

## **AVAILABILITY AND USE OF SCHOLARLY JOURNALS BY STUDENTS IN UNIVERSITY LIBRARIES IN NIGERIA: A CASE STUDY OF AFE BABALOLA UNIVERSITY LIBRARY**

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### **ABSTRACT**

The study investigated the availability and use of scholarly journals by students in university libraries in Nigeria: a case study of Afe Babalola university library, Ado Ekiti, Ekiti State. Six research questions guided the study and the data collection instrument used was structured questionnaire, the study adopted survey research method. The findings of the study shows that majority of the respondent use scholarly journals twice monthly and by monthly basis and they purposely used it for self-examination, learning more about a subject, for assignment and coursework. The study also shows that scholarly journals are readily available and accessible to the respondents. However, most of the respondents indicated that scholarly journals helps to direct and guild them on how to carryout research and do quality research. The study revealed that majority of the respondent encountered challenges on the changes on journal frequency, numbering, titles and format and lack of scholarly journals in their course of discipline. Therefore, the study recommends that university libraries should endeavour to maintain continuous subscription of scholarly journals and make it available in all the fields of knowledge in order to encourage students' effective use.

**Keywords:** Availability, Use, Scholarly journals, University Libraries, Nigeria.

### **INTRODUCTION**

The availability of scholarly journals in academic libraries is essential to students' research development in the academic institutions; it is tantamount to their academic growth and success. It is an effective and efficient primary source for a good research. However, a well-stocked and developed serial section of the library is a pride of any academic institution which will help to support and strengthen the teaching, learning and research. Thereby, maintaining constant and continuous journal subscription in the university libraries pose a serious challenge to the library management. Edelson (1998) asserts that ...the world of scholarly journals - made up of authors, readers, librarians, and publishers-is headed for seismic upheavals that must result in major alterations in the landscape. Librarians, hit with declining budgets and escalating journal prices, are canceling subscriptions. Publishers, facing declining subscription levels, raise rates to compensate, and then some. The increase in the output of research papers balloons the size and

cost of journals. The subscription backlog of scholarly journals in most university libraries is still a perturbing issue in serial building in academic libraries in developing countries.

Nwalo (2003) cited Osborn (1980) described serials as publications issued in successive parts, at regular or irregular intervals and intended to be continued indefinitely. Therein, serials include; newspaper, 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 its articles are products of research and it may never appear in any other publications. But the role of the academic journal does not end here. It has gained a position in the academy of particular importance. The evaluation of academic careers is increasingly based on the assessment of scholarly publication. Tenure and promotion have become all but inseparable from journal publication. Each year, billions of dollars from grant-giving agencies are awarded on the basis of strength of proposal and strength of publication record. Scholarly reputation and recognition are intrinsically tied to the reputation of the journals and presses where academics publish. The caliber of academic departments and the status of universities are most often evaluated by the scholarship and reputation of their faculties (Seiler, 1990)

However, university libraries should endeavor to provide and make available current and relevant scholarly journal titles in all the courses offered by the parent institution; Also they should create awareness of its availability in the library, so as to increase its effective use. Therefore, this study investigated the availability and use of scholarly journals by students in university libraries in Nigeria: a case study of Afe Babalola university library, Ado Ekiti, Ekiti State.

## **LITERATURE REVIEW**

The modern process of scholarly communication relies heavily on books, monographs, and conference proceedings, but most commonly on academic journals (Oluronsola 2001). The journal is fundamental to scholarly communication. The status conferred by publication in highly-rated journals is essential to the career of academics (Mohammed, 2008). Scholarly journal is a periodical that disseminate current findings originating from intellectual and creative work of research of a discipline, subdiscipline, interdiscipline and multidiscipline usually published yearly, quarterly, bimonthly, or monthly issues sold by subscription. Also, Milne (1999) defined scholarly communication as "the social phenomenon whereby intellectual and creative activity is passed from one scholar to another." According to Reitz (2004) a journal is a periodical devoted to disseminating original research and commentary on current developments within a specific discipline, subdiscipline or field of study (example: Journal of Clinical Epidemiology), usually published in quarterly, bimonthly, or monthly issues sold by subscription. Yahaya (1993) refers journal to those periodicals created by any of the following:

- A constituted body: an educational institution, ministry, board, bureau, council, commission, library, center, academy, division, or department.
- A specialized group: scientists, historians, educators, economists, archaeologists, linguists, folklorists, medical doctors
- An interest group: student associations, religious group, tradeunion.

The main purpose of a scholarly journal is to publish recent original research findings to the academic communities. Journal articles are usually written by experts in the field. They are current and usually narrowly focused; references are included to show the sources of information consulted and also use of vocabulary of the discipline, assuming some background on the part of the reader is highly regarded. Submitted articles are often "peer reviewed" and by the editorial body that agrees that the article represents properly conducted original research or writing before it is accepted for publication by the university presses or professional organizations. Scholarly journals are also called academic, professional, peer-reviewed, or refereed journals. Thus, scholarly journal articles should possess the following elements to have a full academic recognition:

- a. Abstract
- b. Introduction
- c. literature review
- d. Research Methodology
- e. Analysis of findings including table, graphs and charts but few glossy pages or exciting pictures.
- f. Conclusion and Recommendations
- g. References.

Therefore, university libraries should provide students with the latest journal titles in all the subjects/courses covered by its parent institution and also, staff and students are expected to make good use of the library to get current information in their chosen field of study. In the words of Olanlokun and Salisu (1988), journals are accorded prominence in the library because they provide the latest information in a discipline and if people want to be current in their field, they have to read relevant journals.

Availability of scholarly journals refers to the presence of journal publications in the library. Aguolu and Aguolu (2002) assert that resources may be available in the library and even identified bibliographically as relevant to one's interest but the user may not be able to lay hands on them. One may identify citations in indexes, but may not have access to the sources containing the relevant article. They further maintain that availability of an information source does not necessarily imply its accessibility because the source may be available but access to it, is prevented for one reason or the other. However, since university library is the repository base of information resources of its parent institution; it is saddled with the responsibility to provide and make accessible adequate information resources available for use.

In proper journal management and organization, scholarly journals are arranged on the shelf either by alphabetic or subject order. Also university libraries usually binds all the issues for a given publication year in one or more volumes in order to preserve and create effective access to users who are interested to use a particular journal title. It is improbable that the scholarly journal will retain its current format as the world evolves from print to the digital electronic form. As libraries make this transition, academic journals will be swept along with the process. Scholarly journals have reasons of their own to make the conversion (Seiler, 1990). Therein, scholarly journals are presently available in digital format in full-text bibliographic databases, usually by licensing agreement.

The use of information and communication technology (ICT) is gaining momentum in universities libraries especially now that most universities in Nigeria are adopting ICT in the development and improvement of their services (Oriogu, Ogbuiyi and Ogbuiyi, 2014). The advent of ICT has revolutionized the mode of collection building in academic libraries; in that the emergent of the Internet has greatly improved the means of scholarly access, use and availability in the university libraries. This paradigm shift has greatly effect users' information seeking behaviour. Therein, the rapid post-World War II expansion of STM research was characterized by the ensuing commercialization of scholarly publishing and an increase in subscription fees, far exceeding library acquisition budgets. This has resulted in a funding crisis that has strained the symbiotic relationship among publishers, academic libraries and scholars. In this environment of rising tensions, with the evolution of digital networks about 1993, it became technically feasible to move from a paper to adigital distribution system for scholarly journals (Solomon, 2013). However, licensing of electronic resources has been very common, but presently, the trend has loosened to open access mode. There are two main forms of open access: Open access publishing in which the journals is freely available from the Internet and self archiving, where the author makes copy of their own work freely available on the web. Despite the promising potential for open access to improve scholarly communication, this mode of publishing is not yet wide spread in developing countries when compared to developed countries (Moller, 2006; Wang and Su, 2006; Directory of Open Access Repositories (DOAR), 2010).

Therefore University libraries should endeavour to subscribe to both paper and online scholarly journals in order to provide effective access to the use of available scholarly research works to students in academic communities.

### **AFE BABALOLA UNIVERSITY LIBRARY**

Afe Babalola University (also known as ABUAD) is a private university located in Ado-Ekiti, Ekiti State, Nigeria. It was established in 2009. The inception of the university gave birth to the university library. ABUAD library is a hybrid library that is rich in print and non-print resources. However, the library provides information resources to staff, students, researchers and the user community at large. The library has an effective Internet connection that enable the students to access the Internet at any location of the library and the university with ease.

### **STATEMENT OF THE PROBLEM**

Scholarly journals are the most crucial serial publication that has highly projected research publications to academic institutions but the limited availability in the university libraries and use by students forms the basis for this study. Therefore, the study investigated the availability and use of scholarly journals by students in university libraries in Nigeria: a case study of Afe Babalola university library Ado Ekiti, Ekiti State.

### **OBJECTIVE OF THE STUDY**

The main objective of this study is to investigate the availability and use of scholarly journals by students in university libraries in Nigeria. The specific objectives of the study are to:

1. determine the frequency of use of scholarly journal
2. ascertain purpose of use of scholarly journals
3. find out the availability of scholarly journals in the university library
4. ascertain the accessibility of scholarly journals in the university library
5. determine importance of scholarly journals to students
6. find out the challenges to the use of scholarly journals

## SCOPE OF THE STUDY

The study covers Afe Babalola university library users in Ado Ekiti, Ekiti State, Nigeria. It also investigated the availability and use of scholarly journals by students in university libraries in Nigeria.

## METHODOLOGY

Survey research method was adopted for the study and structured questionnaire were used to collect data. A total of hundred (150) students of Afe Babalola university library users were sampled, out of which ninety seven (149) was completed for analysis using frequency counts, simple percentage, mean, standard deviation, to answer the research questions. Thus, Random sampling technique was used to administer the questionnaire.

## ANALYSIS OF FINDINGS

### Demographic Information of the Respondents

**Table 1: Distribution of the Respondents by Level**

Statements	Frequency	Percent
100level	6	4.0
200level	5	3.4
300 level	84	56.4
400 level	48	32.2
500 level	6	4.0
<b>Total</b>	<b>149</b>	<b>100.0</b>

Table 1 shows that 6(4.0%) are in 100 Level, 5(3.4%) are in 200 Level, 84(56.4%) are in 300 Level, 48(32.2%) are in 400 Level, 6(4.0%) are in 500 Level..

**Table 2: Distribution of the Respondents by Gender**

Statements	Frequency	Percent
Male	49	32.9
Female	100	67.1
<b>Total</b>	<b>149</b>	<b>100.0</b>

Table 2 shows that 49(32.9%) of the respondents were males while their female counterparts were 100(67.1%).

**Table 3: Distribution of the Respondents by Age**

Statements	Frequency	Percent
15 – 18	54	36.2
19 – 21	65	43.6
22 – 24	23	15.4
25 and above	7	4.7
Total	149	100.0

Table 3 above shows that 54(36.2%) of the respondents were within the 15-18 years, 65(43.6%) were aged 19-21 years, 23 (15.4%) were 22-24, while 7(52.6%) were above 23 years.

**Table 4: Frequency of Use of Scholarly Journal**

Items	Frequency	Percent
Daily	22	14.8
Weekly	28	18.8
Monthly	43	28.9
Twice monthly	41	27.5
Never	15	10.1

Table 4 shows the rating of the items on frequency of use of scholarly journals as follow: Daily 22 (14.8), Weekly 28 (18.8), Monthly 43 (28.9), Twice monthly 41 (27.5) and Never 15(10.1).

**Table 5: Purpose of Use of Scholarly Journals**

Items	Yes	Somewh at	Neve r	Mea n	Std. D.
For examination	56 37.6 %	69 46.3%	24 16.1 %	1.7 9	.703
For self-development	70 47.0 %	66 44.3%	13 8.7%	1.6 2	.643
Learning more about a subject	93 62.4 %	43 28.9%	13 8.7%	1.4 5	.620
For assignment /coursework	92 61.7 %	47 31.5%	10 6.7%	2.2 0	.930
For pleasure and relaxation	32 21.5 %	45 30.2%	72 48.3 %	1.4 0	.743

Table 5 shows the rating of the items on the purpose of use of the Internet as follow: For assignment /coursework (Mean =2.20) was ranked highest in the mean score rating and was followed by For examination (Mean =1.79), For self-development(Mean =1.62), Learning more about a subject (Mean =1.45), and lastly followed by For pleasure and relaxation (Mean =2.09).

**Table 6: Availability of Scholarly Journals**

S/N	Items	Available	Not Available	Mean	Std. D.
1	Journals on Sciences	132 88.6%	17 11.4%	.97	.357
2	Journals on Social sciences and Management	142 95.3%	7 4.7%	1.07	.361
3	Journals on Law	134 89.9%	15 10.1%	.97	.441
4	Journals on Medicine and Health	137 91.9%	12 8.1%	1.02	.500
5	Journals on Engineering	129 86.6%	20 13.4%	.97	.441
6	Journals on General works (Multidisciplinary)	137 91.9%	12 8.1%	.97	.357

Table 6 shows the rating of the items on availability of scholarly journals by students below: Journals on Humanities and Social sciences (Mean =1.07) ranked highest in the mean score rating and was followed by Journals on Medicine and Health (Mean =1.02), Journals on Law (Mean =.97), Journals on Engineering (Mean =.97), Journals on Sciences (Mean =.97) and lastly followed by Journals on General works(Multidisciplinary) (Mean =.97).

**Table 7: Accessibility of Scholarly Journals**

Items	Available	Not Available	Mean	Std. D.
Journals on Sciences	132 88.6%	17 11.4%	1.00	.479
Journals on Humanities and Social sciences	128 85.9%	21 14.1%	1.06	.468
Journals on Law	129 93.3%	10 6.7%	1.03	.317
Journals on Medicine	137 91.9%	12 8.1%	.97	.441
Journals on Engineering	134 89.9%	15 10.1%	.99	.465
Journals on General works(Multidisciplinary)	138 92.6%	11 7.4%	.96	.433

Table 7 shows the rating of the items on accessibility of scholarly journals by students below: Journals on Humanities and Social sciences (Mean =1.06) ranked highest in the mean score rating and was followed by Journals on Law (Mean =1.03), Journals on Sciences (Mean = 1.00), Journals on Medicine and Health (Mean =.97), Journals on Engineering (Mean =.97), and lastly followed by Journals on General works(Multidisciplinary) (Mean =.97).

**Table 8: Importance of Scholarly Journals to Students**

Items	Yes	Somewhat	Never	Mean	Std. D.
It provides me with current and up-to-date information	6 4.0%	114 76.5%	29 19.5%	1.15	.461
It directs and guild me on how to carry out research	108 72.5%	36 24.2%	5 3.4%	1.21	.500
It helps me to carryout quality research	117 78.5%	27 18.1%	5 3.4%	1.25	.505
It provides me with latest research finding in my course of study	91 61%	53 35.6%	5 3.4%	1.38	.622
It helps to develop and improve my intellectual capability	119 79.8%	20 13.4%	10 6.7%	1.23	.627

Table 8 shows the rating of the items on the importance of scholarly journals to students below: It provides me with latest research finding in my course of study (Mean =1.38) was ranked highest in the mean score rating and was followed by It help me to carryout quality research (Mean =1.25), It helps to develop and improve my intellectual capability (Mean =1.23), It directs and guild me on how to carry out research (Mean =1.23) and lastly followed by It provides me with current and up-to-date information (Mean =1.15).

**Table 9: Challenges to the Use of Scholarly Journals**

Items	Yes	Somewh at	Never	Mean	Std. D.
Lack of scholarly journal in my course of discipline	19 12.8%	59 39.6%	71 47.7%	2.35	.697
Change in journal frequency, numbering, titles and format	22 14.8%	86 57.7%	41 27.5%	2.13	.640
Inadequacy of scholarly journals in the library	33 22.2%	36 24.2%	80 53.7%	2.28	.886
Unavailability of scholarly journals in the library	28 18.8%	30 21.1%	91 61.1	2.39	.868
Lack of current and up-to-date scholarly journals	26 17.4%	33 22.1%	90 60.4%	2.43	.773
Lack of professional staff to assist me	12 8.1%	31 20.8%	106 71.1%	2.60	.734

Table 9 shows the rating of the items on Challenges encountered by students on the use of scholarly journals. It revealed that Lack of professional staff to assist me (Mean =2.60) ranked highest in the mean score rating and was followed by Lack of current and up-to-date scholarly journals (Mean =2.43), Unavailability of scholarly journals in the library (Mean =2.39), Lack of scholarly journal in my course of discipline (Mean =2.35), Inadequacy of scholarly journals in the library (Mean =2.28) and lastly followed by Change in journal frequency, numbering, titles and format (Mean =2.13).

## CONCLUSION AND RECOMMENDATION

Scholarly journals plays a pivotal role in providing the research findings of scholars to users in an academic community through promoting and providing current and latest intellectual and creative works of experts in different fields of knowledge. This means of scholarly communication has provided the broad line in which researcher can advance their area of specialization and students tap from the flow of their knowledge. However, society at large has immensely benefited from the creation and assimilation of new and more enduring knowledge and information. Therefore, the study recommends that university libraries should endeavour to maintain continuous subscription and make it available to all the fields of knowledge in order to encourage students' effective use.

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