointed out that digital library includes electronic databases on the internet, WWW, CD-ROM and proprietary services such as dialog, info America etc. While Omotayole (2002) states that an electronic/digital library is a system by which users' access information that resides solely in electronic format on computer networks irrespective of the physical location of the information. Smith (1987) as cited by Hauwa and Mohammed (2017), opine that electronic information resources can help the library to combat information explosion that is experienced as a result of abundance of information in all fields of knowledge due to research and developmental activities. There is a slight basic difference between electronic library and digital library. While electronic library consists of electronic materials and services such as videotapes, CD-ROMs, the digital library consists of digital services and materials that are stored, processed and transferred via digital (binary) devices and networks. The Virtual libraries on the other hand consist of both digital and electronic libraries existing virtually. Both provide remote access to digital collections such as electronic documents, digitized pictures, social and video (Tennant, 1999).

Furthermore, according to Okebukola (2002) the digital/electronic libraries improve the quality of teaching and research in institution through the provision of current electronic books, journal and other library resources, enhance access of academic libraries to global libraries and information resources, enhance scholarship research and lifelong learning through the establishment of permanent access to share the virtual archival collections, provide guidance to academic libraries on ways of applying appropriate technologies for the production of electronic/digital library resources and to advance to use and usability of globally distributed network of library services. Estabrook (2004) states that increased availability of electronic information resources have led libraries particularly in schools, colleges and universities to develop important relationship with their institutions' computer centres. The digital age has brought about a completely different way of providing library services resulting in the development of new services.

The e-library is a child of necessity arising from the need to use technologies in accessing the world information overload or information explosion, for human survival and development. Electronic libraries are transforming education by providing organised access to high quality resources and tools that support innovation in teaching and learning at all levels, from



undergraduate to postgraduate. The need for an e-library system has therefore become a most urgent necessity in Nigeria universities. One of the advantages of e-library to the society includes: integration of text, availability, research-ability, search-ability, sound and video up-to-date, image and relevant information. Many users accessing information simultaneously from single electronic site from many locations and copies of information delivered with electronic speed. Lang (1998) said that digital library as the use of digital technologies to acquire, store, preserve and provide access to information and material originally published in digital form of digitized from existing print, audio- visual or other forms

Electronic library according to Mohammed (2003) is an organised collection of documented information resources, which is not limited by physical structure or printed format, but as well including electronically or remotely irrespective of time and location of the user with the assistance of Information Communication Technologies i.e. ICT. Electronic libraries provide a value added solution for all higher institutions and facilitate online access to enormous current volumes of academic information. In summary, the evolution of computer technology, the internet technology and the communications according to Olarongbe and Aina (2007) have brought about availability of several types of EIS (Electronic Information Sources) all over the world. This development has provided more access to information in electronic form, commonly referred to as electronic information sources (EIS). EIS refers to information sources that are available and can be accessed electronically through computer networked facilities such as Online Library Catalogues, the internet, the World Wide Web and digital libraries (Ekwelem, Okafor and ukwoma, 2009).

Nevertheless, IFLA (2012) as well defined electronic information sources as those information materials that require computer access, whether through a personal computer, mainframe, or mobile device, which could be accessed remotely or via the internet. Basically, there are two categories of EIS: (i) Licensed Electronic Information Sources, these are licensed sources, which could be made available to users of a particular institution or organisation only via subscription. (ii) Open Access Electronic Information Sources, once a user is connected to the internet, access is gained to all kinds of open source information free of charge. Examples of common electronic information sources according to IFLA (2012) are: e-books, e-journals, indexing and abstracting databases, e-reference sources, statistical databases, government and agencies site, full-text databases, e-images, audio and visual sources. This study is to look into and at the same time determine what the use of these services in Osun State University will mean to the undergraduates in relation to their studies.

## **RESEARCH METHODOLOGY**

The population of the study consists of all undergraduates in the faculty of Health Sciences of Osun State University, Osogbo, Nigeria. The faculty has a total number of one thousand three hundred and sixty-nine (1369) undergraduates. A stratified random sampling technique was used in selecting two hundred (200) undergraduates from the faculty bringing the total of one hundred and forty-four (144) respondents used for the study including both sexes from the various departments.

## FINDINGS AND DISCUSSIONS OF THE FACULTY OF Health Sciences

Table 1: Sampled Population

Faculty	Departments	No. of Students	No. Selected	%
	Public Health	396	75	3.,5
	Physiology	395	50	25
	Anatomy	361	45	22.5
	Nursing	217	30	15
	Total	1369	200	100%

Source: Institutions' records, 2016

The instrument contained 15 items that include respondents' background information, frequency of use of electronic services, purpose of use of electronic services and the opportunities the library presents to students in Osun State University, Osogbo, Nigeria. Based on the total number of the population of the study; 200 questionnaires were administered, but only 144 questions were properly filled and returned representing 72% of the respondents. The remaining 56 were not filled properly and some were not returned. The data were analysed using descriptive statistics. Also, this study is restricted to the electronic library services and its patronage among the undergraduates in the faculty of Health Sciences of UNIOSUN, Osogbo, Nigeria. They were analysed and used to prepare the tables below.

Table 2: Below shows the respondents background information by gender and departments

Department	Sex	Frequency	%
Public Health	Male	32	16
	Female	43	21.5
	Total	75	37.5
Physiology	Male	31	15.5
	Female	19	9.5
	Total	50	25
Anatomy	Male	30	15
	Female	15	7.5
	Total	45	22.5
Nursing	Male	9	4.5
	Female	21	10.5
	Total	30	15
Total		200	100%

Source: Institutions' record, 2016

The analysis of the gender respondents in their departments is represented above and the study revealed that in the department of Public Health 32 (16%) were male. While the female respondents were 43 (21.5%). This study confirms that there were more female than male undergraduates in the department of Public Health. A total of 75 (37.5%) stands for both male and female respondents in the department. Similarly, in the department of Physiology, the study revealed that 31 (15.5%) were male, while the female respondents were 19 (9.5%). The study as well confirms that there were more male than female undergraduates in the department of Physiology. While a total of 50 (25%) stands for both male and female respondents. In addition, in the department of Anatomy, the study revealed that 30 (15%) were male respondents. While 15 (7.5%) were female respondents. The study confirms that there were more male than female undergraduates in Anatomy department. A total of 45 (22.5%) stands for both male and female respondents. The analysis of gender respondents in the department of Nursing revealed that 9 (4.5%) were male, while 21 (10.5%) were female. The study confirms that there were more female than male undergraduates in this department. A total of 30 (15%) stands for both male and female respondents in the same department. In summary, a total of 200 (100%) represents the analysis of the gender respondents in the four (4) departments of the faculty of Health Sciences of Osun State University, Osogbo.

Table 3: Background Information of the Respondents by age

Age	Frequency	%
i. 15-20 yrs	45	31.2%
ii. 21-25 yrs	60	41.6%
iii. 26-30 yrs	35	24.3%
iv. 31 & above	4	2.7%
Total	144	100%

The analysis of age of the respondents shows that those in the 15-20 years, with frequency of 45 (31.2%) and 21-25 years with frequency of 60 (41.6) bracket were in the majority in the faculty of Health Sciences of Uniosun. While 26-30 years with the frequency of 35 (24.3%) and 31 and above with frequency of 4 (2.7%) bracket were in the minority.

Table 4: Background Information of the Respondents by levels

Level	Frequency	%
i. 100	42	29.1%
ii. 200	40	27.8%
iii. 300	30	20.9%
iv. 400	32	22.2%
v. 500	Nil	Nil
Total	144	100%

Source: Field Study, 2017

The analysis of level of respondents shows the levels that use the e-library services of Osun State University, Osogbo, Nigeria were 100 with frequency of 42 (29.1%), 200 with frequency of 40 (27.8%) and 400 with frequency of 32 (22.2%). The reason for this is due to the fact that



they work more on their assignments, project writing, term paper writing and seminar presentations.

Table 5: How did you know about the electronic library?

Sources of electronic Information	Frequency	%
i. School Orientation	20	13.9
ii. Lecturers	18	12.5
iii. User Education	20	13.9
iv. Through: Notice boards/ handbill/ Institution's newsletters	6	4.1
v. Roommates/ Friends/ Course mates	80	55.5
Total	144	100%

Source: Field Study, 2017

Table 5 showed that 80 (55.5%) knew of the operation of e-library through their Roommates/ Friends/ Course mates. While 20 (13.9%) claimed that they knew through School orientation, as well as 20 (13.9%) claimed that they knew through User Education. 18 (12.5%) knew through their lecturers, while 6 (4.1%) got to know through Notice boards/ handbill/ Institution's newsletters.

Table 6: Kinds of services provided

S/N	Services	Frequency	%
i.	Internet Services	75	52%
ii.	Free access databases	20	13.9%
iii.	Online databases	15	10.4
iv.	e-books	30	20.8
v.	e-Journal	4	2.7
	Total	144	100%

Source: Field Study, 2017

Table 6 above, pointed out that 75 (52%) of the respondents consult the internet services provided by the e-library of Uniosun. The e-books have 30 (20.8%) while free access databases have frequency of 20 (13.9%) and 15 (10.4%) respondents consult online databases. While e-journals have frequency of only 4 (2.7%), this has actually shown that Osun State University has subscribed sites.

Table 7: Frequency of use

S/N	Items	Frequency	%
i.	Frequently	50	34.7
ii.	Occasionally	41	28.4
iii.	Daily	30	20.9
iv.	Never	23	15.9
	Total	144	100%

Source: Field Study, 2017

Table 7 reveal that 50 (34.7%) of the respondents use the e-library on frequent bases. Occasionally use was 41 (28.4%) while daily use was 30 (20.9%) and never was 23 (15.9%). The implication of the above table revealed that the unit is used frequently showing its significant to learning, teaching and research.

Table 8: Distribution of Purpose of use

S/N	Purpose for the use of electronic library in UNIOSUN	Frequency	%
i.	To read foreign newspapers as well as to listen to foreign news	5	3.4
ii.	To source for current resources for assignments/ Continuous Assessment/Examination	40	27.7
iii.	To read mails	40	27.7
iv.	To prepare notes for course work	10	7
v.	To browse the net for increase of knowledge in an area of study	10	7
vi.	To search for materials for research project work / purposes	25	17.3
vii.	For Seminars and/or term papers presentation	14	9.7
	Total	144	100%

Source: Field Study, 2017

Table 8 presents the distribution which revealed that 40 (27.7%) of the respondents use the e-library to source for current resources for assignments/ Continuous Assessment/Examination and to read mails. While 25 (17.3%) used the e-library to search for materials for research project work / purposes and 14 (9.7%) used it for Seminars and/or term papers presentation. Similarly, 10 (7%) claimed to use the e-library to prepare notes for course work and to browse the net for increase of knowledge in an area of study. 5 (3.4%) use the e-library to read foreign newspapers as well as to listen to foreign news.

Table 9: Level of Use by each of the departments

S/N	Departments	Responses	%
i.	Public Health	42	29.1
ii.	Physiology	41	28.4
iii.	Anatomy	38	26.3
iv.	Nursing	23	15.7
	Total	144	100%

Source: Field Study, 2017

Table 9 above revealed the extent to which the e-library of Osun State University, Osogbo is being used by the undergraduates in each of the departments of the faculty of Health Sciences. The study revealed that in the Public Health Department topped the list on the level of usage with 42 (29.1%) responses, while Physiology Department followed with 41 (28.4%). The Department of Anatomy had 38 (26.3%) responses and Nursing Department also had 23 (15.7%) responses and attendances within the period of the study. All the aforementioned departments use the services for academic purposes.

Table 10: Opportunities presented by the Electronic Library, Osun State University, Osogbo of the Undergraduates in the faculty.

S/N	Opportunities presented	Frequency	%
i.	Has reduced delay and bridged the gap between the state university and other academic institutions	10	7
ii.	Adds quality to teaching, learning and research work by downloading current materials from the net.	20	13.8

iii.	Encouraging digital culture in the young institution, the use of laptops among staff and students	50	34.7
iv.	Position the state university into benefiting from the global village	40	27.8
v.	Making free access to websites available to the community	24	16.7
	Total	144	100

Source: Field Study, 2017

Table 10 above shows that 50 (34.7%) of the studied group agrees that the e-library Encourages digital culture in the young institution, the use of laptops among staff and students. While 40 (27.8%) of the studied group agrees that it is imperative to position the state university into benefiting from the global village no matter where It is located. Moreso, 24 (16.7%) of the respondents indicated that it is advantageous by making free access to websites available to the community. In addition, 20 (13.8%) agrees that it Adds quality to teaching, learning and research work by downloading current materials from the net. While 10 (7%) of the respondents indicated that e-library has reduced delay and bridged the gap between the state university and other academic institutions of learn.

## CONCLUSION

From the findings of this study, it could be concluded that the use of Electronic library and Information Communication Technology tool is of necessity and imperative for institutions of higher learning/organisation in the present day information and knowledge driven society. The new and emerging technology changed the traditional process of learning, teaching, research and the way education is managed, having the capacity of bringing different locations, towns, countries and nations etc into centre stage and building up the economic and social growth. The pace of change brought by these new technologies has had a significant effect on the way people live, play, and work in the world which is a deserving exercise in any institution/organisation. An electronic library is a key or passport to global information network. Similarly, it is predominant to the provision of access to information of all kinds.

## RECOMMENDATION

In order to find solution to the observed aberration and enhance effective utilisation of the project in Osun State University, Osogbo, Nigeria, the following recommendations are made:

- i. That there is palliating need to train and re-train middle level manpower for effective use of electronic resources in UNIOSUN.
- ii. To provide a standard generating plant to power the e-library unit and the entire library as a whole.
- iii. There is need to adequately upgrade the electronic library bandwidth.

- iv. To provide standard and up to date Satellite Cable and V-Sat to the e-library unit. It has being suggested that the unit should not share network with any far host since they are using radio.
- v. It is of necessity and need for the e-library unit of the library to subscribe to a number of licensed online databases in support of academic development in UNIOSUN, Nigeria.
- vi. Using the e-library Unit for General Studies Examination is on call for and it should be totally discouraged.
- vii. There should be adequate financial supports from the university management besides full implementation of policies of national virtual library project by the National Universities Commission (NUC).

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