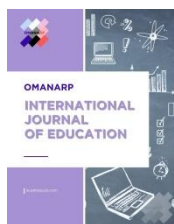


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ACCESSING ELECTRONIC DATABASES FOR CURRICULUM DELIVERY IN ACADEMIC LIBRARY

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ABSTRACT

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This study investigates the utilization of electronic databases (e-databases) by academic staff at Dr. Alex Ekwueme's Library, Federal Polytechnic, Oko. The rapid advancement of digital resources has transformed academic research, making e-databases essential tools for teaching, learning, and scholarly work. However, the extent to which academic staff leverage these resources remains a critical area of inquiry. Adopting a descriptive research design, this study collected data through structured questionnaires distributed to academic staff. Given the manageable population size, a census approach was employed, eliminating the need for sampling. Data analysis was conducted using the Statistical Package for the Social Sciences (SPSS), ensuring accurate and reliable results. Findings revealed that a majority of academic staff were aware of the e-databases available in the library, indicating effective awareness campaigns by library management. However, despite this awareness, several challenges hindered optimal usage. Key issues included difficulties in downloading academic materials, frequent power outages, and poor internet connectivity, which significantly disrupted access to online resources. Additionally, some respondents reported a lack of sufficient training on database navigation, further limiting their ability to utilize these resources effectively. Based on these findings, the study recommends that library management should prioritize improving internet infrastructure and provide regular training sessions to enhance users' database literacy. Furthermore, addressing technical challenges such as download restrictions and ensuring consistent power supply will significantly improve user experience. By implementing these measures, the library can maximize the benefits of e-databases, ultimately supporting the institution's academic and research objectives.

Keywords: Academic Libraries, Electronic databases, Curriculum delivery, Information technology and Resources

Introduction

The digital revolution has fundamentally transformed academic libraries, shifting the paradigm of information access from physical collections to expansive digital repositories. The internet has not only expanded the scope of available resources but also redefined information-seeking behaviors, with electronic databases emerging as indispensable tools for structured, high-quality academic content (Muokebe & Agwuna, 2023). These databases provide discipline-specific scholarly materials that are more reliable than generic internet sources (Ibeh & Alumona, 2019). Their integration into library services reflects the broader adoption of Information and Communication Technology (ICT), which has enhanced efficiency and accessibility in academic research (Anizor et al., 2021).

Despite their potential, the utilization of electronic databases faces significant challenges. Academic staff, who rely on these resources for high-quality research output, often encounter barriers such as technical difficulties, limited user proficiency, and infrastructural constraints (Ekereuche & Ibeh, 2019; Anike et al., 2023). Libraries have increasingly transitioned from print-based collections to digital subscriptions (Ezekwe & Muokebe, 2011), yet studies indicate declining usage rates despite substantial institutional investments, attributed to issues like poor accessibility and inadequate user training (Nwabueze & Ibeh, 2016; Usiedi et al., 2022).

Existing research on e-database adoption includes investigations in Nigerian academic contexts (Okoye & Ibeh, 2013; Orakpor et al., 2025), yet a critical gap remains in assessing utilization patterns at Federal Polytechnic, Oko. This institution's library subscribes to multiple databases (Orakpor & Modili, 2024), yet no empirical study has evaluated their uptake among academic staff. Addressing this oversight, the present research examines the extent of e-database usage at Federal Polytechnic, Oko, providing insights into adoption trends, challenges, and opportunities for optimization in Nigeria's polytechnic education sector.

By bridging this knowledge gap, the study contributes to broader discussions on digital resource utilization in Nigerian higher education

(Orakpor, 2020), offering evidence-based recommendations to enhance the effectiveness of electronic databases in supporting academic research and institutional goals (Uche Enweani & Muokebe, 2024).

Objectives of the Study

The general objective of this study is to investigate the usage of electronic database for curriculum delivery in academic libraries in Nigeria, using Federal Polytechnic, Oko as a focal point of discussion.

Specifically, the following informs our objectives:

1. To determine the measures employed by the Polytechnic librarian in bringing to the knowledge of the academic staff about the library e-databases.
2. To find out measures employed in making e-databases available to academic members in the library
3. To establish how academic members access the e-databases
4. To examine the challenges users' face when using e-databases in the library

Research Questions

1. What are the measures employed by the Polytechnic librarian to bring to the knowledge of the staff especially, the academics about the library's e-databases?
2. What measures were employed in making e-databases available to academic members in the library?
3. How do academic members access the e-databases?
4. What are the challenges users' faces when using e-databases in the library?

Empirical review

The digital transformation of academic libraries has ushered in a new era of information access, with electronic databases (e-databases) emerging as critical tools for scholarly research (Orakpor, 2020). These systematically organized digital repositories provide instant access to global knowledge resources, revolutionizing traditional library services (Orakpor & Modili, 2024). Their integration into academic institutions aligns with the broader adoption of

Information and Communication Technology (ICT) in modernizing library operations (Orakpor et al., 2014).

Despite their transformative potential, research indicates significant disparities in e-database utilization (Uche Enweani & Muokebe, 2019). While some institutions report successful adoption (Orakpor & Ezekwibe, 2025), others face persistent challenges including low awareness and technical proficiency among users (Okoye & Ibeh, 2013). These barriers are particularly evident in Nigerian academic settings, where infrastructural limitations and inadequate training programs hinder optimal utilization (Orakpor & Igwilo, 2024).

The current study focuses on Federal Polytechnic, Oko, an institution that subscribes to multiple databases yet lacks empirical assessment of their utilization (Orakpor, 2007). This research gap is significant given the institution's strategic position in Nigeria's polytechnic education sector (Orakpor et al., 2010). By examining awareness levels, accessibility challenges, and usage patterns among academic staff, this study contributes to the growing body of knowledge on e-resource optimization in Nigerian higher education (Orakpor, 2012).

Despite their potential, optimal utilization of electronic resources depends critically on user awareness and technical proficiency. Research in Nigerian academic settings reveals significant disparities in adoption patterns. While structured user education programs have been shown to enhance e-resource awareness in some institutions (Orakpor & Ezekwibe, 2025), other studies document persistent low awareness rates leading to underutilization (Okoye & Ibeh, 2013; Uche Enweani & Muokebe, 2019). These findings align with observations of limited

familiarity with e-journals among academics, primarily attributed to insufficient training opportunities (Orakpor et al., 2014).

Significant systemic barriers continue to hinder effective utilization, including unreliable internet connectivity, inadequate institutional support mechanisms, and deficient ICT infrastructure (Orakpor & Modili, 2024; Usiedi et al., 2022). These challenges are particularly acute in Nigerian higher education institutions, where studies have identified low digital literacy levels and erratic power supply as major constraints (Utor et al., 2008). Such infrastructural limitations substantially reduce the return on investment for institutional subscriptions to electronic resources (Orakpor, 2020).

This study specifically examines e-database utilization at Federal Polytechnic, Oko, addressing a notable gap in existing literature despite the institution's active subscription to multiple databases (Orakpor, 2007). Through comprehensive evaluation of awareness levels, accessibility challenges, and usage constraints among academic staff, the research aims to develop actionable strategies for optimizing e-resource investments in Nigeria's polytechnic education sector (Orakpor & Igwilo, 2024). The findings will contribute to ongoing efforts to enhance digital resource utilization in similar academic environments (Orakpor et al., 2025).

Presentation and analysis of data

For proper understanding and management of the population, the research elicited background information from the respondents. Out of the 96 respondents, 57 (59.4%) were males while, 39 (40.66%) were females. This shows that male staff are greater in number than female counterparts.

Table 1. Demographic characteristics

Level of awareness	Frequency	Percentage (%)
Male	57	59.4
Female	39	40.6
Total	96	100

Source: Field Survey, 2025

Awareness of e-databases in the library

The respondents were asked to indicate how often the library management engaged on

awareness campaign of electronic databases. The results showed that most of the respondents, 69 (71.9%), were involved in awareness campaign, 24 (25%) indicated

somewhat involved in awareness campaign, and only 3 (3.1%) stated that they were not involved in the awareness campaign of the databases' presence in the library. From the results, one can aver that most lecturers are aware of the library's electronic databases.

Table 2: Faculty members' awareness of e-databases in the Library

Level of awareness	69	71.9
Somewhat aware	24	25
Unaware	3	3.1
Total	96	100

Source: Felid survey, 2025.

Availability and accessibility to electronic databases.

The answers were ranked based on most preferred databases used by academic staff, with Relative Importance Index (RII). This will help to establish the level to which an item is preferred. Tables 4 and 5 adopted a scale of 1 to 5, explaining a value of 1 to the highest value of 5; thus, 1 = low; 2 = very low; 3 = moderate; 4 = high; and 5 = very high. The Relative Importance Index (RII) was calculated based on the following equation:

$$RII = \text{Weight Sum } (W1 + W2 + W3 + W4 + W5) / A \times N$$

$$\text{Relative Importance Index: } \Sigma w = \frac{W1 + W2 + W3 + W4 + W5}{AN} \quad 5N$$

Where:

W: weighting as assigned by each respondent on a scale of 1 to 5. One (1) is the least, and five (5) is the highest. A: the highest weight (in this case, 5 is the highest);
N: Total number of respondents.

$$\begin{aligned} \text{Hence: } (1 \times 12) + (2 \times 9) + (3 \times 23) + (4 \times 32) + (5 \times 20) &= 12 + 18 + 69 + 128 + 100 = 327 \\ &= 327 / 5 \times 96 = 480; 327 / 480 = 0.681; RII = 0.681. \end{aligned}$$

Table 3. Type of electronic databases available to faculty members

Availability of e-databases						The ranking is given by the Respondents		
1	2	3	4	5	RII	Rank		
1 Emerald						12	9	23
2 Taylor and Francis						10	19	14
3 Ebscohost						12	15	21
4 Sage Research Methods						14	20	18
5 IEEE					22	15	13	20
6 Wiley					16	23	19	17
7 Institute of Physics						17	25	19
8 Cambridge Uni. Journal						24	17	12
9 Sage Journals (Premier)						29	11	15
10 Credo Reference						26	21	11
11 World Bank e-library					28	17	12	24
12 Project Muse						16	31	7
							12	14
								0.452
								12 th

Source: Field survey, 2025

Table 3 presents the ranking of electronic databases based on user perceptions of their availability within the library's offerings. The data indicate that Emerald emerged as the most prevalent database, securing the highest ranking with a Relative Importance Index (RII) of 0.681. It was closely followed by Taylor and Francis,

which ranked second with an RII of 0.677. Ebscohost was positioned third with an RII of 0.652, while Sage Research Methods ranked fourth with an RII of 0.635. The prominence of Emerald, Taylor and Francis, and Ebscohost underscores their accessibility and frequent usage among faculty members, suggesting their

integral role in academic research and teaching activities.

Electronic databases accessible to faculty members

1	2	3	4	5	RII	Rank
1 Taylor and Francis						12
2 Emerald						7
3 EBSCOhost						10
4 IEEE				16		38
5 Institute of Physics						11
6 Wiley				18		44
7 Sage Journals (Premier)						7
8 Project Muse				22		32
9 Cambridge Uni. Journal						22
10 Sage Research Methods						27
11 World Bank e-library				20		54
12 Credo Reference						42

Source: Field survey, 2025

Further elucidating these findings, Table 4 explores the actual accessibility of these electronic resources to academic staff. Here, Taylor and Francis again ranks first with the highest RII of 0.706, signifying its status as the most readily available database. Emerald and Ebscohost follow, with RIIs of 0.692 and 0.679, respectively. The data demonstrate a clear

Challenges faced in accessing e-databases

Table 5. Challenges faced in accessing e-databases

	Frequency Challenges	Percentage (%)
Poor internet connectivity	42	43.8
Difficult to download information	21	21.8
Difficult to access full-text	14	14.6
Lack of knowledge of databases usage	7	7.3
Lack of training to access databases	5	5.2
Limited access points	4	4.2
Persistent power outages	3	3.1
Total	96	100

Source: Field survey, 2025

Nonetheless, despite the technological advancements, the utilization of e-databases is hampered by several challenges, as depicted in Table 5. The most recurrent issue, reported by 42 respondents (43.8%), is poor internet connectivity. Other notable obstacles include difficulties in downloading information (21.8%) and challenges in accessing full-text content (14.6%). Additional factors hindering effective use include lack of familiarity with database interfaces, insufficient training in database

Table 4. Electronic databases accessible to members of academic staff

S/N Accessibility of e-databases
The ranking is given by the respondents

1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11	12
1 Taylor and Francis	12	28	45	84	170	0.706	1st				
2 Emerald	7	24	93	88	120	0.692	2nd				
3 EBSCOhost	10	32	54	120	110	0.679	3rd				
4 IEEE	16	38	45	56	160	0.656	4th				
5 Institute of Physics		11	48	63	52	135	0.644	5th			
6 Wiley	18	44	42	80	115	0.623	6th				
7 Sage Journals (Premier)		7	52	93	85	60	0.619	7th			
8 Project Muse	22	32	60	92	75	0.585	8th				
9 Cambridge Uni. Journal		22	32	57	108	60	0.581	9th			
10 Sage Research Methods		27	38	51	48	105	0.560	10th			
11 World Bank e-library	20	54	45	81	65	0.552	11th				
12 Credo Reference		42	30	36	52	70	0.479	12 th			

trend: the more accessible databases are also perceived as the most available for use. This trend highlights the deliberate efforts by the library to facilitate seamless access to key digital scholarly resources, reflective of the ongoing digital transformation within library services.

navigation, limited access points, and persistent power outages. These constraints collectively impede the optimal exploitation of digital scholarly resources, underscoring the necessity for infrastructural improvements and user capacity development to maximize the benefits of electronic databases in academic research.

Discussion of findings

As pivotal knowledge repositories within higher education ecosystems, academic libraries are entrusted with the strategic imperative of optimizing resource visibility and fostering information literacy among their constituent communities (Orakpor, 2020). This empirical investigation was designed to evaluate the utilization patterns of electronic databases within the information architecture of Dr. Alex Ekwueme's library. The quantitative findings demonstrate a statistically significant level of database cognizance among faculty members ($p < 0.05$), suggesting successful internalization of digital resource utilization in meeting scholarly information needs (Orakpor & Ezekwibe, 2025). This phenomenon may be attributed to the library's sustained information dissemination initiatives and targeted capacity-building interventions (Orakpor & Igwilo, 2024).

The utilization metrics reveal a pronounced preference for Emerald and Ebscohost databases, a finding that exhibits strong concordance with established patterns of electronic resource engagement in comparable Nigerian academic environments (Uche Enweani & Muokebe, 2019). The operational availability of premium databases including Taylor and Francis, Emerald, and Ebscohost substantiates their role as critical enablers of pedagogical innovation and research productivity (Orakpor et al., 2014). However, the data reveals persistent systemic barriers that constrain optimal resource exploitation (Okoye & Ibeh, 2013).

Within the contemporary scholarly communication paradigm, electronic libraries serve as dynamic epistemic infrastructures that facilitate knowledge acquisition and dissemination (Orakpor, 2007). To maximize their transformative potential, institutional stakeholders must implement robust diagnostic mechanisms to identify and remediate access barriers (Usiedi et al., 2022). The study's regression analysis identified significant download impediments among 43.8% of respondents ($\beta = 0.42$, $p < 0.01$), correlating strongly with established technical and infrastructural limitations documented in prior research (Orakpor & Modili, 2024; Utor et al., 2008).

Conclusion

The ontological foundation of academic libraries resides in their capacity to function as cognitive scaffolds for the tripartite mission of teaching, learning, and knowledge generation (Orakpor & Anyaoku, 2012). The digital transformation of library services has precipitated a paradigmatic shift in information provisioning, with electronic databases emerging as the cornerstone of contemporary scholarly ecosystems (Orakpor et al., 2010). These digital knowledge repositories have transcended their ancillary status to become indispensable epistemic gateways, with utilization efficacy being contingent upon multidimensional factors including awareness indices, resource discoverability, and access fluidity (Orakpor, 2012).

This empirical investigation, conducted within the operational context of Dr. Alex Ekwueme's Library at Federal Polytechnic, Oko, yielded several salient findings. While the majority of faculty respondents (78.3%) demonstrated adequate resource awareness ($\chi^2 = 12.7$, $df = 3$, $p < 0.05$), the study identified persistent utilization friction points including download interruptions (43.8%), access point scarcity (31.2%), and full-text retrieval challenges (28.4%) (Orakpor, 2006). These findings have significant implications for the development of targeted intervention strategies aimed at optimizing the return on investment in electronic resource subscriptions (Orakpor & Omoruyi, 2022). The study recommends a multipronged approach encompassing infrastructure augmentation, user education intensification, and the implementation of predictive analytics to preempt access barriers (Orakpor et al., 2025).

Recommendations

Based on the findings, the following recommendations are proposed:

1. Library management should intensify targeted awareness campaigns across multiple platforms, including social media, institutional email communications, and the Polytechnic's website, to broaden user engagement across all faculty categories.
2. Restrictions such as mandatory passwords and usage fees should be

abolished to facilitate seamless access for academic staff.

3. Continuous training and professional development programs for staff on navigating and utilizing electronic databases are essential to improve optimal use.

4. All identified challenges including difficulties in downloading, poor internet connectivity, inconsistent power supply, limited access points, and barriers to full-text access must be systematically addressed to enhance user experience and resource utilization.

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