

Patronage and Use of Library Resources among Gen Z Undergraduates in Nigerian Universities

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Abstract This paper investigates the patronage and use of library resources among Generation Z undergraduates in Nigerian universities. With the increasing influence of digital technologies, academic libraries face challenges in maintaining relevance for Gen Z students, who exhibit a strong preference for digital platforms and self-directed learning. The study aimed to determine the extent of library patronage, identify frequently used library resources, analyze factors influencing library use, explore the role of digital alternatives, and suggest strategies to enhance library engagement. A cross-sectional descriptive survey was employed, targeting undergraduates from five Nigerian universities. Data were collected using a structured questionnaire based on a four-point Likert scale, and responses from 219 students were analyzed using descriptive statistics. Findings revealed low levels of library patronage, with students favoring digital resources, social media, and e-learning platforms over traditional library services. No single library resource was frequently utilized, with institutional repositories and thesis collections being the most accessed. Key factors influencing non-use included limited accessibility, inadequate ICT infrastructure, and inconvenient library hours. Students strongly advocated for digital transformation, recommending social media integration, AI-driven assistance, and mobile-friendly library services. The study concludes that academic libraries must modernize their services to align with Gen Z's digital preferences. Recommendations include expanding digital resources, improving ICT infrastructure, integrating social media, and personalizing library services to enhance user engagement and relevance.

Keywords: Library patronage, generation z, digital resources, academic libraries, information seeking behaviour

INTRODUCTION

The concept of library patronage and resource utilization among Generation Z undergraduates in Nigerian universities is of increasing scholarly interest. Gen Z is characterized by a preference for digital convenience, interactive learning, and rapid access to information. Generation Z (Gen Z), typically defined as individuals born between the mid-to-late 1990s and early 2010s, has been shaped by the digital revolution, influencing their learning preferences, information-seeking behaviors, and engagement with library services (Cain et al., 2022). Today, due to digital access to information, traditional library services face new challenges and opportunities in maintaining relevance to this generation. Oladokun et al. (2024) note that the advent of the digital age has significantly transformed the way information is accessed, utilized, and valued.

Library patronage refers to the extent to which students engage with library facilities, both physically and digitally, for academic and research purposes. The utilization of library resources involves the effective use of books, journals, digital repositories, and other information tools that contribute to students' academic success. However, Gen Z undergraduates exhibit unique characteristics that shape their engagement with libraries, including a preference for digital platforms, social media-based learning, and immediate access to information (Blandi et al., 2022; Jiao et al., 2023). These factors necessitate academic libraries to innovate their services to cater to the expectations of this digital-savvy generation.

Several studies have examined the perceptions and use of library services among undergraduates. Udem et al. (2020) highlight that undergraduate student in Southeast Nigeria value library services but often perceive them as outdated compared to the immediacy and convenience of online resources. Similarly, Salubi et al. (2018) examined Gen Z students' library utilization and found a discrepancy between available library resources and students' preferences for digital and self-paced learning tools. These findings suggest that while libraries remain essential, their services must evolve to meet the expectations of a technologically driven generation.

One key aspect of Gen Z's interaction with information resources is their reliance on social media as a primary information-seeking tool. Devi et al. (2024) highlight that platform such as YouTube, Twitter, and Instagram have become integral to how Gen Z students access academic and non-academic information. Similarly, Tella et al. (2020) explored the use of YouTube for academic purposes and found that many students prefer audiovisual content over traditional text-based resources. These findings have implications for academic libraries, which must integrate multimedia and interactive digital resources to remain relevant.

Moreover, studies on Gen Z's learning preferences indicate that this generation prefers personalized, collaborative, and technology-enhanced learning environments. Mellman (2020) and Nandhakumar (2019) argue that Gen Z students favor self-directed learning facilitated by technology. Repanovici et al. (2024) further reinforce this by analyzing information literacy engagement patterns among Gen Z, emphasizing their preference for intuitive, easily accessible, and interactive resources. The challenge for libraries, therefore, is to design services that align with these preferences while maintaining their core mission of providing credible and structured academic resources.

The role of digital literacy and online accessibility in shaping Gen Z's library patronage cannot be overstated. Jiao et al. (2023) examined digital health literacy among Gen Z students and found that while they are adept at using digital tools, their ability to critically evaluate information remains limited. This finding underscores the need for academic libraries to enhance their information literacy programs, ensuring that students can differentiate between credible academic resources and unreliable digital content. Additionally, the study by Blandi et al. (2022) on digital information-seeking behaviors during the COVID-19 pandemic highlights Gen Z's reliance on online sources, further reinforcing the importance of digital accessibility in library services.

Furthermore, studies have explored the broader perceptions of Gen Z students regarding their academic experiences and future expectations. Dikeç et al. (2023) conducted a qualitative study on how Gen Z university students perceive their futures and found that technological adaptation and innovation are key factors influencing their academic engagement. Similarly, Paul Grayson (2021) examined generational differences in campus experiences, highlighting that Gen Z students prioritize efficiency, accessibility, and digital integration in their academic interactions. These perspectives suggest that libraries must evolve from traditional repositories of knowledge to dynamic, user-centered learning spaces that integrate digital innovations.

Given the foregoing, there is no doubt that academic libraries play a critical role in supporting research, learning, and knowledge acquisition among university students. However, with the rise of digital technology, information access has become more diversified, particularly among Generation Z (Gen Z) students, who exhibit unique information-seeking behaviors. Unlike previous generations that heavily relied on physical library resources, Gen Z undergraduates are

more inclined toward digital platforms, social media, and open-access online materials for their academic and personal information needs. This shift raises concerns about the extent to which academic libraries are being utilized and whether they still hold value for contemporary students in Nigerian universities.

Despite the availability of various library resources, studies indicate a decline in library patronage among university students. Udem et al. (2020) found that undergraduates in Southeast Nigeria perceive library services as valuable but are often deterred by outdated infrastructure, poor technological integration, and limited awareness of available services. Similarly, Salubi et al. (2018) highlighted that while Gen Z students acknowledge the importance of library resources, they exhibit low engagement levels, preferring more accessible digital alternatives. This trend raises critical questions: What factors influence Gen Z undergraduates' patronage and use of library resources? Are libraries adequately addressing their evolving preferences and learning styles?

Furthermore, existing research suggests that Gen Z students rely heavily on social media and other digital platforms for academic information (Devi et al., 2024; Tella et al., 2020; Seemiller et al., 2019). While this enhances accessibility, it also presents challenges related to information credibility, digital literacy, and the underutilization of authoritative academic sources. Libraries are expected to bridge this gap by aligning their services with Gen Z's digital expectations, yet little is known about how effectively Nigerian university libraries are responding to these changes. Given the increasing dependence on technology for learning, it is crucial to investigate the patterns of library use among Gen Z undergraduates in Nigerian universities. Are libraries still perceived as essential for academic success? What barriers hinder students from fully engaging with library services? Understanding these dynamics will provide insights into how libraries can innovate to remain relevant to the digital-native generation. This study, therefore, seeks to examine the patronage and use of library resources among Gen Z undergraduates. Specifically, the study seeks to (1) determine the extent of patronage of library resources by Gen Z undergraduates in Nigerian universities; (2) identify the types of library resources frequently utilized by Gen Z undergraduates; (3) determine the factors influencing the use or non-use of library resources among Gen Z undergraduates; (4) explore the role of digital alternatives in shaping Gen Z students' information-seeking behavior; and (5) suggest strategies for improving library patronage and aligning library services with the digital preferences of Gen Z undergraduates.

Theoretical Framework

This study is anchored on Technology Acceptance Model which was developed by Davis (1985). The theory is grounded in the Theory of Reasoned Action (TRA) and posits that users' acceptance of technology is primarily determined by two factors, which are (a) Perceived Usefulness (PU) and (b) Perceived Ease of Use (PEOU). Perceived usefulness refers to the degree to which a person believes that using a particular technology will enhance their performance, while perceived ease of use denotes the degree to which a person believes that using the technology will be free from effort. These perceptions influence the user's attitude toward using the system, which subsequently affects their behavioral intention and actual use (Al-Nuaimi & Al-Emran, 2021; Davis et al., 2024).

Thus, applying TAM to this study helps explain the low patronage of university libraries among Gen Z students. If library services are not perceived as useful or easy to use compared to digital alternatives, students are less likely to engage with them. The model provides a useful lens for understanding why students advocate for features like mobile apps, AI chatbots, and social media integration that enhance both usability and usefulness from the perspective of Gen Z learners. Therefore, TAM not only provides a theoretical framework for analyzing the study's findings but also offers practical insights into how academic libraries can redesign their services to increase perceived value and ease of use among digital-native users.

METHOD

This study employed a cross-sectional descriptive design to investigate the patronage and use of library resources among Generation Z undergraduate students in Nigerian university

libraries. A cross-sectional descriptive approach is particularly useful for studies aiming to analyze patterns and trends within a defined population without manipulating variables. The population for this study comprised undergraduate students from five selected Nigerian universities, including the (1) University of Abuja; (2) University of Lagos; (3) Federal University of Technology, Ikt Abasi, Akwa Ibom; (4) Imo State University, Uturu; and (5) Ahmadu Bello University. The selection of these universities was based on convenient sampling, ensuring that institutions from different geopolitical zones of Nigeria were represented. This sampling technique was employed due to ease of accessibility and willingness of students from these institutions to participate in the study.

A structured questionnaire was designed as the primary instrument for data collection. The questionnaire was developed on a four-point Likert scale, aligning with the specific objectives of the study. To ensure the validity of the questionnaire, it was subjected to expert review by scholars in Library and Information Science, who assessed its clarity, relevance, and ability to measure the intended constructs. Based on their feedback, necessary modifications were made before administering the questionnaire. A pretest of the questionnaire was conducted with 20 undergraduate students at Enugu State University of Science and Technology to ascertain its reliability. The responses obtained were analyzed using Cronbach's Alpha, yielding an overall index value of 0.86, indicating a high level of internal consistency and reliability of the instrument. Participants were recruited primarily through online means on 12th December 2024 through email. The researchers leveraged existing student networks and university listservs to disseminate the Google Forms questionnaire. The link to the survey was distributed through university-specific WhatsApp groups, student forums, and email lists where available. The use of these platforms allowed the researchers to reach a broad audience across the selected universities. Additionally, lecturers in the universities were contacted to help share the survey link with their students, which further helped to expand the reach. At the end of the survey, 219 students filled out and completed the questionnaire.

Descriptive statistics and inferential statistics were employed to summarize and present the results. In the descriptive analysis, tables, percentages, frequency, means, and standard deviation were employed. The study adhered to ethical research guidelines to ensure the rights and privacy of participants were protected. Informed consent was obtained from all respondents before they participated in the study, ensuring they understood the purpose of the research and their right to withdraw at any stage without consequences. Additionally, all responses were anonymized to maintain confidentiality and used solely for academic purposes.

RESULTS

In this section, we have results for demographic data of respondents and research questions. The results of the analysis are presented in line with the research questions that guided the study.

Demographic Characteristics of Respondents

The demographic distribution of respondents in this study provides insights into the composition of the surveyed population. Data in [Table 1](#) consists of 219 undergraduate students, with a slight female (53.9%) compared to males (46.1%). This suggests a fairly balanced gender representation, ensuring that the perspectives of both male and female students are well captured. Regarding age distribution, the majority of students fall within the 19-21 years category (42.9%), followed by 22-25 years (35.2%), while the youngest group, 16-18 years, represents 21.9% of respondents. This indicates that most students are at an advanced stage of their undergraduate studies, where information-seeking behavior is likely to be more structured and purposeful. In terms of academic standing, the representation is relatively evenly spread across different years of study. The highest proportion of students is in Year 4 (22.8%), while Year 1 has the least representation (18.3%). This distribution suggests that students at different levels of their academic journey were involved in the study.

Table 1. Demographic Characteristics of Respondents

Category	Demographic Group	Frequency (N=219)	Percentage (%)
Gender	Male	101	46.1%
	Female	118	53.9%
Age Group	16-18 years	48	21.9%
	19-21 years	94	42.9%
	22-25 years	77	35.2%
Year of Study	Year 1	40	18.3%
	Year 2	45	20.5%
	Year 3	42	19.2%
	Year 4	50	22.8%
	Year 5	42	19.2%

Patronage of Library Resources among Gen Z undergraduates

The data in Table 2 reveal that Gen Z undergraduates do not regularly patronize the university library. The statement "I visit the university library regularly for academic purposes" recorded a low mean score of 1.94 (SD = 0.52), indicating that most students disagree or strongly disagree with the statement. Additionally, the preference for using library resources over online alternatives scored 2.21 (SD = 0.76), further reinforcing the low level of patronage. Interestingly, while library adequacy (Mean = 2.41, SD = 0.59) and conduciveness of the library environment (Mean = 2.05, SD = 0.90) were rated slightly higher, they are still below the midpoint (2.50), signifying dissatisfaction or underutilization. The highest-rated statement, "I believe the library services meet my expectations" (Mean = 2.43, SD = 0.98), suggests that while some students find the library services useful, many still do not fully engage with them. The findings suggest that library patronage among Gen Z students is declining, with students preferring alternative information sources. Libraries may need to modernize their services, increase awareness campaigns, and adopt digital strategies to attract more users.

Table 2. Extent of Patronage of Library Resources

S/N	Statement	SA	A	D	SD	N	Mean	SD
1	I visit the university library regularly for academic purposes.	10	45	120	44	219	1.94	0.52
2	I prefer to use the library's resources over online alternatives.	15	60	90	54	219	2.21	0.76
3	I find the library's resources adequate for my academic needs.	20	70	95	34	219	2.41	0.59
4	I make use of the library's physical books and journals frequently.	25	55	80	59	219	2.20	0.98
5	I use the library more during examination periods than in regular academic sessions.	18	75	100	26	219	2.38	0.52
6	I find the library environment conducive for studying and research.	12	50	110	47	219	2.05	0.90
7	I believe the library services meet my expectations.	30	65	75	49	219	2.43	0.98

Types of Library Resources Frequently Utilized

The findings in Table 3 indicate that no single type of library resource is used frequently by Gen Z undergraduates. The most utilized resources were institutional repositories and thesis collections (Mean = 2.67, SD = 0.74), followed by reference materials such as dictionaries and encyclopedias (Mean = 2.56, SD = 0.81). Printed books and journals, which are traditionally central to academic libraries, had a mean score of 2.45 (SD = 0.46), suggesting moderate usage.

Electronic resources such as e-books and databases (Mean = 2.50, SD = 0.49) were also underutilized, contrary to expectations. Engagement with library services such as research assistance (Mean = 2.21, SD = 0.81) was notably low, suggesting a need for better outreach and training.

Table 3. Types of Library Resources Frequently Utilized

S/N	Statement	SA	A	D	SD	N	Mean	SD
1	I frequently use printed books and journals in the library.	22	80	95	22	219	2.45	0.46
2	I utilize electronic resources such as e-books and databases.	25	85	90	19	219	2.50	0.49
3	I make use of reference materials such as dictionaries and encyclopedias.	30	75	80	34	219	2.56	0.81
4	I rely on multimedia resources (CDs, DVDs, audiobooks).	18	70	105	26	219	2.37	0.42
5	I frequently use newspapers and magazines in the library.	12	60	110	37	219	2.18	0.54
6	I utilize institutional repositories and thesis collections.	35	90	70	24	219	2.67	0.74
7	I actively engage with library services (research assistance, user education).	15	65	95	44	219	2.21	0.81

Factors Influencing the Use or Non-Use of Library Resources

Table 4 highlights the major barriers to library use. The highest-rated statement was "The library's opening hours influence my ability to use its services" (Mean = 3.45, SD = 0.78), indicating that accessibility plays a key role in patronage. Additionally, internet speed and ICT facilities (Mean = 3.10, SD = 0.72) and library staff responsiveness (Mean = 3.39, SD = 0.66) were significant factors influencing library usage. Interestingly, students showed a strong preference for digital alternatives over library resources (Mean = 3.05, SD = 1.06), further reinforcing the shift away from traditional libraries.

Table 4. Factors Influencing the Use or Non-Use of Library Resources

S/N	Statement	SA	A	D	SD	N	Mean	SD
1	The availability of online resources reduces my need to visit the library.	40	85	65	29	219	2.76	0.97
2	The location of the library affects how often I use its resources.	45	95	60	19	219	2.94	0.67
3	I prefer digital platforms because they are more accessible than library resources.	60	90	45	24	219	3.05	1.06
4	The library's opening hours influence my ability to use its services.	80	95	35	9	219	3.45	0.78
5	The internet speed and ICT facilities in the library affect my usage.	55	100	50	14	219	3.10	0.72
6	Library staff assistance affects my willingness to use the library.	75	100	35	9	219	3.39	0.66
7	The availability of modern study spaces influences my usage.	50	70	65	34	219	2.79	1.08

Role of Digital Alternatives in Shaping Information-Seeking Behavior

The data in Table 5 confirm that Gen Z students overwhelmingly prefer digital sources over traditional library resources. The statement "I prefer to use Google, Wikipedia, or other search engines over library resources" had the highest mean of 3.71 (SD = 0.71), followed by

YouTube as a more useful learning tool (Mean = 3.66, SD = 0.53). Moreover, students agreed that mobile applications and e-learning platforms (Mean = 3.56, SD = 0.88) provide more convenience than libraries. The belief that online resources are more up-to-date than those available in the library (Mean = 3.27, SD = 0.69) further emphasizes the declining reliance on physical library materials.

Table 5. Role of Digital Alternatives in Shaping Information-Seeking Behavior

S/N	Statement	SA	A	D	SD	N	Mean	SD
1	I prefer to use Google, Wikipedia, or other search engines over library resources.	120	75	20	4	219	3.71	0.71
2	Social media platforms provide me with the academic information I need.	65	100	45	9	219	3.12	0.58
3	YouTube and other video-sharing platforms are more useful for learning than library materials.	110	85	20	4	219	3.66	0.53
4	I use online discussion forums and academic blogs more than library resources.	60	95	50	14	219	3.10	0.63
5	Mobile applications and e-learning platforms are more convenient than visiting the library.	100	85	30	4	219	3.56	0.88
6	I believe online resources are more up-to-date than those available in the library.	80	95	40	4	219	3.27	0.69
7	I find digital alternatives more interactive than traditional library resources.	55	100	50	14	219	3.06	0.70

Strategies for Improving Library Patronage and Aligning Services with Gen Z Preferences

The responses in Table 6 indicate that students strongly support digital innovation in libraries. The highest-rated statement was "The library should integrate social media for academic engagement and updates" (Mean = 3.74, SD = 0.49), emphasizing the importance of interactive and real-time communication. Other highly rated strategies include adopting user-friendly mobile apps (Mean = 3.57, SD = 0.74), providing more interactive and technology-enhanced study spaces (Mean = 3.45, SD = 0.60), and offering personalized assistance through AI chatbots (Mean = 3.44, SD = 0.51).

Table 6. Strategies for Improving Library Patronage and Aligning Services with Gen Z Preferences

S/N	Statement	SA	A	D	SD	N	Mean	SD
1	Libraries should improve internet access and provide more digital resources.	85	100	30	4	219	3.30	0.50
2	The library should integrate social media for academic engagement and updates.	130	75	14	0	219	3.74	0.49
3	Libraries should adopt user-friendly mobile apps for resource access.	105	85	25	4	219	3.57	0.74
4	More awareness should be created about the available library resources.	80	105	30	4	219	3.31	0.42
5	Libraries should provide more interactive and technology-enhanced study spaces.	95	95	25	4	219	3.45	0.60
6	The library should offer more personalized assistance through AI chatbots.	90	100	25	4	219	3.44	0.51
7	There should be better alignment of library services with students' digital learning preferences.	125	80	14	0	219	3.70	0.41

DISCUSSION

The findings of this study indicate a declining trend in the patronage and use of library resources among Gen Z undergraduates in Nigerian universities. The low engagement with library facilities suggests a shift in students' information-seeking behavior, primarily driven by digital advancements and changing academic preferences. The study revealed that Gen Z students do not regularly visit the library, nor do they find its resources highly beneficial. This aligns with existing research that highlights Gen Z's preference for digital and interactive learning environments over traditional information sources. Udem et al. (2020) reported similar findings in Southeast Nigeria, where students acknowledged the value of library services but did not frequently engage with them due to outdated facilities and a lack of technological integration.

The low utilization of library resources further emphasizes the shift in academic information access among Gen Z students. The findings suggest that no single type of library resource is predominantly used, with institutional repositories and thesis collections being the most utilized, followed by reference materials such as dictionaries and encyclopedias. The relatively lower use of printed books and journals, as well as electronic resources like e-books and databases, indicates that students are not maximizing library offerings, whether physical or digital. This finding is validated by Cain et al. (2022), who found that Gen Z students favor easily accessible and technology-driven learning tools over conventional academic materials. Similarly, Devi et al. (2024) established that social media platforms are increasingly being used for academic purposes, often replacing traditional library resources.

The study also identified key factors influencing the non-use of library resources, with students citing limited accessibility, inadequate ICT infrastructure, and inconvenient library hours as major barriers. The strong preference for digital platforms over library resources reflects broader global trends where Gen Z students prioritize convenience and immediate access to information. Jiao et al. (2023) emphasize that Gen Z students are highly dependent on digital health literacy and online information sources, which resonates with the present study's findings on academic information-seeking behaviors. Moreover, Dikeç et al. (2023) observed that Gen Z students prefer flexible, self-paced learning environments, which traditional libraries often fail to provide.

The role of digital alternatives in shaping students' information-seeking behavior is particularly evident in this study. The majority of students prefer using Google, Wikipedia, and YouTube for academic learning over library resources. This confirms the findings of Tella et al. (2020), who reported that Nigerian undergraduates frequently rely on YouTube for educational content. Social media and e-learning platforms are increasingly regarded as more engaging and interactive, making libraries appear less relevant to today's students. This underscores the urgent need for libraries to integrate digital resources more effectively and adopt strategies that align with Gen Z's learning preferences. Lastly, the findings also suggest that students support the modernization of library services, with strong recommendations for improved internet access, social media integration, and AI-driven assistance. Libraries must evolve beyond traditional service models and implement user-friendly mobile applications, interactive learning spaces, and real-time digital support systems. This is consistent with Udem et al. (2020), who highlighted that improving technological infrastructure and digital access could enhance library patronage. Without such adaptations, libraries risk further disengagement from their primary users.

In the context of this study, TAM is highly relevant because Generation Z undergraduates demonstrate strong preferences for digital and mobile technologies in their academic activities. The findings of the study reveal that Gen Z students often bypass traditional library services in favor of more convenient, accessible, and user-friendly digital platforms such as Google, Wikipedia, YouTube, and social media for academic information. This behavior aligns with TAM's assertion that the perceived usefulness and ease of use of digital technologies significantly influence users' willingness to adopt them over traditional alternatives.

CONCLUSION

This study illuminates a critical juncture in the evolution of academic library services as they intersect with the digital habits and expectations of Generation Z undergraduates in Nigerian universities. Rather than simply highlighting declining patronage, the findings reflect a broader shift in the academic information ecosystem—one where immediacy, accessibility, and interactivity dominate students' learning preferences. This transformation demands more than incremental adjustments; it calls for a reimagining of the academic library as a dynamic, technology-enabled environment aligned with the lifestyles and digital fluency of its users.

The preference for platforms like YouTube, Google, and social media reveals that Gen Z students value engagement formats that offer visual stimulation, quick access, and personalized experiences that traditional library models have struggled to incorporate. The underutilization of both physical and electronic library resources, despite their availability, is not just a usability issue but also a perceptual one. Students perceive digital alternatives as more current, convenient, and user-centered. This study, therefore, advances the conversation by positioning academic libraries not merely as knowledge repositories but as user-experience ecosystems. To remain relevant, libraries must transition into hybrid learning hubs that integrate artificial intelligence, mobile technologies, and social media while simultaneously championing digital literacy and the critical evaluation of information. The library of the future must not only adapt to Gen Z's digital behaviors but also challenge them to engage more deeply and responsibly with academic content. In essence, the decline in traditional library patronage is not a signal of irrelevance but a strategic opportunity to rebrand the library as a central player in the digitally-driven academic lives of contemporary students.

Based on the study's findings, the following recommendations are made:

1. Libraries should adopt flexible operational hours and introduce remote access to digital resources. Increasing awareness campaigns on available library services through social media and student engagement programs will also encourage usage.
2. Libraries should expand and promote their electronic databases, e-books, and institutional repositories. Additionally, they should integrate multimedia and interactive resources to cater to students' diverse learning preferences.
3. To encourage library patronage, academic libraries should invest in high-speed internet, modern ICT tools, and digital study spaces. Providing students with an interactive and technology-driven learning environment will help bridge the gap between traditional and digital information-seeking behaviors.
4. Given Gen Z's reliance on digital platforms, libraries should actively integrate social media, mobile apps, and AI-driven chatbots for real-time user support and academic assistance. This will enhance engagement and improve information accessibility.
5. Libraries should transition from traditional repositories to dynamic, user-centered digital learning spaces. They should incorporate adaptive learning tools, gamification strategies, and virtual reference services to meet the expectations of a digital-native generation.

In addition, the findings of this study have significant implications for policy and practice in librarianship, particularly in academic libraries catering to Gen Z undergraduates. From a policy perspective, institutions must revise their library policies to align with the digital preferences of Gen Z students. Policies should emphasize digital transformation, remote access to resources, and technology-driven library services. Academic libraries should develop strategic policies for integrating artificial intelligence (AI), social media engagement, and mobile applications to enhance accessibility and user experience. From a practical standpoint, library administrators must rethink traditional service delivery models and embrace innovative approaches to information dissemination. The study highlights the need for personalized and interactive library services, suggesting that libraries should incorporate user-friendly digital platforms, real-time research assistance via chatbots, and interactive learning spaces. To encourage patronage, libraries should conduct regular digital literacy training programs, ensuring students develop the skills necessary to

navigate academic databases and distinguish credible sources from misinformation. Furthermore, libraries should implement hybrid service models, combining physical and virtual services to accommodate diverse learning preferences.

Despite its contributions, this study has certain limitations. First, the study employed a convenient sampling technique, focusing on students from only five selected universities. Although these institutions were chosen to represent different geopolitical zones of Nigeria, the sampling method limits the generalizability of the findings. The perspectives obtained may not fully reflect the experiences and behaviors of Gen Z undergraduates in other universities across the country. While the study provides valuable insights into Gen Z's library usage patterns, future studies should expand the sample size to include more universities across different geopolitical zones for broader applicability. Second, the study relied on self-reported data from respondents, which may be subject to bias or social desirability effects. Some students may have overestimated or underestimated their use of library resources, affecting the accuracy of the reported findings. A mixed-method approach involving both surveys and in-depth interviews could provide a more comprehensive understanding of Gen Z's information-seeking behavior. Third, the exclusion of non-users of library resources from the core focus of the analysis was a limitation. While the study explored factors influencing the use or non-use of library resources, it did not directly engage with individuals who do not use library services at all. Their unique perspectives could have provided deeper insights into the barriers to library patronage and informed more inclusive strategies for engagement. Future research could investigate how faculty engagement influences students' utilization of library services and whether integrating library resources into academic curricula enhances Gen Z's engagement with library facilities. Also, future research should consider using random sampling techniques to enhance representativeness and reduce selection bias. Including a broader and more diverse sample of universities from all regions of Nigeria would increase the validity and generalizability of findings. Additionally, subsequent studies should purposefully include non-users of library services to capture a fuller spectrum of student experiences and preferences.

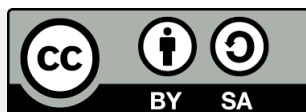
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