

Full Length Research

Gender and Self-Efficacy as Factors Influencing Use of Electronic Resources by Law Undergraduates in Private Universities in South-West, Nigeria

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Accepted 11 January 2021

The study was carried out to assess the influence of gender and self-efficacy on use of e-resources by law undergraduates in private universities in South-west, Nigeria. Descriptive survey research design was adopted for the study. The population comprised 2,823 law undergraduates at 300, 400 and 500 level in the ten private universities offering law programme in South-west, Nigeria. Purposive sampling technique was used to cover law undergraduates at these levels since it is at these levels that law undergraduates are exposed to court attachment, legal research methods, while 500 level undergraduates are expected to write their project reports using up-to-date literature, which are the essential features of the e-resources. A sampling fraction of 50% was further employed using simple random sampling technique and this gives a sample size of one thousand, four hundred and sixty seven (1467). Out of 1467 copies of questionnaire distributed only 1089 copies which constitute 74.2% return rate were found usable for the study; it was analyzed with the aid of frequency counts, percentages and correlational methods. The results revealed that the law undergraduates in private universities use e-resources to obtain information on trending legal issues, to obtain complementary learning materials and for research development. The findings further indicated that gender does not influence their use of e-resources. However, there was significant influence of both gender and self-efficacy on the use of e-resources by law undergraduates in the studied universities. The implication of the findings is that an improvement in the level of self-efficacy of law undergraduates would result in corresponding increase in the use of e-resources by law undergraduates in private universities in South-west, Nigeria. The study appears to be the first among its kind and output of the study would add to the body of knowledge in the area of gender and psychological wellbeing of undergraduates towards the use of information resources particularly among the law undergraduates.

Keywords: Gender, Self-efficacy, e-resources, Law undergraduates, Private universities

Cite this article as: George A.E., Opeke R.O. (2021). Gender and Self-Efficacy as Factors Influencing Use of Electronic Resources by Law Undergraduates in Private Universities in South-West, Nigeria. *Inter. J. Acad. Lib. Info. Sci.* 9(1): 17-25

INTRODUCTION

Electronic resources are described as the kind of information resources that require computer or other electronic gadgets' access or any electronic product that delivers a collection of data in full text bases, CD-ROMs and other digital networks (Adeniran, 2013). They are more useful owing to their inherent capabilities such as provision of cheaper access to information, time saving, low storage requirement and capability for representing important component of the collection building activities of libraries. Electronic resources usually consist of e-books, e-journals, e-databases such as LexisNexis, Legalpaedia, IEEXplore, AGORA, ECONLIT, LANTEEL and CD-ROMs, which serve as an alternative to the print media. Law undergraduates are expected to make use of these information resources for the enhancement of learning activities, research development as well as for obtaining trending news in the field of legal education. However, the context observations revealed usage problems of e-resources among law undergraduates in private universities owing to factors largely attributed to poor search ability, low awareness about available resources and mismatch of interests without recourse to the influence of gender and self-efficacy of user of such information.

Gender connotes a range of characteristics pertaining to, and differentiating between, masculinity and femininity. It is used to explain the state of being male or female. Gender also cut across the cultural and social construction of a personality, which manifest in qualities and behaviour of men and women (Steinerova and Susol, 2007). The two facets form the basis upon which gender construct is measured to date. Several scholars over the years have paid attention to the influence of gender on the use of ICT based information resources. For instance, Ahmed (2015); Steinerova and Susol (2007) noted that research on gender differences remains the subject of academic discourse. The authors averred that literature is replete with studies on human information behaviour which shows tendencies of men and women to display differences in the characteristics when using electronic-based resources. Though, nowadays, some males claim femininity and vice versa particularly in the use of electronic-based information resources.

Gender appears to have played a great part on an individual's acceptance and use of information systems. Venkatesh, Morris, Davis and Davis (2003) cited in Hamzat and Mabawonku (2018); Fallows (2005) have shown that women appreciate especially the communicative features of the Internet, while men are more likely to use online transactions, get information, play games and use it for other entertainment purposes such as aesthetic and beauty appreciations. Gender manipulates factors such as income, time constraints, literacy, education, language, and cultural context and

may affect access to facilities, training and development in the use of electronic resources. In elaborating the issue of gender equilibrium in the use of e-resources, Akande (2015) carried out a study on gender differences in information retrieval skills and use of electronic resources among information professionals in South-Western Nigeria. The author remarked that developing information technology skills and competency in using electronic resources transcends gender boundary as both sexes need skills to navigate the information landscape. The author however concluded that gender as a variable should not be considered a significant criterion in determining fitness for the use of ICT enabled resources, recruitment, opportunities for training, improved education and capacity building in an ICT environment rather equal provision should be made for both sexes. Based on this line of argument, it therefore, follows that while studying the use of electronic resources, the concept of gender influence should not be kept in abeyance. Rather, there is the need to investigate the roles of gender in the use of electronic resources particularly among the law undergraduates in Nigerian private universities.

Another factor presumed to influence the use of e-resources is self-efficacy. Self-efficacy entails an individual's confidence in his/her ability to perform the behaviour required to produce specific outcome. The concept is considered to directly impact the choice of an individual to engage in a task, not minding the effort that will be expended and the persistence that will be exhibited (Sam, Othman & Nordin, 2015). Self-efficacy is an individual's belief in his or her innate ability to achieve goals. Bandura (1986) cited by Sadiku and Kpakiko (2015) described self-efficacy as an individual's personal judgement of how well he/she can execute courses of action required to deal with prospective situations. The term 'self-efficacy' has been shown to influence choice of whether to engage in a task, the effort expended and the persistence shown in accomplishing such task.

Self-efficacy is concerned with understanding important aspects of self and identity, people's beliefs about their personal capabilities and how these beliefs influence what they try to accomplish, how they try to accomplish it, and how they react to success and setbacks along the way. Though, the expectations of self-efficacy may determine whether an individual would be able to exhibit coping behaviour and how long an effort would be sustained in the face of obstacles. Thereby, individuals who possess high self-efficacy will exert sufficient effort that, if task is well executed, it may lead to successful outcomes, whereas those with low self-efficacy are likely to cease effort early (Tara, 2012). Self-efficacy affects every area of human endeavour and has strong influences on both the power an individual has to face challenges competently and the choices made. These effects are particularly noticeable and compelling with

regards to behaviours or approach to issues. It also contributes immensely in predicting effective performance through increase in motivation, task focus, effort and decreasing anxiety and self-defeating of negative thinking.

Talsma, Schüza, Schwarzer and Norris (2018) averred that self-efficacy is believed to enhance performance through a range of mechanisms. They remarked that individuals with high levels of self-efficacy set more difficult goals, expend more effort, persist for longer with challenges, and show resilience in the face of adversity. Self-efficacy is quite important in predicting effective utilisation of electronic resources by law undergraduates. Law undergraduates' self-efficacy in the use of e-resources can further be explained in terms of imaginal experiences and social influence. Imaginal experience is a terminology used to describe a visualisation or an exercise that allows someone to envisage future success in details by overcoming challenges that may hinder goals. Imaginal experience is the art of visualising oneself behaving effectively or successfully in a given situation. It involves identifying models that can assist someone to complete challenging tasks and mastering of perceived difficult tasks. Tsang, Hui and Law (2013) defined imaginal experience as a kind of visualised rehearsal of successful or unsuccessful performance, be it deliberate or otherwise and that are capable of improving an individual coping strategy and enhance self-efficacy. Individual undergraduate's imaginal experiences include beliefs in one to explore e-resources for effective academic task. Hirschman (2018) described imaginal experience as individuals' perceptions about the activities they engage in and that permit them to self-project into a particular role or character. Imaginal experience is widely seen as role-play in typical online games such as World of Warcraft (WoW) and the popular three-dimensional virtual world named Second Life where players can choose to play particular roles and characters.

Self-efficacy of law undergraduates in private universities in South-West, Nigeria can also be measured in terms of social influence. Social influence comes from individual observation of people around, especially people considered as role models such as lecturers, senior colleagues, and peers among others. Seeing individuals similar to oneself succeeding by their sustained effort raises someone's beliefs that he too possesses the capabilities to master the activities needed to be successful in the use of e-resources for enhancement of his/her law undergraduate's academic activities. Social influence connotes external pressures that can be exerted upon an individual or group of individuals to act in a particular way. It reflects the influence of some variables (opinions of family, close friends, and colleagues) on use behaviour. The construct simply explained the role of opinions of close associates of a user in enhancing his/her use of any information

system (Venkatesh *et al* 2003). The term social influence is also used to represent the degree to which individuals perceived the importance of using new technology/information system by others. Hence, the construct could exert different influence on law undergraduates' *vis-à-vis* electronic resources use. The rate at which law undergraduates make use of electronic resources might be functions of many factors. It could be for obtaining information on cases, digest, statutes and other academic purposes. As a result, there are concerns about how law undergraduates use e-resources and how self-efficacy can influence their search strategies. This development therefore, calls for the need to assess the influence of gender and self-efficacy of law undergraduates with reference to private universities in South-west, Nigeria.

OBJECTIVES OF THE STUDY

Specifically, the study sought to:

- i. determine the purpose to which e-resources are being used by law undergraduates in private universities in South-West, Nigeria;
- ii. ascertain the influence of gender on e-resources use among law undergraduates in private universities in South-West, Nigeria;
- iii. examine the influence of self-efficacy of law undergraduates on the use of e-resources in private universities in South-West, Nigeria; and
- iv. establish the combined influence of gender and self-efficacy on e-resources use by law undergraduates in private universities in South-West, Nigeria.

HYPOTHESES

In this study, the following null hypotheses were tested at 0.05 levels of significance:

1. There is no significant influence of gender on use of e-resources by law undergraduates in private universities in South-West, Nigeria.
2. There is no significant influence of self-efficacy on use of e-resources by law undergraduates in private universities in South-West, Nigeria.
3. There is no combined influence of gender and self-efficacy on law undergraduates' use of e-resources in private universities in South-West, Nigeria.

LITERATURE REVIEW

Law undergraduates in private universities like their counterparts in science and other disciplines are

expected to make use of electronic resources and other sources for the enhancement of their class and home assignments, formulation of term papers, projects and for the performance of other academic activities. Gender and self-efficacy were recognized as important variables of study out of plethora of factors that could enhance use of these resources. Gender involves a range of characteristics pertaining to, and differentiating between, masculinity and femininity. Gender can be regarded as cultural and social construction of a personality, which manifest in qualities and behaviour of men and women (Steinerova & Susol, 2007). It is used to explain the state of being male or female.

Gender remains the most important issue to be studied because the concept has not been given adequate attention in the existing literature. In most cases, the issues of gender are frequently embedded within larger topics, such as multiculturalism and diversity. Another factor considered to influence use of e-resources by law undergraduates is self-efficacy. Self-efficacy reflects an individual's confidence in his/her ability to perform the behaviour required to produce specific outcome. Bandura (1997) defined self-efficacy as a personal judgement of how well an individual can execute courses of action required to deal with prospective situations. According to Tsang Hui and Law (2012), self-efficacy can be defined as the individuals' beliefs about their ability to perform in different situations and functions. It could be regarded as a multi-level and multi-faceted set of beliefs that influence how people feel, think, motivate themselves and behave during various tasks. Animashaun and Ojo (2012) described self-efficacy as an individual belief in his/her ability to change his behaviour. Hashemi and Ghanizadeh (2011) noted that students with low in self-efficacy could display less persistence and effort expenditure in the use of any system. Users with low self-efficacy often avoid uncertain and challenging tasks, display lack of intentionality, and possess attributions that are nonrealistic and maladaptive.

Self-efficacy could be defined in terms of an individual law undergraduate's confidence in his/her ability to use e-resources to obtain legal information on statutes, digest, cases, and proceedings in order to achieve effective academic tasks. The concept is thought to directly impact the choice of an individual to engage in a task, as well as the effort that will be expended and the persistence that may be exhibited. Overtime, psychologists have studied self-efficacy from several perspectives, and reported

various paths in the development of the concept, the dynamics of self-efficacy, interactions between self-efficacy and self-concept as well as the habits of attribution that contribute to, or detract an individual from self-efficacy.

Empirically, Jayanthi and Saravana (2013) tested gender differences in e-resources usage among the students of engineering institutions in Kanchipuram District. One thousand, two hundred and fifty (1250) valid copies of questionnaire were collected and then data was analysed, tabulated, interpreted, presented based on frequency counts and percentages. The results of the study demonstrated and elaborated various aspects of e-resources use such as, frequency, frequently used place, various online services and satisfaction level of users with the e-resources facilities provided in the Engineering colleges with recourse to female users. It is observed from this study that the majority of the respondents are satisfied in using the e-resources and services, the ICT based resources, and services have become an indispensable as well as unavoidable commodity.

Bassi and Camble (2011) reported that there exists a statistical difference between males and females in the use of electronic resources as female users have more difficulty in finding information online than males. Ono and Zovadry (2003) also found women to be less frequent and less intense users of the internet. In Nigeria, Ozoemelem (2009) conducted a study on the use of electronic resources by postgraduate students of the Department of Library and Information Science, University of Abraka. The author reported that male and female postgraduate students made use of e-resources for academic activities irrespective of their gender differences. On self-efficacy of e-resources use among undergraduates, Köseoğlu (2015) analysed self-efficacy and academic achievement of Turkey university students. The author employed motivated strategies learning questionnaire, implicit theories of intelligence scale, achievement goal inventory scale, and self-reported grade point averages for predicting academic achievement. A multivariate analysis of co-variance (MANCOVA) carried out indicated that students with low self-efficacy were inclined to believe that intelligence is inherent and cannot be changed. It also indicated that students with high self-efficacy preferred mastery goals, which entailed challenges and new knowledge, as well as performance goals that comprised good grades and surpassing others.

METHODOLOGY

Descriptive survey research design of was adopted for this study. The population comprised 2,923 law undergraduates at 300, 400 and 500 level in the ten private universities offering this programme in South-west, Nigeria. Law undergraduates at these levels were purposively selected because it is at these levels that the students are exposed to court attachment, legal research methods, while 500 level undergraduates are expected to write their project reports

using up-to-date literature, which are the essential features of the e-resources. Since it appears that the population of students at these levels is too large to study, a sampling fraction of 50% was drawn using simple random sampling technique and this gives a sample size of one thousand, four hundred and sixty seven (1467). However, the analysis was based on 1089 copies of questionnaire retrieved and found usable for the study. Moreover, adapted questionnaire was the instrument used for data gathering and the instrument was divided into five sections namely A, B, C, D and E. Further, the response rate to the questionnaire distributed was presented in Table 1.

Table 1: Questionnaire administration

S/N	University	No. of copies distributed	No. of copies returned	%
1	Adeleke University, Ede	165	119	72.1
2	AfeBabalola University, Ado-Ekiti	189	123	65.1
3	Ajayi Crowther University, Oyo	117	92	78.6
4	Babcock University, Ilishan-Remo	150	115	76.7
5	Bowen University, Iwo	98	73	74.5
6	Crescent University, Abeokuta	93	71	76.3
7	Elizade University, Ilara-Mokin	57	42	73.7
8	Joseph Ayo Babalola University, Ikeji-Arakeji	230	179	77.8
9	Lead City University, Ibadan	206	153	74.3
10	Redeemers university	162	122	75.3
	Total	1467	1089	74.2

Out of 1467 copies of the questionnaire administered, 1089 copies were returned and found usable for analysis. This represents a response rate of 74.2% as shown in Table 1.

RESULTS PRESENTATION

Table 2: Socio-demographic profiles of the respondents

S/N	Variables	Number	Percentage (%)	
1	Gender	Male	386	35.4
		Female	703	64.6
		Total	1089	100.0
2	Age range	16 to 20 years	501	46.0
		21 to 25 years	336	30.9
		26 to 30 years	145	13.3
		Others	107	9.8
		Total	1089	100.0
3	Level of Study	300	422	38.8
		400	313	28.7
		500	354	32.5
		Total	1089	100.0

From the data provided in Table 2, it could be observed that the gender distribution of respondents revealed that there were 386(35.4%) male respondents as against 703 (64.6%) female. This implies that there were more female law undergraduates than their male counterparts in private universities in South-west, Nigeria. Also, the distribution of respondents by age showed that 501 (46.0%) of the respondents were aged between 16-20 years, 336 (30.9%) were aged between 21 to 25 years and only 107(9.8%) of the respondents were above 30 years which was classified as "Others". On level of study, 422 (38.8%) were in 300 level, 354 (32.5%) were in 400 level and 313(28.7%) were in 500 level. The implication of the findings on demographic profiles of respondents point to the fact that the law undergraduates who participated in the study were well informed to be able to respond appropriately to the questions posed in the questionnaire used in the study. The distribution also shows that demographic characteristics of law undergraduates in the ten private universities under review were homogeneous

Objective One: The study sought to determine the purpose to which e-resources are being used by law undergraduates in the universities offering the course and the results is as presented in Table 3. Note: SA= Strongly Agree, A=Agree, D= Disagree, SD= Strongly Disagree. *S.D=Standard Deviation*

Table 3: Purpose of e-resources use by law undergraduates use e-resources in private universities in South-West, Nigeria

	Purpose of e-resources use	SA		A		D		SD		Mean	S.D
		Freq.	%	Freq.	%	Freq.	%	Freq.	%		
1.	I use e-resources to obtain information on statutes or statutory instruments	536	49.2	389	35.7	128	11.8	36	3.3	3.38	0.805
2.	I use e-resources for gathering materials for Legal Research and Legal Writing	644	59.1	300	27.5	136	12.5	9	0.8	3.65	0.740
3.	I use e-resources for collation of materials on reported cases and digest	516	47.4	421	38.7	134	12.3	18	1.7	3.51	0.972
4.	I use electronic resources to obtain information on trending issues in the field of legal education	435	39.9	314	28.8	222	20.4	118	10.8	3.30	0.835
5.	I use electronic resources to obtain information for class and home assignments	395	36.3	363	33.3	184	16.9	147	13.5	3.28	0.806
6.	I use electronic resources to obtain information for Gathering materials for term papers	184	16.9	306	28.1	517	47.5	82	7.5	2.93	0.960
7.	I use electronic resources to obtain information for writing projects reports	228	20.9	387	35.5	238	21.9	236	21.7	3.09	0.801
8.	I use electronic resources to obtain information for gathering materials needed in preparation for examinations	383	35.2	392	36.0	166	15.2	148	13.6	3.11	0.853
9.	I use electronic resources to obtain information for updating my knowledge	324	38.9	516	47.4	131	12.0	118	10.8	3.17	0.747
10.	I use electronic resources to obtain information for personal self-development	209	19.2	403	37.0	326	29.9	151	13.9	3.15	0.740
11.		Weighted mean= 3.23									0.826

Source: *Researcher's Field Survey, 2020*

Results on purpose of use of e-resources by law undergraduates as presented in Table 3 indicated that majority of the respondents used e-resources for gathering materials for Legal Research and Legal Writing (Mean=3.65, S.D=0.740). This was indicated by 644(59.1%) of respondents who claimed that they used e-resources very often for this purpose while only 9(0.8%) indicated that they never used e-resources for gathering materials for Legal Research and Legal Writing. Also, e-resources were used by majority of respondents for collation of materials on reported cases and digest (mean=3.51, S.D=0.972). In fact, 516(47.4%) of the respondents posited that they used e-resources very often for collation of materials on reported cases and digest while only 18(1.7%) indicated that they never used e-resources for this purpose. Additionally, most of the respondents hinted that they used e-resources to obtain information on statutes or statutory instruments (mean=3.38, S.D=0.805). This was evident in the response format where 536(49.2%) of the respondents claimed that they used e-resources to obtain information on statutes or statutory instruments very often while only 36(3.3%) claimed they never used e-resources for this purpose.

Other purposes for which law undergraduates in private universities in South-west, Nigeria were to obtain information on trending issues in the field of legal education (mean=3.30, S.D=0.835), to obtain information for class and home assignments (mean=3.28, mean=0.806) and to obtain information for updating my knowledge (mean=3.17, standard deviation=0.747). On the other hand, purposes such as to obtain information for Gathering materials for term papers and to obtain information for gathering materials needed in preparation for examinations were ranked least in terms of mean score of responses. Thus, it could be deduced that law undergraduates in private universities in South-west, Nigeria made use of e-resources for legal research, case reporting and digest, to obtain information on statutes or statutory instruments, for class and home assignments and to obtain information on trending issues in the field of legal education.

Objective Two: The second objective of the study aimed at ascertaining the influence of gender on use of e-resources by law undergraduates in private universities. The results are presented in Table 4.

Table 4: Correlation analysis showing influence of gender on use of e-resources in by law undergraduates in private universities in South-West, Nigeria

Variable	Mean	Std. Dev.	N	r	P	Remark
Gender influence	16.25	5.184	1089	0.184*	.070	Not Sig.
Use of e-resources	84.99	29.977				

Source: Researcher's Field Survey, 2020

*Sig. at .05 level

The result of the hypothesis as shown in Table 4 using the Pearson Correlation Coefficient (r) revealed that there was a weak linear relationship between gender influence and use of e-resources by law undergraduates in private universities in South-west, Nigeria ($r=0.184$; $P> 0.05$). It could be noted that the p-value is 0.070 which is greater than 0.05 level of significance, hence the relationship is not statistically significant. Thus, the null hypothesis which states that there is no significant influence of gender on law undergraduates 'use of e-resources in private universities in South-West, Nigeria is hereby accepted. This means that gender does not significantly influence the use of e-resources by law undergraduates in private universities in South-west, Nigeria. By implication, both the male and female law undergraduates have the tendency to use e-resources given the same condition.

Objective Three: The third objective of the study aimed at ascertains the influence of self-efficacy on use of e-resources by law undergraduates in private universities. The results are presented in Table 5

Table 5: Correlation analysis showing influence of self-efficacy on use of e-resources in by law undergraduates in private universities in South-West, Nigeria

Variable	Mean	Std. Dev.	N	R	P	Remark
Self-efficacy	40.84	10.074	1089	0.369*	.000	Sig.
Use of e-resources	84.99	29.977				

Source: Researcher's Field Survey, 2020

*Sig. at .05 level

Table 5 presents that the mean of self-efficacy of law undergraduates 40.84 with standard deviation score of 10.074. Also, the mean score of e-resources use by law undergraduates was 84.99 and the standard deviation was 29.977. It could be noted that the correlation coefficient obtained was 0.369 with p-value < 0.05 . The result showed a positive and moderate correlation between self-efficacy on law undergraduates 'use of e-resources in private universities in South-West, Nigeria. The correlation is statistically significant at 5 percent significance level. This implies that there is a moderate, positive and significant influence of self-efficacy on law undergraduates 'use of e-resources in private universities in South-West, Nigeria as shown in Table 5 as ($r = 0.369$, $N = 1089$, $p < 0.05$). As such, the null hypothesis is therefore rejected and the alternative hypothesis is accepted. This means that an improvement in the self-efficacy of law undergraduates will enhance their use of e-resources in private universities in South-West, Nigeria. In other words, an improvement in the level of self-efficacy of law undergraduates would result in corresponding increase in the use of e-resources by law undergraduates in private universities in South-west, Nigeria.

Objective Four: The fourth objective of the study aimed at establishing the combined influence of gender and self-efficacy on e-resources use by law undergraduates in private universities in South-West, Nigeria. The results are presented in Table 6.

Table 6: Multiple Linear Regression Showing combined influence of information seeking behaviour, gender and self-efficacy on law undergraduates 'use of e-resources in private universities in South-West, Nigeria

Model	Sum of Square	Df	Mean Square	F	Sig. (p value)	Remark
Regression	246.052	3	82.017			
Residual	361.101	1085	0.333	246.437	.000	Sig.
Total	607.153	1088				

R=.637
R²=.405
Adj. R²=.404
Std. Error of the Estimate= .57890

Source: Researcher's Field Survey, 2020

*Sig. at .05 level

Table 6 presents the results of the combined influence of gender and self-efficacy on law undergraduates 'use of e-resources in private universities in South-West, Nigeria. The result revealed that gender and self-efficacy have significant combined influence on e-resources use of law undergraduates in private universities being investigated. The table also shows that the analysis of variance (ANOVA) for the regression yielded an *F*-value of 246.437 and *p*-value of 0.000 (significant at 0.05 level). This implies that the combined influence of gender and self-efficacy on use of e-resources was significant. In other words, gender and self-efficacy had combined significant influence on law undergraduates 'use of e-resources in private universities in South-West, Nigeria.

CONCLUSION

The results of the study demonstrate that electronic resources are an important information source used by law undergraduates for the enhancement of their learning and research activities. It is noted that gender has no significant influence on the use of e-resources by law undergraduates in private universities in South-west, Nigeria. Though, there was a moderate, positive and significant influence of self-efficacy on law undergraduates 'use of e-resources in private universities in South-West, Nigeria. Therefore, there is need to up-scale efforts at enlighten the students on varying search strategies they could inculcate to enhance their self-efficacy towards the use of e-resources for learning and research capability.

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