

ACCESS RATE AND EXTENT OF USE OF E-BOOKS FOR LEARNING AMONG UNDERGRADUATES IN UNIVERSITIES IN EKITI STATE, NIGERIA

Okoh Maureen O.¹, Okorie Nnaemeka C.²

¹Federal university Oye Ekiti, Ekiti State
Department of Educational Foundations
Maureen.okoh@fuoye.edu.ng

&

Dr. Bolaji Hameed O.³

Al-hikmah University, Ilorin kwara state
Department of Science Education

Abstract

The study assessed the access rate and extent of use of e-books in Universities in Ekiti State. A survey research was used for the study with a population size of 150 undergraduates selected from state and public Universities from Ekiti State, Nigeria. The sample were selected using a simple random sampling method. An instrument, a self-designed questionnaire titled “Electronic Book Access Questionnaire” (EBAQ) on a Four point Likert scale of Strongly Agree (SA), Agree (A), Disagree (D), and Strongly Disagree (SD) was used for the data collection for the research. The instrument was validated for face and content validity by experts in Test Measurement and Evaluation and Educational Technology. The reliability of the instrument was 0.76 using Cronbach alpha to calculate the coefficient alpha for the instrument. The data was analysed using descriptive statistics as mean, percentages, and standard deviation. Findings revealed that the access rate, use and extent of use of e-books for learning by undergraduates in Ekiti State Universities is low. The researcher recommends that institutions of learning should create greater awareness and promote the use of relevant e-books for teaching course content. Printed books should be supplemented with e-books, and the integration of e-books into instructional practices should be prioritized. This approach is essential, considering the findings of this study, which revealed a low extent of e-book usage among students

Key words: Access rate, use of e-books, learning, undergraduate.

Introduction

The transformations observed since the advent of technological tools into the teaching and learning process has influenced how we read and the format in which reading and learning materials would be presented, which is no longer personalized to the traditional paper print and physical bulky concept of handling books in this era. The methods of access to books and the usage of these books differ from what is commonly known prior to the introduction of electronic books (e-books). Preliminary observation of the researcher has shown that many of the undergraduates hardly understand the opportunity of e-books in assisting them in useful information for studies, another concern is the lack of access on how this electronic books could be gotten by the students. Lim, Liu and Choo (2020) reported lack of awareness as the key thwarting factor to the use of e-books. Therefore it is expedient to know if this is a contributing factor to undergraduate students in Nigeria in having access to e-books or extent in which e-books are used in their learning.

Today's learner are digital natives that have experienced the influence of technologies since they were born due to the various digitalization on the global stage (Potnis, Deosthali, Zhu & McCusker 2018). This category of people are referred to as the millennials (Aharony, 2014). They are students born into the age of internet connectivity, use of social media, cloud

computing, big data and even the advance technology as artificial intelligence, therefore it would be out of place to ignore the realities that the teaching learning processes has surpasses just the traditional method where the need to augment with innovation is lacking. With the position of things in the country in terms of costing and the possible merits that e-books could help in reducing the high price of purchasing textbooks by students, Alsalmi et al. (2020) added that the cost of textbooks is becoming a growing concern in the world's tertiary education and school learning setting, it is pertinent for the students to be better aware of use of the electronic contents.

An e-book can be defined as an electronic version of a book that enables the storage and retrieval of information using technological devices such as mobile phones, laptops, and desktop computers. Liaw and Huang (2014) regarded e-book as a book that can be delivered in a digital format with technology devices such as the smartphones, computer, laptop, and electronic readers. E-book according to Nelson (2008) indicated that the meaning does not have a distinguishing definition, this assertion was corroborated by Gonzalez, Gasco and Llopis (2014) that the definition differ from one researcher to another. Arshad, Ameen and Rafique, A. (2023) emphasize the concept of e-book is defined to comprise the digital or electronic nature of a book, likeness to a printed book and reference on the e-book technologies. According to Kumbhar, R. (2018) posited that there were prospects that e-books can become an auspicious resource for education. This position can be infer as support for the implementation of e-books usage in the learning and teaching, The usage of e-books for learning in some environment could be in its advance stages, whereas some can be in the infant stages in other nations due to their acceptance or technological savvy available. Contrary to this assertion Ujakpa, Heukelman, Kleinveltdt, Nyalugwe and Kiana (2019) assert that the e-books use and acceptance is still in its beginning state. Therefore, the findings over time appears to diverge from one course, location and study to another and might not be generalized on the level of use of e-books.

The studies on the usage of e-books has earlier revealed that in Africa, the adoption of e-books practice was limited (Adubika, 2011; Egberongbe, 2011), or not in use in nations investigated (Asunka, 2013). However contrary to the study of Asunka (2013), Nwagwu and Okafor (2014) discovered that over 27% of the students of arts and technology were in the habit of using e-books daily in University of Ibadan, Nigeria. That is to show that in Nigeria about a decade ago, students had adopted technological development into the way they learn. Technological developments have added to the civilization of this digital period, where diverse methods or techniques has been inculcated into the way higher institutions go about their teaching and learning experience for educational purposes. Some of the modifications are the use of hybrid learning, use of social media network and blended learning to supplement the traditional learning methods. However, this changes likewise came with ideas that the printed books should be complimented with facilities as electronic resources for the digital natives. According to Salau (2015) the Nigeria educational sector has prioritize resource collection of academic libraries for universities and the addition of e-books to supplement the traditional printed books were considered as pertinent in reviewing the standard of the universities requirement for approval. According to Aronsen, Johansen and Rein (2016) study on the adoption and usage of e-books revealed significant result in the utilization and adoption of the digital book format. Whereas, Letchumanana and Tarmizib (2010) study investigated use of e-book among mathematics students in the university, and exposed that it could be utilized.

Different scholars has researched on the usage of e-book in schools around the world, however it does not mean the e-books claimed to be available are used for learning in the institutions. This assertion is because there are studies that identify that some of the e-books in the University are not relevant to the studies of the students and therefore does not attract any meaningful need in meeting the objectives of the students. Subair and Oriogu (2016) assert that the use of e-books is a concern that needs to be evaluated in Nigerian universities.

There are advantages that students can possibly derived in being able to access or use e-books for their learning. Melcher (2015) confirms that e-book will be of tangible benefit to students in this period of university education with open access university instead of the conventional form of university where the face to face approach of teaching learning process is prevalent. The advent of e-books can serve as an antidote to scarcity of tertiary textbooks in Nigeria, which is important due to the shortfall in printed books in many of the higher institutions of learning. Madu (2019) emphasize that the nature of e-book is an advantage due to the ease to transfer to technological devices as the smartphones, computer, laptop, and electronic readers. This does not only entails the e-books, but also involves the other e-learning materials created by individuals or institutions for educational practices as learning websites, mobile apps, online courses, virtual labs, among others.

The potential value of a material as e-books to students should not be underestimated, according to Amanda, Rockinson-Szapkiw and Lunde (2013) that identified that students select the usage of e-books above the conventional book because it possess inherent prospect for learning skills that creates an enabling environment for the students to learn independently. This is essential in building more knowledge for the learners for self-reliance in their studies. Complexities of authors publishing printed books and the cost involved in achieving this feat has little effect on the production of mass electronic content, therefore the e-learning materials could be produced and distributed faster and at a more reasonable cost when compared to the production of printed books. Tella, Amuda and Simplice (2019) identify presently the electronic information is beginning to contend relatively well with information in traditional printed form, this appears to be due to the increasing attitude of the teachers and the learners to the use of technologies daily in their social life with also their search for knowledge

Statement of the Problem

The lack of awareness to the availability and importance of e-books by undergraduates in tertiary institutions is a problem because observation has shown that many cannot afford the cost of printed book formats and are seen to struggle when they do not have access to books pertinent to their courses of study in the schools. Whereas, there are diverse means by which students could access e-books that can help the students in competing favorable with those that possess textbooks, many do not know where to access these materials. The knowledge of these resolutions can possibly be the reason why many are affected in their academic performance.

In addition the innovation adopted by some institutions to improve on their E-resources in their libraries without students having the insight of such facilities to be in existence through their course of studies, makes such investment to become unworkable for the betterment of the goals of the institution. Presently, the libraries in Nigeria higher institutions are conversant with stocking the academic libraries with digital content, however while the content is more of electronic journals, the disposition towards having e-books differ from other facilities install into their directories. This seem to be a common place matter in many of the universities and could be a reason why students resort to use of printed books because majority would rather focus on the course work before thinking of paper writing or project.

However, the inability of the students to access printed books have been identify by scholars, because of the limited funding that institutions receive from the government and owners in the management of the schools. Observation in Nigerian institutions has revealed that the advantages in the use of e-books are hardly explored by the students due to lack of access, no guidance on the contents and attachment to the traditional book concepts for learning. Other challenges are the issue of unstable internet connectivity, poor electricity supply and lack of subscription from internet providers in accessing the e-book. In view of all the challenges mentioned, this research will focus on finding out the undergraduates' access rate and use of e-books. This would create an avenue to understand the existing shortcomings if any and likely

ways that the access and use of e-books can be used for the enhancement of the teaching learning process by Universities in Nigeria.

Purpose of the Study

The principal aim of this study is to examine the access of students to the e-book in Universities and what those electronic contents are used for by the students. However, the study will investigate the following:

1. Determine the access rate of undergraduates to e-books in Universities in Ekiti State.
2. Examine the use of e-books for learning among undergraduates in universities in Ekiti State.
3. Find out the extent of use of e-books for learning among undergraduates in universities in Ekiti State.

Research Questions

The research questions raised for this study include the following:

1. What is the rate of access to e-books among undergraduates in Universities in Ekiti State?
2. Do undergraduates in Universities in Ekiti State use e-books for learning?
3. What is the extent of use of e-books accessible to the students?

Methodology

The descriptive survey design type was used for this study by using structured questionnaire for the collection of the needed data on student's access and the use of e-book in Universities in Ekiti State by undergraduates. The target population are the Universities in both the state and public institutions in Ekiti State, Nigeria. A simple random sampling method was used to select respondents from Federal University at Oye, Ekiti State University, Ado-Ekiti, and Bamidele Olumilua University of Education, Science and Technology, Ikere-Ekiti. One research instrument was used for collection of data. The research instrument titled "Electronic Book Access Questionnaire" (EBAQ) has four point Likert scales of Strongly Agree (SA), Agree (A), Disagree (D), and Strongly Disagree (SD). The Instrument was developed with the assistance of experts in Educational Technology and Library and information science. The instrument was validated by experts to check for grammatical errors, arrangement, typing and relation of the content to the area of study. Responses from the questionnaire were analyzed using descriptive statistics as standard deviation, mean and percentages.

Results

Research Question 1

What is the rate of access to e-books among undergraduates in Universities in Ekiti State?

Calculation for the analysis to the question elicit mean scores outcome of undergraduates in Ekiti State access rate to e-books for learning.

Table 1: Undergraduates in Ekiti State Universities Mean Scores and Standard Deviation Result for rate of access to e-books

S/N	ITEM	Agree		Disagree		Mean	SD	Decision
		<i>f</i>	%	<i>f</i>	%			
1	The access rate of e-books for learning is encouraging in the University	47	31.33	103	68.67	2.28	0.85	Reject
2	The access level to e-books for undergraduates learning is however limited	54	36	96	64	2.90	0.72	Accept
3	I have other access to sites that e-books can be used for learning in the University	46	30.67	104	69.33	2.30	0.82	Reject
4	I have challenge of network to access e-books	61	40.67	89	59.33	2.35	0.85	Reject
5	I cannot access e-book because of subscription	68	45.33	82	54.67	2.43	0.87	Reject
6	I have challenge of electricity to access e-books	<u>47</u>	31.33	<u>103</u>	68.67	<u>2.19</u>	0.90	Reject
7	I do not have device to access e-books in the University	86	57.33	64	42.67	2.66	0.91	Accept

Mean cut off: 2.5

Table 1 above showed students' access rate to e-books in the universities. Using the criterion mean score of 2.50 as cut-off to determine the affirmative of each statement in the instrument used for the research. From item one on the questionnaire, the respondents indicated that the access rate of e-books for learning is encouraging in the University ($\bar{x} = 2.28$). From item two, the access level to e-books for undergraduates learning is however limited ($\bar{x} = 2.90$), the respondents elicited on item three they do not have other access to sites that e-books can be used for learning in the University ($\bar{x} = 2.30$). Decision made on items four, five and six was also rejected because of the mean cut off were lesser than 2.5. All the results are written respectively, I have challenge of network to access e-books ($\bar{x} = 2.35$) on the instrument item four revealed the decision was rejected. I cannot access e-book because of subscription ($\bar{x} = 2.43$), I have challenge of electricity to access e-books ($\bar{x} = 2.19$). However, item seven showed a mean outcome that is greater than 2.5 and thus the decision on the item was accepted. I do not have device to access e-books in the University ($\bar{x} = 2.66$). It exposed that the undergraduates' lacks claimed they lack the device that can be used in accessing E-books. Looking at the results and the analysis derived, it can be concluded that the access rate of e-books for learning by the undergraduates in the universities was low.

Research Question 2

Do undergraduates in Universities in Ekiti State use e-books for learning?

Calculation for the analysis to the question reveal mean scores outcome of undergraduates in Ekiti State use of e-books for learning.

Table 2: Undergraduates in Ekiti State Universities Mean Scores and Standard Deviation Result for use of e-books for learning.

S/N	ITEM	Agree <i>f</i>	%	Disagree <i>F</i>	%	Mean	SD	Decision
1.	Undergraduates use e-books as reference sources in course work for learning	26	17.33	124	82.67	2.06	0.73	Reject
2.	I am skilful in the use of e-book for my studies	40	26.67	110	73.33	2.27	0.87	Reject
3.	I prefer to use an e-book than the common printed book format	64	42.67	86	57.33	2.41	0.88	Reject
4.	I use e-books from my University's website	79	52.67	71	47.33	2.66	0.89	Accept
5.	I use e-books for project/research	49	32.67	101	67.33	2.34	0.89	Reject
6.	I use e-books for class work	70	46.67	80	53.33	2.47	0.90	Reject

Mean cut off: 2.5

Table 2 showed students' approach towards learning with e-books. Using the criterion mean score of 2.50 as cut-off to define the affirmative of each statement considered, the respondents indicated that Undergraduates use e-books as reference sources in course work for learning ($\bar{x} = 2.06$), I am skillful in the use of e-book for my studies ($\bar{x} = 2.27$), I prefer to use an e-book than the common printed book format ($\bar{x} = 2.41$), I use e-books from my University's website ($\bar{x} = 2.66$), I use e-books for project/research ($\bar{x} = 2.34$), I use e-books for class work ($\bar{x} = 2.47$). Except for item four on the table 2, all other items showed a decision that denotes reject because of their mean cut off was lower than the 2.5 benchmark set for the determining decision making. However the respondents identified that e-books are used from University's website on item four from the table and showed an acceptance decision that describes the use of the electronic resource was majorly from the University's website. The result from the table in answering the use of e-books for learning revealed that use of e-book by the undergraduate students in Ekiti State Universities is low. Barely is e-books use by the undergraduates for class work, reference sources, project or research and the issue on lack of skill for usage is another cogent concern that was discovered in the analysis.

Research Question 3

What is the extent of use of e-books accessible to the students?

Calculation for the analysis to the question produce mean scores outcome of undergraduates extent of use of e-books accessible to them in the Ekiti State universities.

Table 3: Undergraduates in Ekiti State Universities Mean Scores and Standard Deviation Result for extent of use of e-books for learning.

S/N	ITEM	Agree <i>f</i>	%	Disagree <i>F</i>	%	Mean	SD	Decision
1.	Consistent e-book usage is convenient for me when learning	59	39.33	91	60.67	2.30	0.86	Reject
2.	I regularly read transferred e-books for learning from the library	59	39.33	91	60.67	2.29	0.98	Reject
3.	I regularly learn with e-books throughout the day	89	59.33	61	40.67	2.65	0.83	Accept

4. I transfer e- books to phone or laptop for future use often	37	24.67	113	75.33	2.15	0.84	Reject
5. E-books available in the university are not used in association to the course work	78	52	72	48	2.50	0.89	Accept
6. I rarely use e-books for my academics	62	41.33	88	58.67	2.39	0.88	Reject
7. I search e-books from online platforms that are not related to my school library	43	28.67	107	71.33	2.23	0.91	Reject

Mean cut off: 2.5

Table 3 showed students' extent of use of e-books for learning. Using the criterion mean score of 2.50 as cut-off to determine the affirmative of each statement, the respondents indicated that Consistent e-book usage is convenient for me when learning ($\bar{x} = 2.30$), I regularly read transferred e-books for learning from the library ($\bar{x} = 2.29$), I regularly learn with e-books throughout the day ($\bar{x} = 2.65$), I transfer e- books to phone or laptop for future use often ($\bar{x} = 2.15$), E-books available in the university are not used in association to the course work ($\bar{x} = 2.50$), I rarely use e-books for my academics ($\bar{x} = 2.39$), I search e-books from online platforms that are not related to my school library ($\bar{x} = 2.23$). The result revealed that the extent of use of e-books for learning is low in Ekiti State Universities, possibly because the E-books available in the university are not used in association to the course work as indicated in the result analyzed, although the results also showed that those using the electronic resource claimed to be using e-books on a regular bases for their studies. In view of analysis obtained, the extent of use of e-books whereas can be inferred to as low generally among the undergraduates in the Universities research, but students using it could be stated to use on a daily occurrences.

Discussion

Previous studies on e-books access and usage had been carried out, however in Ekiti State Universities the access rate and extent of use of e-books is a study that adds to the existing literature on e-books adaptation and adaptation in tertiary level of education. Whereas the research investigated access rate, it shows the undergraduates in the University can access e-books on their institution's website, but yet the access rate was however low among the students. The mean scores and standard deviation gotten was below the benchmark of 2.5 which gave a negative decision to agree with the items raise in the questionnaire. Result establish that the access rate of the students was poor. It was however shown from the responses of the respondents that the access level to e-books for undergraduates learning is however limited and the lack of relevant tools was positive. The research done by scholar as Arshad et al. (2023) elicit that undergraduates' attitude in Universities on usage of e-books is increasing. While the previous study emphasized that the female were less active, this study did not focus on which gender is low in performance because it was a general outcome for the undergraduates as low. Although with a different geographical location, Alsalhi et al. (2020) agreed with Arshad et al. (2023) on the characteristic of gender. This research revealed the extent of low and the study of Tella et al. (2019) elicited that the students were satisfied with usage of e-books. Additionally, undergraduates were observed to show such approval from the low population that claimed to use it for their learning. Moreover, Oriogu et al. (2018) study revealed that the students were not aware of how to use e-books for learning. The study showed the respondents used the accessed e-books for course assignment, project, seminar and term papers which this study contradicts that it is hardly used for these purposes and though the present study elicit low extent of usage, it is an improvement of the Oriogu et al. (2018) that claimed the students lacked awareness on how to use e-books.

The use of e-books in the Universities was low for instruction and learning in the tertiary institutions, therefore it exposed that printed book format exceeds the use of electronic format of books for teaching. Though previous studies were based on awareness, use and gender, the efficacy of research has shown that the extent of use can be termed to still be at an embryonic facet in the Universities. Similarly findings from this study approves with the point that because of the daily usage of the e-books by the low undergraduates, the perception of the students appears to be positive. Therefore, lecturers should consider that learning for the digital natives in the Universities should explore e-books for their course work by integrating the inherent benefits that such practice can provide in the present day educational applications.

In this 21st century of learners' mainly digital natives and the growth of self-paced or individualized learning around the world, it will be absurd for students to depend merely on the printed book format that are expensive and in some cases inadequate for the reach of all students.

Conclusion

The study revealed that access rate of e-books for learning by the undergraduates was poor and the extent of use of e-books by the undergraduates were also low from the results of the research in Universities in Ekiti State. It also exposed that the extent in which the undergraduate use e-books for their learning was poor. That is an indication that in the sampled Universities used for the study in Ekiti State, Nigeria, undergraduates are barely using e-books for their course work and learning. Possible, consequence can be because the lecturers are mainly tailoring their course work and teaching activities to the conventional method of teaching as identified in the review of the responds from the undergraduates.

Recommendations

Based on the findings of the study, the following recommendations are proposed to enhance the access rate and utilization of e-books for learning among undergraduate students:

1. The findings revealed that use of e-book is low. Therefore, institutions of learning should create better awareness and utilize the relevant e-books for their course content teaching in schools.
2. Using of the printed books should be supplemented by the use of e-books. It will assist in many the needed materials available for studies.
3. The use of e-books should be implemented in teaching because it can improve the extent of use of e-books that was shown in this study to be low. The motive is for the digital natives to have resources that they can easily carry around and learn at their own pace.

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