

## **AWARENESS AND USE OF ELECTRONIC JOURNALS BY POSTGRADUATES IN TWO FEDERAL UNIVERSITIES IN SOUTH WEST, NIGERIA**

By

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### **Abstract**

*This study examined awareness and use of electronic journals by postgraduates of Obafemi Awolowo University and University of Ibadan, Nigeria. Random sampling technique was used to select postgraduates from four faculties (Arts, Science, Social Science and Education) from the aforementioned universities. A structured questionnaire was used to collect data from a sample of 400 postgraduates. Frequencies and percentages were used for data analysis. Findings revealed that postgraduates were aware of electronic journals databases the library holds and they were utilized mainly for research work. The study revealed that postgraduates were highly skilled in searching and retrieving of electronic journals but encountered some difficulties such as incessant power outage, slow internet connectivity and download delay among others. It was recommended that a standby generating set should be provided to cushion the effect of erratic power supply and that user education/ training on a regular basis should be carried out in order to increase usage of electronic journals.*

**Keywords:** Electronic journal, Access, Use, Postgraduates, University,

### **Introduction**

Electronic journals are scholarly journals or intellectual magazines that can be accessed electronically (Electronic journal, 2019). In practice, this means that they are usually published on the web. They are a specialized form of electronic document with the purpose of providing material for academics, research and study. They have revolutionized the change in the field of library and information services and they are regarded as important library resources. Academic libraries have embraced electronic journals (e-journals) because of their accessibility and convenience (Tenopir, Hitchcock and Pillow 2003). Patrons can instantly retrieve numerous full-text documents from a database search and they appreciate the convenience of electronic access. In some decades ago, library collections were mainly in prints formats but due to the emergence of internet, information technologies (IT) cum adoption of IT in library routines, library collection now consists of both prints and electronic resources. In addition, the rapid growth of new technologies has changed the level of communication and as well changed the way and manner students search for information. Abinew and Vuda (2013) stated that libraries have transformed into digital and virtual libraries where books, journals and magazines have changed into electronic books (e-books), electronic journals (e-journals) and electronic magazines (e-magazines). This has increased the global dissemination of information. In a nutshell, technology has changed the way of life, the way we relate to each other and also search for knowledge or information Popoola (2008) reiterated that effective use of library information products and services lies solely on awareness. Information sources which users are not aware of will be underutilized, once they are aware of it, they tend to use it.

When users of a library have adequate information on the resources that are available in the library, they are encouraged to use them as the need arises. The core of all the activities and collections in the library is quick accessibility and use of the resources by library patrons. To achieve this, responsibility rests on the librarians/libraries to continually create an awareness of

the resources in the library to patrons especially the students and academic staff (Eyiolorunsho and Eluwole, 2017). It is therefore important that academic librarians create an awareness of the resources in the library and also evaluate usability of such resources on a regular basis. It is on this note that the study investigates awareness and use of electronic journals by postgraduates in Nigerian universities.

**The following are the objectives of the study:**

- 1) To ascertain the level of awareness of e-journals by postgraduates
- 2) Investigate means through which postgraduates get notified of e-journals
- 3) Determine the frequency of use of e-journals
- 4) Find out the reasons for the use of e-journals by postgraduates
- 5) Identify the challenges of accessing/using e-journals

**Literature Review**

Quite a lot of study has been carried out on electronic information resources, electronic databases, electronic sources of the library, awareness and use of e-journals by postgraduates (Katalwa and Underwood, 2017; Veena, 2016; Akinola, Shorunke, Ajayi, Odefadehan & Ibikunle 2018). Das, Anushandhan, Odisha and Maharana (2013) reiterated that awareness is core to the usage of electronic information resources; where materials are in closed access, users ease of access to such electronic resources is by far reduced but where they are in open access (not subscription-based) postgraduate students find and use them.

Akpojotor (2016) averred that awareness and use of electronic information resources are essential so as to keep postgraduates alert of the available media through which they can access needed information. Findings from his study established that postgraduates of library and information science (LIS) in Southern Nigeria are highly aware of electronic resources and its usage was to a large extent.

Samyal, Singh and Sumi (2016) investigated access and usage of electronic journals by students of Panjab University and found that e-journals were mostly accessed by postgraduates and research scholars. It was established that there was high usage of e-journals and library was the point of access. In addition, the findings revealed that the purpose of use was strictly for research.

Similarly, Akinola, Shorunke, Ajayi, Odefadeha & Ibikunle (2018) found that majority of the postgraduates of the University of Ibadan are aware of electronic databases especially individual electronic databases that are made available by the university library for postgraduates' use. Findings established surfing the internet as major channel of awareness of e-journals and that the purpose of use of electronic information resources was majorly for research work while other reason includes; literature searching, to generate new information and update knowledge.

Additionally, Khan and Ahmad (2009) reported that most of the research scholars at Aligarh Muslim University and Banaras Hindu University are aware of the availability of e-journals and largely use them for reference purpose in their research work.

Katalwa and Underwood (2017) in a study on access and use of PERii e-journals by postgraduates of Dar es Salaam University, Tanzania, found that majority (95%) of the respondents

are aware of PERii electronic journals through various means which include library website, through notice board, through colleagues, librarians and so on. The findings revealed that 95.8 percent reported having access to the journals whereas only 4.2 percent claimed not having access to PERii electronic journals due to some infrastructural challenges such as limited power outage, access to computer, download delay, etc.

Samyal, Singh and Sumi (2016) established that e-journals are mostly accessed and used by postgraduates and research scholars of Panjab University, Chandigarh. Findings showed that majority (61%) of both the postgraduates and research scholars make use of e-journals on daily basis to gain knowledge in their respective field while 69% of them affirmed that they use e-journals to make assignment and complete research project on some specific subject areas and 51% use them to find particular information.

Sudhakra and Sharadamma (2017) in their findings revealed that postgraduate students at Government First Grade College Kolar, Karnataka in India are aware of the existence of e-journals. The findings showed that respondents' optimal use of the e-journals is impeded by limited access such as lack of information searching skills, limited space, low bandwidth and erratic power supply.

Veena (2016) investigated the awareness and utilization of open access electronic information resources and related issues among postgraduate students of Mangalore University, and found that majority of the students are aware of open access resources and that 72(47.36%) of respondents frequently use e-books/e-journals, 58(38.15%) of respondents acquired their open access electronic resource usage skill through teachers/research supervisors, 98(64.47%) of the respondents stated that they are satisfied with open access resources. Findings further established that the respondents' main purpose of using open access electronic resources was to study followed by research work/project.

It is apparent that quite a lot of studies have been carried out on awareness and use of electronic journals by postgraduates of university. Findings have however revealed level of awareness of e-journals by postgraduates and also barriers militating against the effective use of e-journals.

### **Methodology**

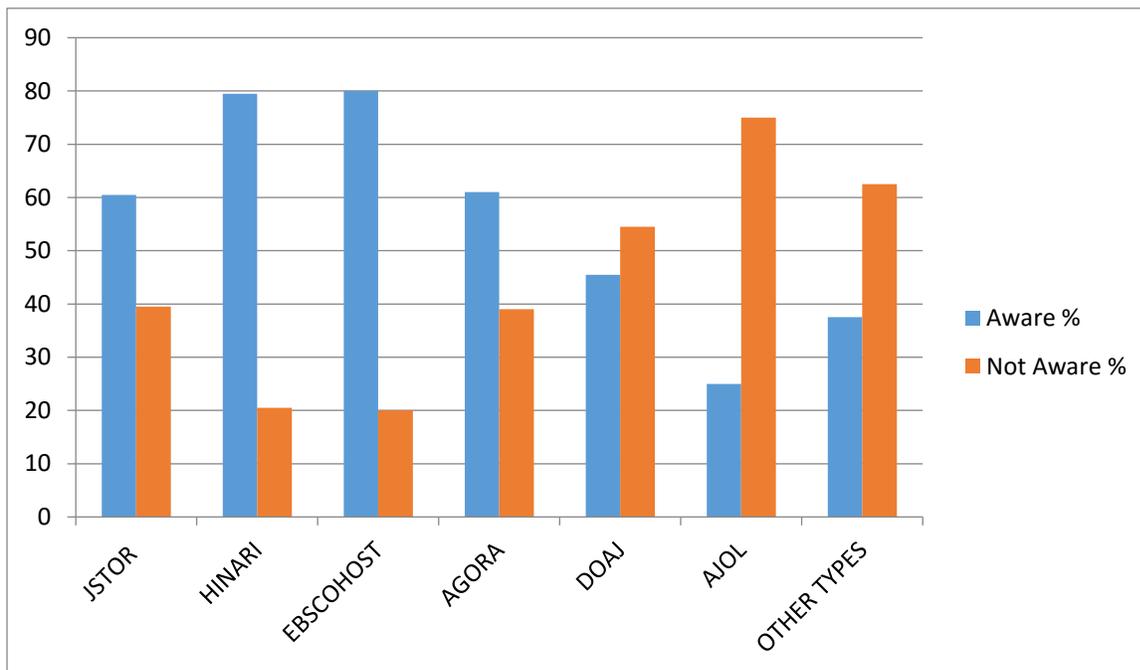
Descriptive survey design was employed for the study. Data was collected through the administration of a closed ended questionnaire used to elicit information from the respondents. The target population were postgraduates from Obafemi Awolowo University, Ile-Ife and University of Ibadan. 450 postgraduates from four faculties (Social Science, Arts, Education and Science) were randomly selected. The population sample size is in consonance with the study of Akinola, et al., (2018) where four faculties were the sample size used to represent the entire population of the postgraduates of University of Ibadan on the awareness and use of electronic databases. A well structured questionnaire was administered on the respondents and 400 out of 450 were completed and returned. The data collected was analysed using frequencies and percentages.

**Result and Discussion of Findings****Table 1: Demographic Information of Respondents**

<b>Variable</b>	<b>Measurement</b>	<b>Number of Respondents</b>	<b>Percentage (%)</b>
<b>Gender</b>	Male	234	58.4
	Female	166	41.6
<b>Total</b>		400	100
<b>Age</b>	21-25	174	43.5
	26-30	42	10.5
	31-35	84	21
	36-40	80	20
	40 years and above	20	5
<b>Total</b>		400	100
<b>Category of Students</b>	Masters	324	81
	PhD	76	19
<b>Total</b>		400	100

The demographic information of respondents in table 1 revealed that more than half of the respondents 234 (58.4%) were male while 166 (41.6) were females. This gender distribution explains high interest of male in academics and in the usage of e-journals. This confirms the findings of Samyal, Singh and Sumi (2016) who affirmed that male students use e-journals more than female students. Further, findings showed that there is larger percentage of postgraduates 174 (43.5%) between the ages of 21-25 years. This was followed by those within the ages of 31-35 years, 84 (21.1%), 80 (20%) were aged 36-40, 42 (10.5%) were aged 26-30 and 20 (5%) were aged 40 years and above. On the category of students, statistics revealed (324) 81% of the respondents are masters students while (76) 19% are PhD students. This implies that we have more masters' students in the study than PhD students.

**Figure 1: Level of Awareness of E-journals by Postgraduates**



On the level of awareness, result shows respondents' high level of awareness on Ebscohost 80% and was followed by Hinari 79.5%. Agora and Jstor 60%, Doaj 45%, other types 37% while Ajol 25% was the least aware.

**Figure 2: Means through which Postgraduates get notified of E-Journals**

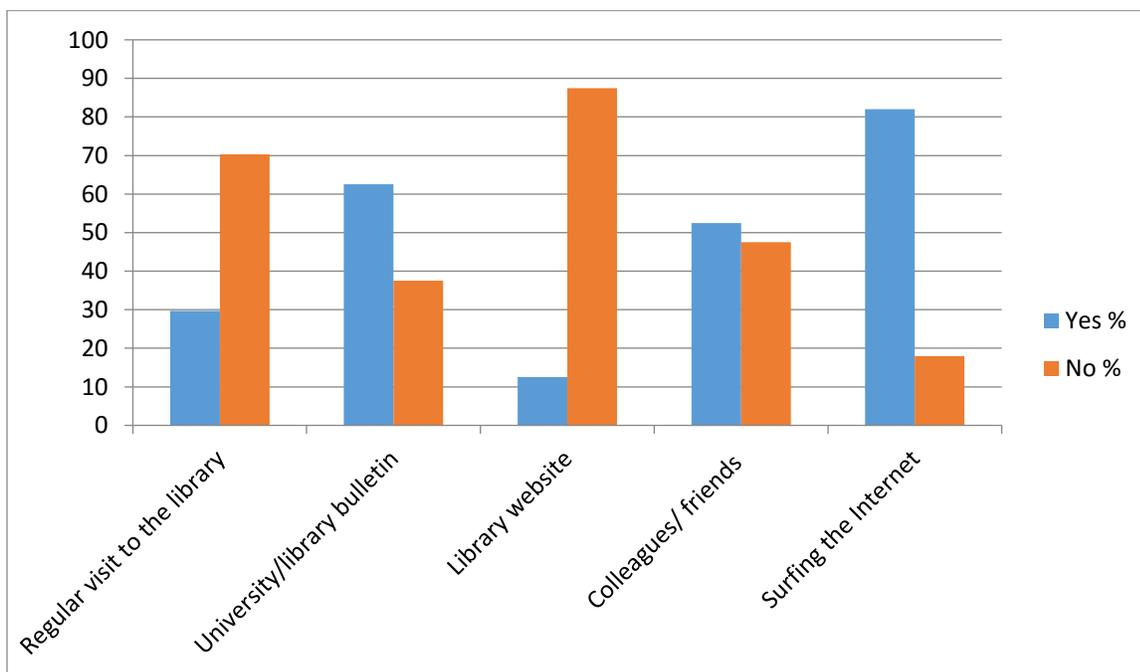


Figure 2 established the various means of awareness of e-journals by postgraduates. Majority 328(82%) of the respondents became aware of e-journals by surfing the net. Sizeable number 250 (62.5%) became aware through university/library bulletin and this was followed by colleagues and friends 210 (52.5%). Others means of awareness include; regular visit to the library 119 (29.7%) library website 50 (12.5). This confirms the findings of Akinola, et al., (2018) who affirmed that majority of the postgraduates became aware of electronic resources through surfing of the net.

**Figure 3: Purpose of Use of E-journals by Postgraduate**

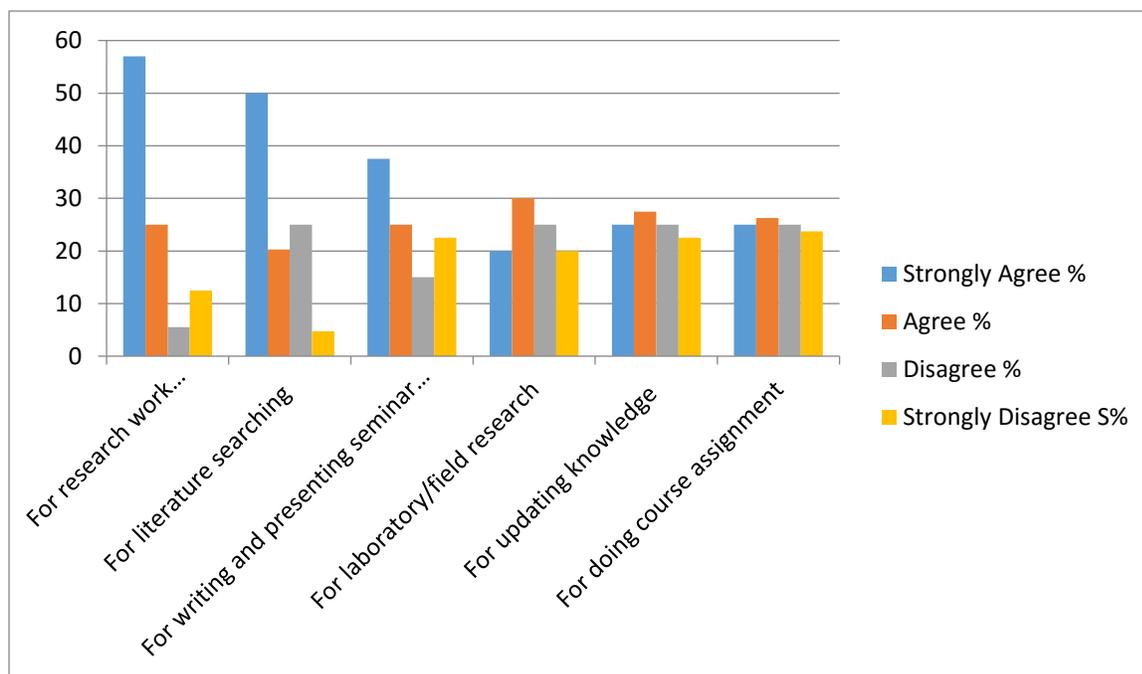
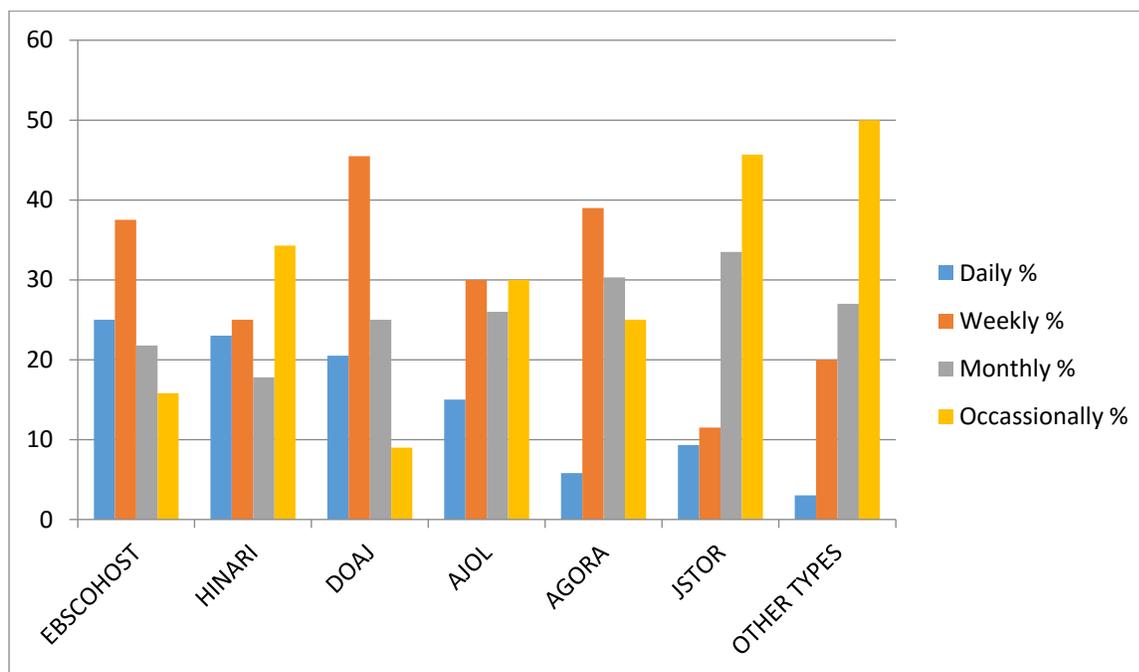


Figure 3 revealed various reasons given by respondents for using e-journals. 328 (82%) used e-journals for research work, 281 (70.3%) for literature searching, 250 (62.5%) for writing seminar papers, 220 (55%) for laboratory or field work, 210(52.5%) to update knowledge and 205 (51.25%) for doing course assignment.

**Figure 4 Frequency of use of E-journals by Postgraduate**

The e-journals that were used on daily basis were Ebscohost, Hinari, Doaj, Ajol and Jstor with a range of 10-30% while a large percentage (50%) of the respondents' claimed to use e-journals on weekly/monthly basis. However, 45% and 50% of the respondents occasionally use Jstor and other e-journals databases respectively.

**Table 2 Challenges Encountered**

S/N	Items	Agree	Disagree
1	Incessant power outage	285 (71.25%)	115 (28.75%)
2	Slow internet connectivity	257(64.25%)	143(35.75%)
3	Access denied due to unknown password and username	262 (65.5%)	138(34.5%)
4	No access to full text of citation and abstracts	280 (70%)	120(30%)
5	Download delay	208 (52%)	192(48%)
6S	Lack of knowledge/ search techniques	120 (30%)	280(70%)

Table 2 presents information on the problem faced by respondents' when accessing/using e-journals. Incessant power outage 285(71.25%) was the major challenge faced by respondents in accessing/using of e-journals. 280 (70%) reported no access to full text of citation and abstracts, 262 (65.5%) were faced with access denied due to unknown password and username, 257 (64.25%) faced with slow internet connectivity and 208 (52%) with problem in downloading the e-journals. Findings further revealed that 280 (70%) of the respondents disagreed lack of knowledge/search techniques. This implies that postgraduates at the two institutions have ICT skills in searching and retrieving electronic information resources. The finding agrees with Akpojotor (2016) and

Akinola, et al., (2018) who reported that postgraduates are highly skilled in the use of electronic information resources.

### Conclusion

Electronic journals are essential source of information for postgraduates, research scholars and lecturers in their day to day academic and research activities. It is evident from the findings that postgraduates of Obafemi Awolowo University and University of Ibadan are aware of electronic journal databases which domiciled in their respective libraries. The major channel of awareness was through the university/library bulletin. The study established various purposes on the use of e-journals which was majorly for research work while other reasons includes literature searching, writing of seminar papers, doing course assignment and so on. Conclusively, despite the importance and usefulness of e-journals to postgraduates' learning and research activities, there are some challenges militating against effective use of e-journals by postgraduates. These include incessant power outage, no access to full text of citation and abstracts, access denied due to unknown password/username and slow internet connectivity.

### Recommendation

Based on the findings from this study, the following recommendations are put forward to improve and maximize the use of e-journals by postgraduates:

1. The library should be more proactive in creating awareness on the new and existing databases to postgraduates by employing marketing information strategies like flyers, newsletters, bulletins, etc as well as using social media platforms such as facebook, whatsapp group, mobile text alert and e-mails alert messages.
2. The library should make its webpage more visible or install mobile library application as a means of providing a guide to the use of electronic databases its holds.
3. Librarians have a role to play in making these electronic databases known to postgraduate by organizing seminar/training as soon as they begin their course work on the uses and benefits of e-journals and the need to develop their searching and retrieval skills.
4. It is highly recommended that libraries should provide other source of power to curb erratic power supply. Standby generating set, provision of inverter or solar energy could be of great assistance to both the library and its users.
5. Finally, libraries should provide more computer workstations with internet connection for ease of access to electronic databases.

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