

Students' Perception of E-Resources in an Academic Library: The Federal University of Agriculture, Abeokuta Experience

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Abstract

This paper examines students' perception of e-resources in academic libraries: case study of the serial's section of 'Nimbe Adedipe Library, Federal University of Agriculture, Abeokuta, Ogun State, Nigeria. The survey research method was adopted for this study. A structured questionnaire was designed and used to collect data for this study. The population under study constitute the number of students that came to the serial's section over a period of a month which was Four Hundred and Forty-One Students' (441). The method used for the selection of the population was simple random sampling. Data were collected from the selected students using questionnaire as the main instrument for data collection. The questionnaire was designed to identify the important variables to be measured. These are perception of students to e-resources, access to e-resources, usability of e-resources and challenges encountered in using these e-resources. Copies of the questionnaire were given to students as they came into the serial's section. 500 Level students' were 168, while 400 level students' were 159, also 300 level students were' 49 making a total of 376 undergraduate students' and post-graduate students' were 65 students' respectively. All the questionnaires was dully completed and found usable for the study. Findings revealed that both post-graduate students' and undergraduate students' perception of e-resources are on the positive side because they perceive it as been useful for their research and this is having high impact on usage of these resources at the Serial Section of the library.

Keywords: E-resources, E-services, Serial's Section, Perception, Awareness, Challenges

Introduction

The importance of the Serial's section in academic libraries cannot be over emphasized. The serial's section manages journals, newspapers, magazines and other periodicals that support University curricular needs and compliment the general monograph and reference collections. Afolabi (2011) quoting Nwalo (2003) described serials as publications issued in successive parts, at regular or irregular intervals and intended to be continued indefinitely. There are many kinds of serials. These include; newspapers, magazines, newsletters, journals, indexes, abstract, reports proceedings and transactions of societies etc. Out of them all, journals are the most important to researchers because much of articles therein are products of research and it may never appear in any other publications. With the advent of Information Communication Technology in delivering library services, many of these serial's materials can now be found in electronic format. Libraries are even acquiring databases that are of relevance to their institutions. An example of this specialized database is The Essential Electronic Agricultural Library (TEEAL) which is made accessible to library patrons at the Serial's Section of 'Nimbe Adedipe Library at the Federal University of Agriculture, Abeokuta, Ogun State, Nigeria. TEEAL as it is popularly called is a specialized database for Agricultural based disciplines. Also within the Serial's Section of 'Nimbe Adedipe Library, there are also other e-resources that are made available for library patrons, which are HINARI, EBSCOHOST, AGORA, JSTOR, National Virtual Library of Nigeria, ALUKA, BIOONE, On-line Nigerian Newspapers, and INTUITE. It is on this premise that the researcher aim to ascertain students' perception of these e-resources, usability of these resources and

the challenges encountered in using these resources.

Research Objectives

The main objective of this study is to determine students' perception of e-services in academic libraries: case study of the serial section of 'Nimbe Adedipe Library, Federal University of Agriculture, Abeokuta, Ogun state, Nigeria. while the specific objectives are:

- a. To determine the types of e-resources in the Serial's Section of 'Nimbe Adedipe Library
- b. To determine the perception of students about e-resources in the Serial's Section of 'Nimbe Adedipe Library
- c. To analyse the challenges encountered in using e-resources in the Serial's Section of 'Nimbe Adedipe Library
- d. To determine the purpose of using e-resources
- e. To determine the level of awareness of e-resource
- f. To determine the frequency of use of e-resources

Literature Review

Serials are rapidly morphing into networked electronic resources and services. The Anglo American cataloguing rules (1988) define serial as a 'continuing resource issued in a succession of discrete parts usually bearing numbering that has no predetermined conclusion for example, print and electronics journal, magazines, continuing directories, annual reports, newspapers and monographic serves'. Hammed and Osunrinade (2011) quoting Aina (2004) also describes serial as a distinctive title which is issued in parts, and each issue is published indefinitely. It includes periodicals, journals, newsletters, newspapers and magazines, etc. A periodical such as newspaper or magazine

has a distinctive title and is issued more frequently than once a year containing articles. While non - periodical serials are publications that are issued in successive parts once a year or less frequently, yearbooks annuals or monographic series are examples of non-periodical serials.

The provision of information and the access to the services of the library has been greatly influenced by the advent of (ICT) Information communication Technology. This development has affected serial's section of the library, the resources of the library and the services provided. It has also affected the users in one way or the other. For easy accessibility and usability, these serials materials are now mostly converted to electronic format which can now be accessible anytime through the library network. Also, various newspapers can also be accessible online and the databases also can be acquired by the library for the use of library patrons.

Achonna (2012) opined that a good percentage of students are aware and have easy access to use the e-journal resources. They are also aware of the potential benefits they stand to derive by exploiting the resources. However, they were hindered by some problems, among which is lack of skill in the use of the E - journal resources, power outage which limits access to the resources; inadequate computers which may hinder students from having access to the resources.

Research has shown that academic staff prefers electronic journals to print. Brown (2007) who worked on academic staff use of e-journal, found that 84% of the respondent prefers e-journal. According to him, having access to journal is seen as important by majority of the respondents. Sarasvady (2007) corroborated this further when he posited that, 58% of his respondents preferred electronic journals to print version. Chandran (2014) quoting Nallathamb and

Kanakaraj (2012) found that the majority of the respondent in the engineering colleges use electronic resources daily.

Bashorun and Adisa (2011) quoting Shuling (2007) concluded that nearly 80 percent of respondents knew little about electronic resources and nearly half the respondents use both printed and electronic resources, followed by print periodicals. Halima (2011) quoting Madhusudhan (2008), opined that Seventy-eight percent (78%) of the respondents feel that the use of the UGC – Infonet e-journals has created high dependency value on their research work and they needed current article alert services and electronic document supply services. Also Oduwole and Akpati (2003) investigated the accessibility and retrieval of electronic information at the University of Agriculture Library, Abeokuta, Nigeria. The 425 participants responded out of a survey population of 1,000, giving a response rate of 53.87 percent. The study revealed that electronic information cuts across all members of the University community that it was to a greater extent easy to use and were satisfied with their search outputs. The constraints identified included insufficient number of terminals available for use despite high demand and inadequate electricity supply. Chandran (2000) concluded in his own study that the majority (95.12%) of the respondents were aware of electronic resources in the library but only 4.88 % of the respondents were not aware of it, the types of electronic resources used most by the respondents were e-journals and e-databases with usage rates of 26.01% and 24.39% respectively. Only 4.88% of the respondents used all types of electronic resources and the purpose of using electronic resources mostly by the respondents (34.14%) was “to prepare for projects” while the purpose of using electronic resources lest by the

respondents (6.51%) was “to write book reviews”.

Halima (2011) concluded in her own study that majority of lecturers 92 (90.6%) and research scholars 56(80.0%) prefer to use e-journals, second highest of users prefer e-mail and WWW with 82 (73.2%) and 60(53.6%) among lecturers, whereas 36(52%) and 46(65.6%) among scholars. 32(28.6%) of lecturers and 30(42.9%) of research scholars made use of e-research report. The rest of the electronic resources, bibliographic databases, e-newspapers, e-magazines were comparatively less used. Her study also revealed that 73 (65.2%) lecturers and 46(65.7%) scholars usually used e-resources, 30(26.8%) lecturers and 20(28.65%) scholars used e-resources sometimes, whereas 9(8.04%) lecturers and 4(5.75%) scholars used e-resources rarely. The study indicated that scholars used the library more frequently than lecturers.

Methodology

The instrument used for data collection was the questionnaire. The population under study constitute the number of students that came to the serial's section over a period of a month which is Four Hundred and Forty-One Students' (441). The method used for the selection of the population was simple random sampling. Data were collected from the selected students using questionnaire as the main instrument for data collection. The questionnaire was designed to identify the important variables to be measured. These are perception of students to e-resources, access to e-resources, usability of e-resources and challenges encountered in using these e-resources. Copies of the questionnaire were given to students as they come into the serial's section. 500 Level students' were 168, while 400 level students' were 159, also 300 level students were' 49 making a total of 376 undergraduate students' and post-graduate students' were 65 students' respectively. All the questionnaires were dully completed and found usable for the study.

Figure 1: Users' Status

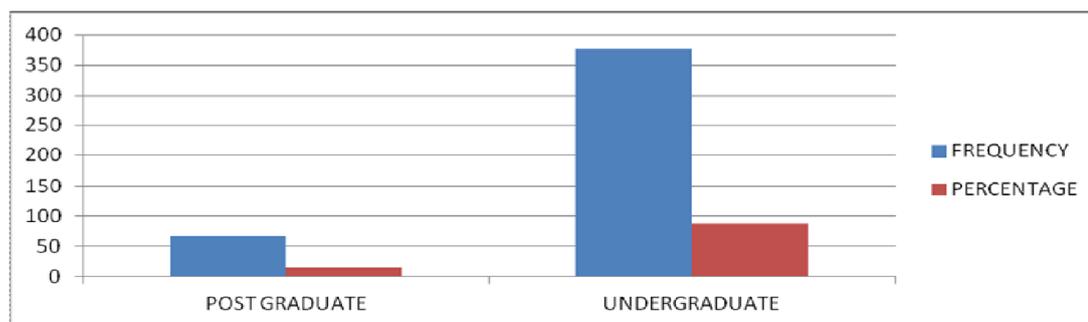


Figure 1 showed the breakdown of the target population by status. The table revealed that of the 441(100.0%) respondents, 65 (14.7%) were post-graduate students' while 376 (85.3%) were undergraduate students'. Table 2 revealed that of the 65 (14.7%) respondents which were post-graduate students', 29 (44.6%)

were male while 36 (55.4%) were female. Also from the same table 2, 376 (85.3%) which is the number of undergraduate students', 181 (48%) were male while 195 (52%) were female.

This indicated that more female undergraduate and post-graduate students' makes use of the Serial's section of the Library.

Figure 2: Distribution of users' by gender

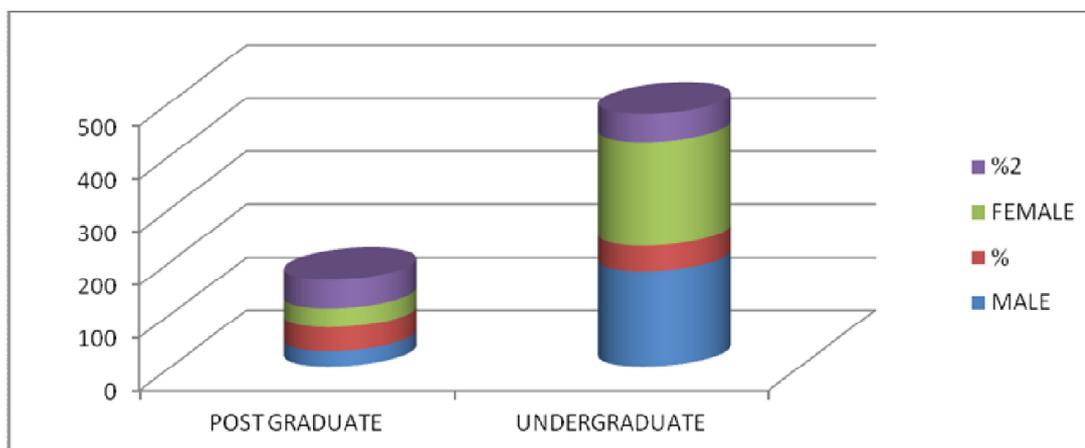


Figure 3: Awareness of e-resources

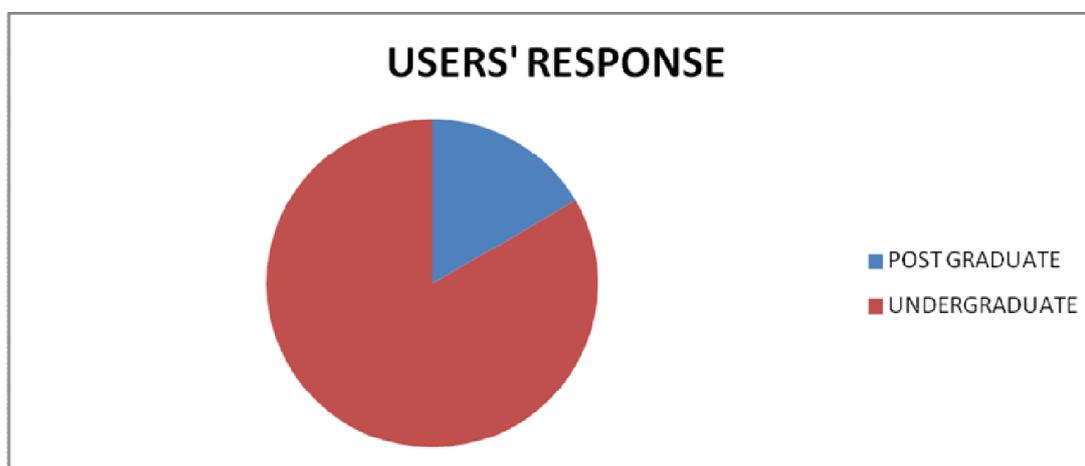
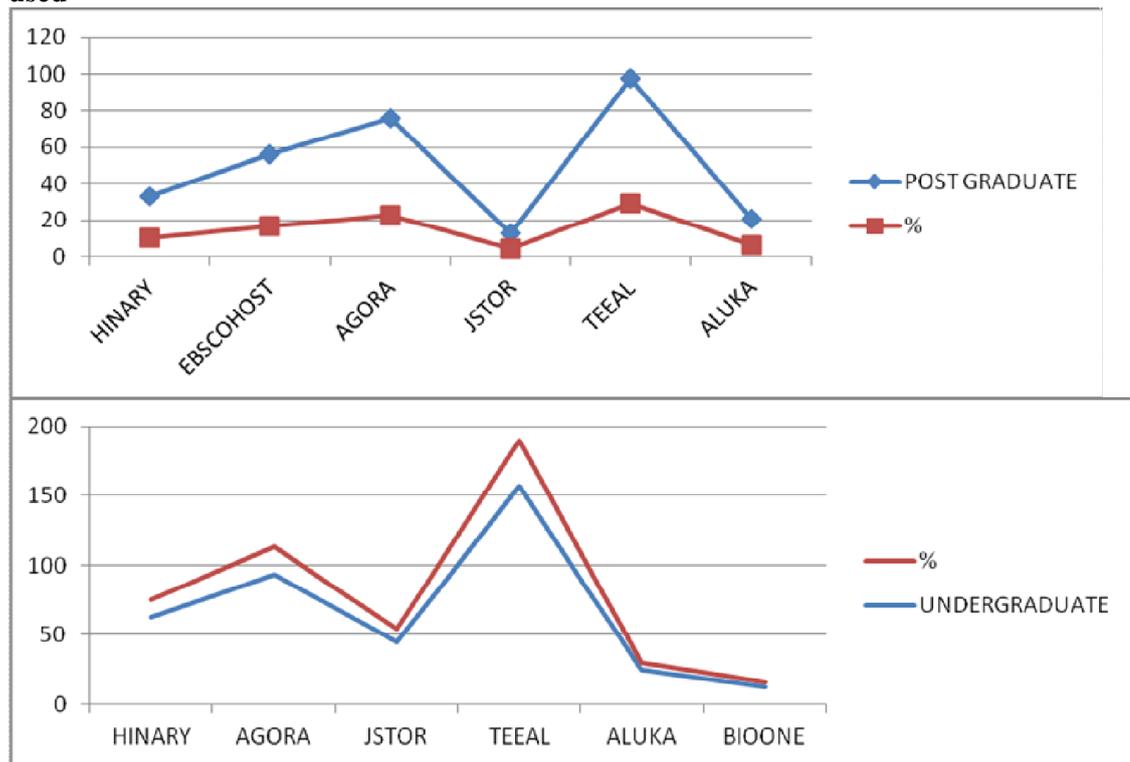


Figure 3 was used to measure the level of awareness of e-resources and from the table, it can be deduced that 59 (90.8%) and 6 (9.2%) indicated YES and NO respectively among post-graduate students. While 296 (78.7%) and 80 (21.3%) also indicated YES and NO among undergraduate students'. This indicating that majority of both post-graduates and undergraduates students' using the Serial's section are aware of e-resources within the section

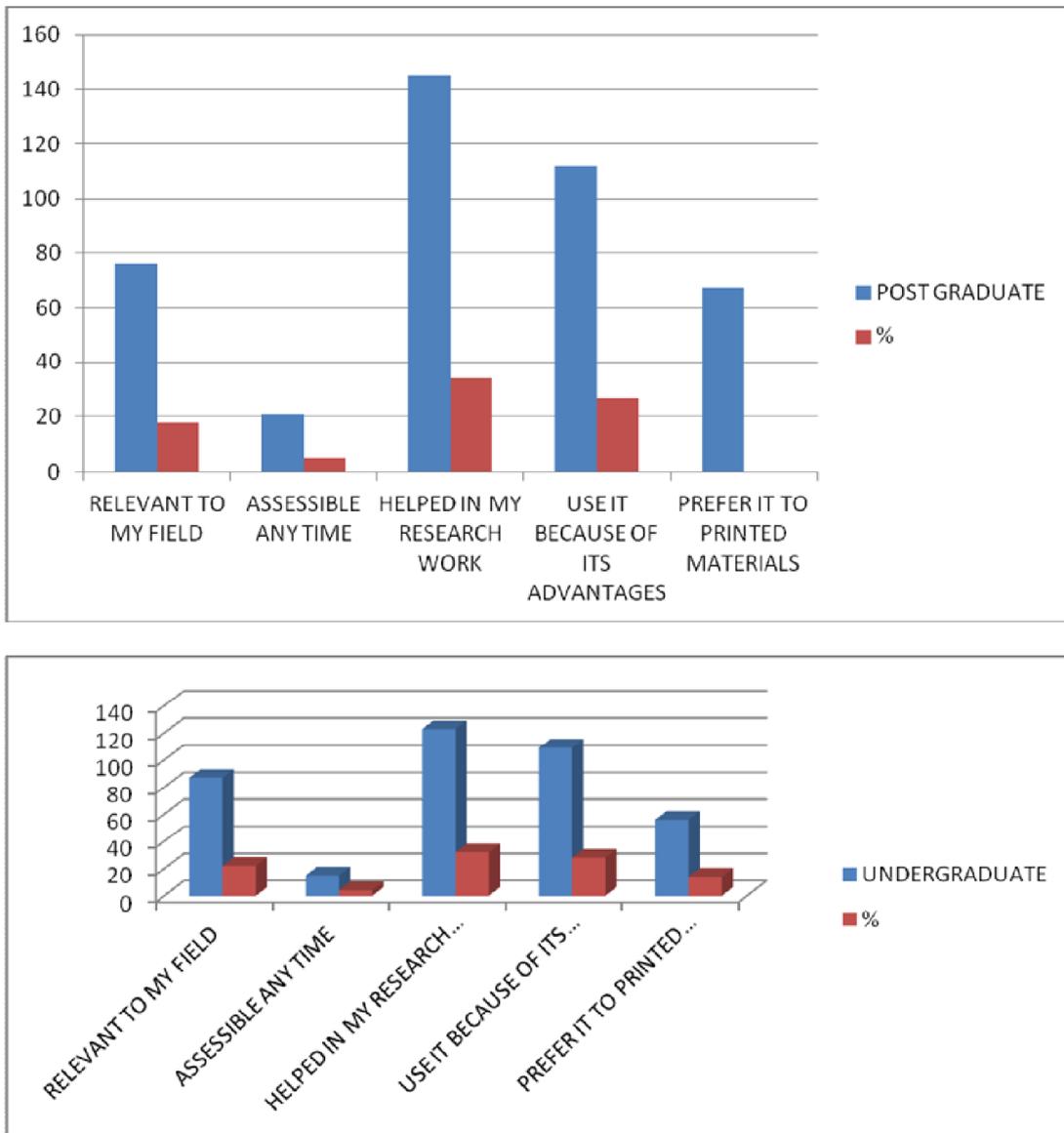
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Figure 4: Types of e-resources used



The deduction from figure 4 implies that of all e-resources at the Serial's section, TEEAL and AGORA has the highest number of usage with undergraduate having 157 (33%) and 94 (20%) respectively. While post-graduate has 98 (29%) and 76 (23%) respectively. Implication of these figures points to the fact that both undergraduate and post-graduate students make use of TEEAL and AGORA more than any other e-resources in the section.

Figure 5: Perception of students to e-resources



The data from figure 5 shows that the perception of post-graduate student to e-resources is that it has helped them in their research work with 145 (34%) and undergraduate students' too perceived the same way with 123 (32%).

Figure 6: Purpose of using of e-resources

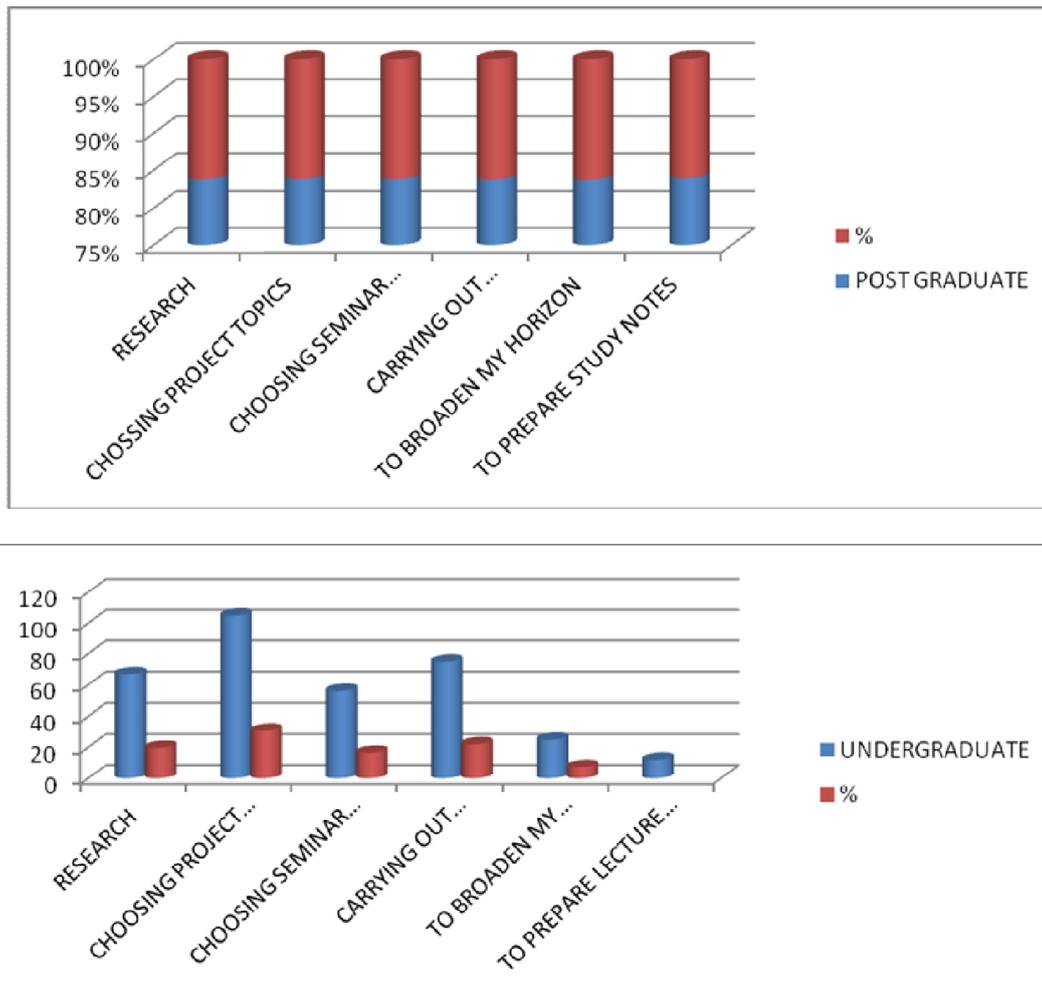


Figure 6 measured the purpose of using e-resources with post-graduate student identifying that the main purpose of using e-resources is for their research with 148 (28.6%) followed by choosing project topics 123 (23.7%) and the third purpose is for choosing seminar topics with 112 (21.6%) respectively. While, undergraduate students' main purpose for using e-resources is for choosing project topics 105 (30.9%), followed by for carrying out assignment 75 (22.1%) and for research 67 (19.7%) respectively.

Figure 7: Challenges encountered in using the e-resources

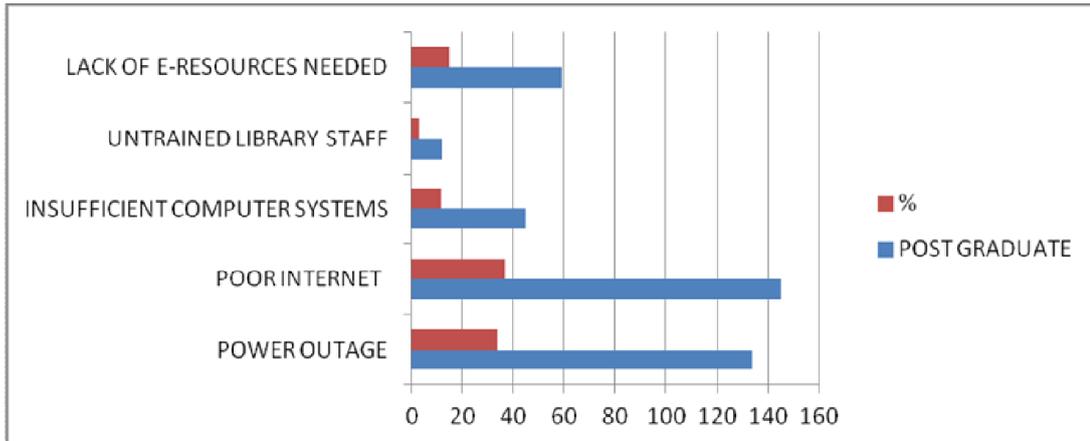


Figure 7 measured the challenges encountered in using e-resources at the Serial's section and the major challenge is poor internet facility 145 (36.7%) and 133 (32.2%) for both post-graduate and undergraduate students' respectively. While power outage 134 (33.9%) 127 (30.8%), and insufficient computer systems 45 (11.3%) 78 (18.9%) also ranked as major challenges for all categories of students'.

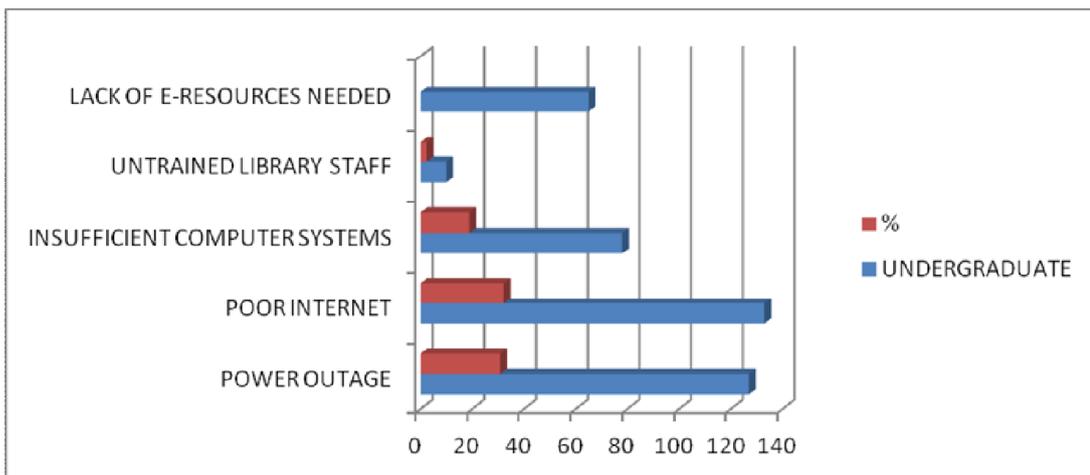


Figure 8: Frequency of use

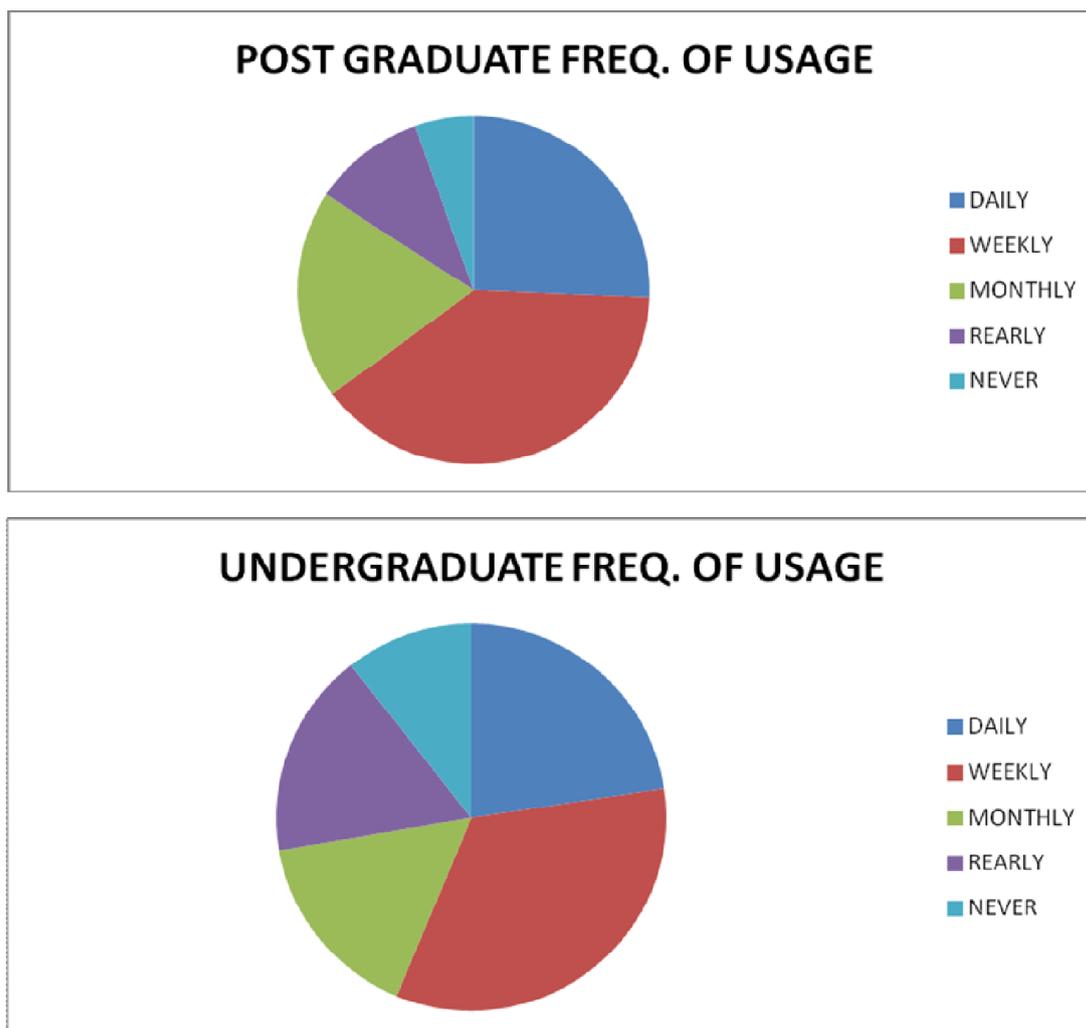


Figure 8 measured the frequency of usage of e-resources and for post-graduate students' 57 (25.7%) use e-resources daily, 87 (39.2%) use e-resources weekly, 43 (19.4%) use e-resources monthly, 23 (10.4%) use e-resources rarely, while 12 (5.4%) have never use e-resources at the Serial's section of the library. Also for undergraduate students', 45 (22.6%) use e-resources daily, 67 (33.7%) use e-resources weekly, 32 (16.1%) use e-resources monthly, 34 (17.1%) use e-resources rarely, while 21 (10.6%) have

never use e-resources at the Serial section of the library.

On the whole, the study sought to investigate students' perception to e-resources in Academic Libraries. Therefore, the study revealed that majority of both undergraduate and post-graduate students' are aware of e-resources at the serial's section of 'Nimbe Adedipe Library which is the main Library at the Federal University of Agriculture, Abeokuta, Ogun State, Nigeria. The study also revealed that of all e-resources in Serial's Section of the

library, TEEAL and AGORA has the highest number of usage among students'. The perception of both undergraduate and post-graduate students' to these e-resources is that it helps them with their research work, they use these e-resources because of its numerous advantages and also because it is relevant to their field. Two of the major challenges faced in using these e-resources according to respondents is poor internet connectivity and power outage.

Conclusion and Recommendations

Based on findings from the study, it was observed that post-graduate students' and undergraduate students' of the Federal University of Agriculture, Abeokuta, Ogun State, Nigeria have the same perception to e-resources at the Serial section of the 'Nimbe Adedipe Library. The perception is that it has helped them in their research work thereby implying a huge impact on the usage of these e-resources with all its attendant advantages despite all the challenges faced. For better service delivery at the Serial's Section of 'Nimbe Adedipe Library, the University management should endeavour to:

- a. Provide funds for subscription to more electronic primary and secondary sources
- b. Subnet the library by giving her certain percentage of the bandwidth enough to accommodate her patrons
- c. Organize training for her patron's because it is essential for the better use of electronic resources in the library since a good number of users are searching electronic literature on their own.

In conclusion, although majority of these students are aware of these e-resources, and they use them, they are of the opinion that the management of the Library can help cushion the effects of these challenges

faced in really getting the maxima output of the usage of these e-resources which is highly beneficial to their research work.

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