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**AN INVESTIGATION INTO STUDENTS' PREFERENCE BETWEEN PRINTS AND  
ELECTRONIC RESOURCES IN TWO PRIVATE UNIVERSITY LIBRARIES IN  
NIGERIA**

**BY**

**IDIEGBEYAN-OSE, JEROME; ILO, PROMISE; MICHAEL-ONUOHA, HAPPINESS  
AND IDAHOSA, MARY**

**ABSTRACT**

The study investigated students' preference between prints and electronic resources in academic libraries. Survey method was used for the study and questionnaires were administered to the students in the two universities under study. A total of two thousand, three hundred and seventy five copies (2,375) copies of questionnaires were administered and one thousand, eight hundred and sixty one copies (1,861) were returned and used for the study. This represents 78.4% response rate. The findings reveal that apart from the fact that students use the library frequently, they utilize both print and electronic resources for their research. It was also discovered from the students' responses that electronic resources will not replace prints in libraries but they will continue to complement each other. The study therefore recommends that libraries should as a matter of fact acquire and subscribe to both prints and electronic resources to serve the diverse interest of various library users.

**KEYWORDS: Prints resources, electronic resources, Covenant University students,  
Benson Idahosa University students.**

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## **Introduction:**

Libraries exist for the provision of information resources. Hitherto, they provided print resources to various groups of clientele. With the advent of technology, libraries presently subscribe to electronic databases which are integrated into their existing print collections. Bauer (2001) explained that academic libraries today face a state of change in the composition of their collections and patron usage of those collections. According to the above author, new electronic resources and patrons' desire to use those resources remotely increase every year. In conjunction with this trend, Michelle, (2005) posited that the arrival and proliferation of electronic resources and digital libraries have already influenced and changed the way students and scholars use print resources and traditional libraries. It has also sparked a new wave of literature on the perceptions and preferences of print and electronic resources.

Students have different perceptions and preferences in their choices of print and electronic resources.

Print resources are resources in written formats which can be felt physically. These include encyclopedias, journals, books, etc. on the other hand, electronic resources are based on systems in which information is stored electronically and made accessible through electronic devices and computers through different networks like local area network (LAN), Wide Area Network (WAN) and Metropolitan Area Network (MAN) etc. These resources include e-journals, e-books, internet resources and other online databases accessible through internet (Zahid, et al. 2014). Prior to the advent of ICT in libraries, researchers based their studies on prints as those were the only available source of information. This means that any challenge in the course of using the print will have to be accommodated. Today, researchers have more platforms to carry out robust research because of the availability of both print and electronic resources in the libraries.

In order to provide a better platform for the learning and research, Covenant University subscribes to several databases which include Ebsco Host, Jstor, Agora, NUC Virtual Library, Hinari, Oare, MIT Open Courseware, Science Direct, SAGE, Ebrary, Scopus, Web of Science, Research Africa Funding Opportunities. In the same way, Benson Idahosa University Library

subscribes to the under listed data bases: EBSCO Host, Lexisnexis, Compulaw, Legapedia, Agora, Hinari, and Oare.

### **Literature review**

Students' preference of print and electronic resources has been the focus of some studies for some years now. Most of these studies were conducted in the academic environment, with particular interest in students to find out their attitude towards prints and electronic resources in academic libraries so as to meet their satisfaction. Idiegbeyan-ose and Esse (2013) stressed that satisfaction of library users is a critical and important issues in any academic library.

Dilevko and Gottlieb (2002) conducted a web-based survey of undergraduate library users at the University of Toronto. They found that while undergraduate students typically begin assignments and essays using electronic resources they often end up with traditional print resources. They further stressed that prints remain crucial components in their research because of their reliability and permanent accessibility. Liew, and Chennupati (2000) carried out a similar survey of 83 graduate students to study their use and perceptions of electronic journals. They found out that a vast majority of graduate students use both prints and electronic resources. Friedlander (2002) also discovered that faculty and graduate students seem to expect a hybrid environment of print and electronic resources. Dillon and Hahn (2002) discovered that 70% of the faculty at the University of Maryland wants core journals in both print and electronic formats. Schaffner (2001) observed that on several occasions, students have requested assistance in changing the focus of their research to a topic that could be searched using different sources.

The core purpose of an academic library is to serve the needs of present and future clientele. It follows that the library must have an enduring collection of resources that are accessible and meaningful to both current and future scholars (Michelle, 2005, Idiegbeyan-ose and Osazuwa, 2014). For this purpose, physical formats will remain in collections for many years to come. As the world has seen with radio after television's debut, the creation of a new medium does not necessarily invalidate the former ones. He further explained that print is a time-tested format that continues to fulfill promises that technology cannot yet deliver.

Bauer (2001) observed that when electronic resources are added to a collection, measuring usage becomes more complex. Patrons may access networked electronic books and journals without ever having to check them out. An electronic resource may be very popular, but its use will never be reflected in traditional circulation, shelving, or photocopying statistics.

Columbia University (2001) pointed out that, the greatest strength of the Internet also becomes one of its dominant liabilities. Anyone with a computer and the necessary rights to a Web Server can post or alter data. This greatly increases accessibility and availability of information on a limitless range of topics, but it also means that anyone with such access can edit documents and disseminate false information, actions that cannot necessarily be detected by the user; hence prints materials will definitely remain in libraries.

Noh (2010) observes that globally, the proportion of e-resources in library resources has been growing; so does the proportion of the budget dedicated to acquiring them and the proportion of library usage due to their availability. Liu, (2005) listed some benefits of electronic resources as follows: it makes information available at all times, the ability to work from any location, the information being available all in one place, the diversity of resources provided, and the availability of resources that students would not have access to otherwise. Electronic resources also result in students obtaining diversity of resources, and more up-to-date resources. Electronic resources are more convenient and less intimidating than the library.

Electronic resources also have challenges; it presents the user with vast amounts of information that if care is not taken, the user will be drawn in the pool of information. Columbia University,(2001) also pointed out that electronic resources present the users with too much information, the users have to rely on judgment to decipher what is valid and what is not.

## **STATEMENT OF THE PROBLEM**

Most libraries in the world are currently acquiring print and electronic resources to meet the users' information needs. Twenty first century libraries cannot satisfy the patrons without the integration of print and e-resources in their collections. There is an argument from different points of view as regarding students' preference between prints and e-resources. There is need for academic librarians to know the users' preference of the resources in their collections.

Knowledge of users preference between print and e-resources will equip librarians with information on which type of resources needs to be strengthened during acquisition. This will undoubtedly help ensure users satisfaction in library and information centres. Therefore this research is to investigate students' preference between prints and e-resources in academic libraries.

### **OBJECTIVES OF THE STUDY**

The general objective of this study is to investigate students' preference between prints and electronic resources in academic libraries.

The specific objectives are:

1. To ascertain the frequency of library use by students.
2. To ascertain if the students use both prints and electronic resources in the two libraries under study.
3. To investigate into students preference between print and electronic resources.
4. To ascertain the kinds of resources the students would prefer their libraries to acquire often?

### **RESEARCH QUESTIONS**

1. How often do students use the library?
2. How often do students utilize both print and e-resources for researches?
3. What type of resource do students prefer for their work?
4. What kind of resources would students like their libraries to acquire often?

### **METHODOLOGY**

The population for the study comprises students of two Nigerian Universities. Covenant University and Benson Idahosa University respectively. A total of 25% of the students'

population was selected as sample size for the study. The students' population in Covenant University is about 7,000, while that of Benson Idahosa University is about 2,500. The data obtained for the survey was collected by issuing out questionnaires to the respondents. Close-ended questions were adopted which provides answers that are easy for interpretation and tabulation. A total of 1,750 copies of the questionnaires representing (25%) of the student population were administered to Covenant University students while 625 copies were distributed to students of Benson Idahosa University. 1,448 copies were returned from Covenant University, while 413 respondent from Benson Idahosa University returned their questionnaires. A total of 2,375 questionnaires (25%) of the total population were administered in the two Universities, 1,861 were returned giving a response rate of 78.4%. The returned copies of questionnaires were analyzed using percentage and frequency count.

#### DATA ANALYSIS

**Table 1: Name of Library**

Name of Library	Frequency	Percentage
Centre for Learning Resources Covenant University	1448	77.8%
Benson Idahosa University Library	413	22.2%
Total	1861	100%

Table 1 above reveals that 1448 (77.8%) respondents are from Centre for Learning Resources, Covenant University while 413(22.2%) are from Benson Idahosa University Library. This data is based on 25% sample size from the two universities.



**Table 2: Sex of respondents**

Sex of respondents	Frequency	Percentage
Male	734	39.4%
Female	1127	60.6%
Total	1861	100%

The gender distribution of the respondents showed that 734 (39.4%) of the respondents were males while the remaining 1127(60.6%) were females.

**Table 3: Do you use the Library**

Use of library by students	Frequency	Percentage
Yes	1861	100%
No	-	0%
Total	1861	100%

Table 3 provides information as to whether or not the students use the library. From the table, all the respondents of 1861 (100%) use the library. This response resulted from the fact that questionnaires were distributed right at the point where the students were in the Library.

**Table 4: How often do Students use the Library?**

Frequency of library use by students.	Frequency	Percentage
Very often	1532	82.3%
Sometimes	329	17.7%
Never	-	0%
Total	1861	100%

Table 4 gives information regarding the frequency of library use by students. A total of 1532 (82.3%) respondents use the library often, while 329 (17.7%) respondents use the library sometimes, hence it can be deduce that the respondents make adequate use of the library.

**Table 5: What Type of Resources Do students refer for their Work?**

Type of resources preferred by students for their work	Frequency	Percentage
Prints Resources	893	48.0%
Electronic Resources	968	52.0%
Total	1861	100%

Table 5 reveals that 893 (48.0%) of the respondents prefer print resources for their work, while 968 (52.0%) of the total respondents prefer electronic resources for their work.

#### 6: What type of Resources would you prefer your library to acquire?

Resources students would prefer their library to acquire	Frequency	Percentage
Print resources	111	6.0%
Electronic resources	147	7.9%
Both print and electronic resources	1603	86.1%
Total	1861	100%

Table 6 above shows that 111 (6.0%) of the total respondents would prefer their libraries to acquire only prints resources while 147 (7.9%) of the respondents prefer the acquisition of only electronic resources. The highest number being 1603 (86.1%) of the total respondents would prefer their libraries to acquire both prints and electronic resources.

#### DISCUSSION OF FINDINGS

The findings revealed that students use their libraries very often. This study corroborates with the earlier finding of Idiegbeyan-ose and Esse (2013), in their research which discovered a constant usage of the libraries investigated. Ferdinand, Ruth and Paul (2015) also found out a high rate of patronage of the libraries they investigated. The finding of this research also revealed that the students use both prints and electronic resources. This is in agreement with the study of Adeniran (2013) which discovered that electronic resources are invaluable research tools which complement the print – based resources in a traditional library setting. Also Egberongbe(2011) found out that majority of lecturers and research scholars believe that e-resources will never replace traditional resources, rather they complement each other

The findings finally established that the students appreciate the availability of both prints and

electronic resources in the libraries and would therefore prefer the acquisition of both in their respective libraries. This finding is also in correlation with. Liu (2006) in his study, the researcher discovered that users desire and use hybrid information resources for their teaching learning and research.

## CONCLUSION

Prints and electronic resources are meant to serve various needs of library users. Each format contributes in enriching the university libraries. Academic libraries should therefore ensure the acquisition and subscription of print and electronic resources for the satisfaction of present and future patrons.

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