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## Students' Perception and Use of Digital Resources in University of Africa, Bayelsa State, Nigeria

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### Abstract

The study investigated students' perceptions and the use of digital resources at the University of Africa Bayelsa State. The study was guided by three research questions and two hypotheses. The researchers employed a descriptive survey design. The study comprised 1420 undergraduate students out of which 409 were randomly selected. The study's sample size was determined using the Taro Yamane sample size formula. The questionnaire was used for data collection. The questionnaire was validated by educational technology experts. The data gathered from the study were analyzed to check for internal consistency of reliability and the Cronbach alpha value of 0.86 was obtained. Based on the coefficient obtained, the questionnaire was considered reliable. Data were analyzed using frequency count, and simple percentages, and Statistical Product and Service Solutions (SPSS) version 23 was used to generate the mean while the test of the hypotheses was done using Pearson's product-moment correlation coefficient and independent t-test at 0.05 significant levels. The findings revealed that the students had positive perceptions and a high level of usage of digital resources. The study also established that inadequate information retrieval skills, poor Internet connectivity, and lack of time to search for suitable resources were some of the challenges in the use of digital resources. Lastly, the test of the hypotheses showed, that there is a significant relationship between students' perceptions and the use of digital resources in this study. Hence, the students' positive perceptions influenced their level of digital resources usage. Based on the findings of the study, recommendations were made.

### Keywords

Students Perception, Digital Resources, University Library, Toru-Oroua

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## Introduction

The main goal of any university library is to collect relevant information resources in support of teaching, learning, and research. These materials are necessary for providing library services as well as meeting users' information demands. Before this time, library resources were primarily made up of printed materials, but the 21<sup>st</sup> century has seen a rapid expansion of digital resources, with new ones being available at regular intervals. With the introduction of the Internet, digital resources have progressively gained prominence and have become a significant element of library collections around the world (Hoq & Haque, 2018). Digital resources are becoming more popular in academic libraries due to their dynamic nature, interoperability, and flexibility as compared to print resources (Frimpong & Addo, 2020). Digital resources are materials that can be accessed via Internet-connected devices (Ambrose et al., 2021). They are available in a digital form. Examples include websites, databases, e-books, e-reports, online course content, and educational films. Digital resources have been acknowledged as one of the most important sources of information for students (Ternenge & Kashimana, 2019) because it provides them with timely and appropriate information on various topics. Another benefit of digital resources is that students can access and use the same information material on the Internet (Kumar & Kaur, 2006) from anywhere in the world without having to physically visit the library. Despite their benefits, students particularly those in developing countries, underutilize these vital tools (Kodua-Ntim & Fombad, 2020). The low use could be due to negative perceptions and lack of information literacy abilities, limited computer systems, poor electrical supply, etc. According to Frimpong and Addo (2020), such obstacles have an adverse effect on student's attitudes towards the usage of digital resources. As a result, student perceptions can have a significant impact on digital resources' acceptance and use.

As a result of the increasing need for digital resources, the university spent a significant amount of money on the purchase of e-journals, e-books, and e-databases to improve teaching, learning, and research and to enable remote access. The purchase of digital resources has become increasingly important, as a result of the paradigm shift to online education (Ambrose et al. 2021). The perception of library clients about library resources is of extreme significance on the ground that it decides the level of information resource usage in academic libraries. The positive perceptions and high usage of these resources will be a justification for the huge financial

investment in the procurement of these resources in the university library. The study is significant in the sense that its outcomes will help the library to measure how often digital sources are used to determine the success or satisfaction of the users. It is on this note, therefore, that this study examined the student's perceptions and use of digital resources at the University of Africa, Bayelsa State.

### **Statement of the Problem**

Due to the benefits of digital resources over print resources, it has become a significant strength of many academic libraries across the world. The majority of university libraries have spent a significant amount of money on these online resources to improve teaching, learning, and research at their respective schools. Despite their benefits, students particularly those in developing countries, underutilize these vital tools. Students' negative perceptions of digital resources have been observed in certain research, which may be attributed to the difficulties they encountered when using digital resources. To justify the significant financial investment, students are required to use them for productive study and research to contribute to their academic success. To ensure that these investments are worthwhile, it is necessary to learn about students' perceptions and the challenges they encountered in the use of these resources. It is on this note that this study examined students' perceptions and use of digital resources at the University of Africa, Bayelsa State.

### **Objectives of the Study**

The main objective of this study is to investigate students' perceptions of the use of digital resources at the University of Africa Bayelsa State, Nigeria. The specific objectives are:

- i. To examine student's perceptions of digital resources
- ii. To investigate the level of usage of digital resources by students
- iii. To find out the constraints to the effective use of digital resources by students

### **Research Questions**

The following research questions guided the study:

- i. What are the student's perceptions of digital resources?
- ii. What is the level of usage of digital resources by students?
- iii. What are the constraints to the effective use of digital resources by students?

## Hypotheses

- There is no significant relationship between student's perceptions and the use of digital resources
- There is no significant difference between male and female student's perceptions of the use of digital resources

## Literature Review

Few studies have been conducted on the student's perception and use of digital resources. In this section, a review of some of these studies is presented.

Ahmad et al. (2019) investigated undergraduate students' use and perceptions of digital resources at Government Degree College Baramulla, using a survey method of data collection with a sample size of 350 students from a population of 4741. A stratified random sampling design was used and data was collected using a self-structured questionnaire. Descriptive statistics such as tables of frequency counts and percentages were used. Statistical tests including Chi-Square, ANOVA, and Student's T-Tests were utilized in the study to improve the reliability and validity. The findings demonstrate that students prefer digital resources to printed materials. The study concluded that library management should conduct user orientation and awareness workshops to help students' better grasp and utilize electronic information resources.

Partap & Ranga (2021) investigated students' awareness and use of digital resources at Chandigarh College of Architecture in Chandigarh, India. The questionnaire was used for data collection and out of the 150 questionnaires distributed, 127 were returned fully completed. The findings show that over 90% of respondents were aware of the usage of digital resources and were using them in their academic and research work. More than 95 percent of respondents were satisfied with the use of digital resources in their academic and research work. The study also established that the respondents had issues with downloading speed, looking for e-contents, and a lack of ICT skills. Finally, adequate training programs should be conducted regularly so that students can learn how to successfully search and use digital resources in their academic and research work.

Ambrose et al. (2021) investigated the use of digital resources among undergraduate Library and Information Science (LIS) students at the University of Benin in Benin City amid the COVID-19 pandemic lockdown. A descriptive survey design was used by the researchers with an online

questionnaire. The sample of the study comprised 93 students who completed the online questionnaire. The findings reveal that the students mostly used Internet resources, e-books, and e-journals. The three biggest hurdles to the unsuccessful use of digital resources were unpredictable power supply, slow internet connectivity, and high data subscription costs. The study recommended that the government should provide adequate power supply, establish a strong IT infrastructure, and prevail on network providers to give low-cost data subscriptions so that students can have more access to the internet for successful learning even at home. In addition, Wiche & Ogunbodede (2021) identified insufficient information literacy skills, low electrical availability, and poor Internet access as some of the barriers to successful digital resource usage.

Alabi (2021) investigated undergraduates' use of digital resources in private university libraries in southwest Nigeria. The study was conducted using a survey research design. The population of the study comprised 4,913 undergraduates and a sample size of 370 was drawn using a stratified sampling procedure. A questionnaire was used to gather information. The majority of respondents used digital resources to obtain relevant information to write term papers/assignments, upgrade their expertise, etc. The studies also revealed that undergraduates frequently used e-resources and that poor connectivity and power outages were the most significant barriers to undergraduates' usage of digital resources. The study recommended that universities and library management in the selected institutions should make efforts to expand bandwidth and improve Internet connectivity.

Qudus & Zaynab (2020) investigated undergraduate students' perception of the use of digital sources in Kwara State University Library. The study used a descriptive survey approach with a study population of undergraduate students at Kwara State University. A simple random sampling procedure was employed to choose the 152 respondents that made up the study's sample. A self-designed questionnaire was used for data collection. The data were analyzed using a frequency count and basic percentages. The findings show that students believe that digital resources in Kwara State University library are insufficient. E-journals are the most common sort of electronic source in the KWASU library. The difficulty in locating relevant information materials is one of the most significant problems in using the KWASU library. The study recommended that academic libraries should develop a comprehensive and intensive education and library program that will expose students to the various electronic sources available in the

library, and Internet connectivity should also be improved to allow library users to effectively use electronic sources. Electronic sources should also be made accessible on 24/7 bases.

Anyim (2020) investigated students' perceptions of digital resources, their utility, and enhancement measures for an effective distance learning program. The study used a descriptive survey approach, with a sample size of 379 students chosen from a total population of 7,125 using a convenience sampling technique as the target respondents. The population of the study comprised 320 students, all of whom were analyzed without sampling due to their manageable size. The study used frequency counts and percentages as statistical metrics. The findings show that students are aware of and satisfied with the available digital resources for remote learning. E-resources provide users with up-to-date information, boundless information from many sources, quick and easy access to information, and so on. Provision of an effective Internet/server to enhance the accessibility of electronic information resources, online user guidelines for accessing e-resources, creation of user-friendly interfaces for easy access to online content, and so on can all help to improve the use of electronic information resources. This research can help advance information about e-resources, their utility, and enhancing tactics for effective distant learning.

However, some of the reviewed studies include Ahmad et al. (2019) Partap and Ranga (2021) Ambrose et al. (2021) Alabi (2021) Qudus and Zaynab (2020), Anyim (2020). Some of the reviewed studies are similar to this present study because they all studied undergraduate students' perceptions and use of digital resources. The reviewed studies also used the descriptive survey design and questionnaire methods for data collection. However, the researchers identified some aspects of these studies that were different from this present study. For instance, none of the studies proved statistically if there is any significant relationship between students' perceptions and use of digital resources and if there is any significant difference between male and female students' perceptions of the use of digital resources. Furthermore, the sample size of this study is larger than each of the reviewed studies. This creates gaps this study intends to fill. This study aims to close these gaps by using statistics to demonstrate if there is any correlation between the two variables, that is students' perceptions and use of digital resources.

## **Methodology**

The study employed a descriptive survey design. The population of the study comprised 1420 undergraduate students out of which 409 were randomly selected. The questionnaire was the instrument used for data collection. A total of 450 questionnaires were distributed to the

respondents and 409 were retrieved and found usable. The response to each of the items was weighted on a 4-points 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. From 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 was adjudged as average-level usage, and a mean response above 2.5 was adjudged as 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 accepted.' Data were analyzed with frequency count, 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.**

## 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	212	52
Female	197	48
<b>Total</b>	<b>409</b>	<b>100</b>

Table 1 shows that 212(52%) of the respondents were male while 197(48%) were female. This implies that the majority of the respondents under study were male.

**Table 2: Age Range of the Respondents**

Age Range	Frequency	Percentage (%)
21-30	286	70
31-40	123	30
<b>Total</b>	<b>409</b>	<b>100</b>

Table 2, revealed that 286(70%) of the respondents were within the age bracket of 21-30 years while 123(30%) were within the age bracket of 31-40 years. This implies that the majority of the respondents were within the age bracket of 21-30 years.

### Research Question 1

What are the student's perceptions of digital resources?

**Table 3: Student's Perceptions of Electronic Information Resources**

S/N	Student's Perceptions of Digital Resources	SA	A	D	SD	Mean	Remark
1.	Digital resources provide wider access to information	272	137	-	-	3.7	Agree
2.	Digital resources help in carrying out my academic and research activities	259	150	-	-	3.6	Agree
3.	Digital resources provide access to up-to-date information	257	152		-	3.6	Agree
4.	Digital resources provide quick access to information	151	255	3	-	3.4	Agree
5.	It provides round-the-clock access to information	201	205	3	-	3.4	Agree
6.	It provides users the opportunity to share information with others	196	213	-	-	3.4	Agree
7.	It is very easy to find digital resources in my field	189	212	6	2	3.4	Agree
8.	Digital resources can greatly improve the quality of learning and able to enhance the student's critical thinking skills, information handling skills, and problem-solving capacity	152	251	6	-	3.4	Agree
9.	Students with more experience with technology and e-resources have more motivation and a better perception of technology-based resources	148	256	5	-	3.3	Agree
10.	Digital resources provide free quality materials for learning and research	147	253	9	-	3.3	Agree
11.	It provides access to unlimited information from different sources	142	266	1	-	3.3	Agree
12.	It provides speedy and easy access to information	146	256	7	-	3.3	Agree
13.	Digital resources are cost-effective, convenient, and easy to use	134	264	11	-	3.3	Agree
14.	The quality of digital resources is satisfactory	126	266	14	3	3.3	Agree
15.	Digital resources offer the possibility to efficiently manage my time	156	234	18	1	3.3	Agree
16.	Digital resources enable me to share information with peers and establish a culture of teamwork and promote student collaboration	139	261	9	-	3.3	Agree
17.	I prefer digital resources to print resources	70	235	74	30	2.8	Agree
	<b>Grand Mean</b>					<b>3.4</b>	<b>Agree</b>

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), more so, the grand mean (3.4) is greater than the criterion mean (2.5), and this shows that the students have positive perceptions of digital resources.

## Research Question 2

What is the level of usage of digital resources by students?

**Table 4: Use of Digital Resources**

S/N	Use of Digital Resources	SA	A	D	SD	Mean	Remark
1.	I use digital resources to carry out my research activities	233	176	-	-	3.6	High
2.	I use digital resources in writing my assignments and reports	175	231	3	-	3.4	High
3.	I use digital resources as supplements to classroom lectures	162	241	6	-	3.4	High
4.	I use digital resources to prepare my coursework	164	245	-	-	3.4	High
5.	I use digital resources to learn and share knowledge with my friends and it assists me in my professional growth	143	257	7	2	3.3	High
6.	I use digital resources to update my knowledge	191	198	-	20	3.3	High
7.	I use digital resources as an alternative to print textbooks	66	215	74	54	2.7	High
	<b>Grand Mean</b>					<b>3.3</b>	<b>High</b>

Table 4 revealed 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), as a result, the usage of digital resources is very high. This data shows that the respondents were using digital resources among others for research activities, writing assignments, and reports, as supplements to classroom lectures, and to prepare coursework.

## Research Question 3

What are the challenges to the effective use of electronic information resources by students?

**Table 5: Challenges to the Use of Electronic Information Resources**

S/N	Challenges to the Use of EIR	SA	A	D	SD	Mean	Remark
1.	Inadequate information literacy skills in using EIR	127	147	83	52	2.9	Agree
2.	Poor Internet connectivity	121	154	79	55	2.8	Agree
3.	Lack of time to look for suitable resources	128	105	123	53	2.7	Agree
4.	Poor electricity supply	23	40	189	157	1.8	Disagree
	<b>Grand Mean</b>					<b>2.6</b>	<b>Agree</b>

Table 5 shows the student's responses to the challenges to the use of EIR. All the items in table 5 except for item 4, 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), this shows that items 1-3 are the challenges to the use of EIR. Item 4 is not regarded as a challenge, because the institution has a standby generator that supplies electricity on campus.

**Hypothesis 1:** There is no significant relationship between student’s perceptions and the use of digital resources

**Table 6: Relationship between student’s perceptions and use of digital resources**

Variable	Mean	N	R	p-value	Remark
Perception	58	409	0.976	0.000	Significant
Use of DR	21				

$\alpha = 0.05$

Table 6 shows the relationship between students’ perceptions and the use of digital resources. The table shows a strong correlation coefficient of 0.976 and a p-value of 0.000. Testing the hypothesis at 0.05, the p-value is less than the alpha value of 0.05. This means that the null hypothesis is rejected. Therefore, there is a significant relationship between students’ perceptions and the use of digital resources in this study. Hence, the students’ positive perceptions influenced their level of digital resources usage.

**Hypothesis 2:** There is no significant difference between male and female student’s perceptions of digital resources

**Table 7: Difference between male and female student’s perceptions of digital resources**

Gender	Mean	SD	N	t	df	p-value	Remark
Male	55.73	6.33	212	-0.282	407	0.778	non-Significant
Female	55.91	6.75	197				

$\alpha = 0.05$

Table 7 shows the difference between male and female students’ perceptions of digital resources at the University of Africa Bayelsa State. The table shows a t-value of -0.282 and a p-value of 0.778. Testing the hypothesis at 0.05, the p-value is higher than the alpha value of 0.05. This means that the null hypothesis is accepted. Therefore, there is no significant difference between male and female students’ perceptions of digital resources in this study.

## Discussion of Findings

The study shows that the respondents had positive perceptions of digital resources. The positive perceptions are largely due to its perceived usefulness in the student's academic and research activities because it provides wider and quick access to information, it provides users with more up-to-date information and it provides unlimited information from different sources among others. This finding is in line with the earlier findings of Bakare (2015), who also found that students have positive perceptions about digital resources because of their numerous advantages. On the level of usage of digital resources by students, the study also discovered that the students had a high level of usage. The high level of usage of digital resources is because they use it for research activities, writing of assignments and reports, as supplements to classroom lectures, and preparing coursework among others. This finding is in agreement with that of Frimpong and Addo (2020) who observed that the general use of digital resources by students was quite high. On the challenges to the use of digital resources, the study discovered that inadequate information retrieval skills, poor Internet connectivity, and lack of time to search for suitable resources were some of the major challenges to the effective use of digital resources. This finding is in agreement with the findings of Wiche & Ogunbodede (2021) who also found that inadequate information retrieval skills, poor and Internet connectivity among others were some of the major barriers to the use of digital resources in higher education, especially in developing countries. Finally, the test of the hypotheses revealed that there is a significant relationship between students' perceptions and the use of digital resources in this study. Hence, the students' positive perceptions influenced their level of digital resources usage. There is also no significant difference in male and female students' perceptions of digital resources in this study.

## Conclusion and Recommendations

This study examined students' perceptions and use of digital resources at the University of Africa Bayelsa State. It is obvious in this study that the students had positive perceptions and a high level of usage of e-resources. The positive perceptions and high level of usage are a justification for the increasing need for digital resources in academic libraries and the huge financial resources spent on the acquisition of these resources. The test of the hypotheses revealed that there is a significant relationship between students' perceptions and the use of digital resources in this study. Hence, the students' positive perceptions influenced their level of digital

resources usage. The study also established that there was no significant difference in male and female students' perceptions of digital resources. Based on the findings, the researchers recommended that the institutions or library management should organize training for the students on digital literacy skills, provide stable Internet services and also continue to create awareness of the use of these resources so that students can continue to take full advantage of the digital resources provided by the institution.

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