

Utilization of serial resources in libraries of selected tertiary institutions in Nigeria

Information Impact:

Journal of Information and Knowledge Management
2017, Vol. 8 (2) Pg. 55 - 62
ISSN: 2141 – 4297 (print)
ISSN: 2360 – 994X (e-version)
www.informationimpact.org

Adeola Esther Olutoki

Tai Solarin University of Education, Ijagun, Nigeria.

Monisola Adebanke Osoba

Tai Solarin University of Education, Ijagun, Nigeria.

Abstract

This study is aimed at investigating how serial collections are being utilized by library users of selected tertiary institutions in Ogun State, Nigeria. The total population for this study is 1,464 respondents out of which 146 respondents were selected as the study sample representing 10% of the total population. The survey research design was adopted. The main instruments used for data collection were research questionnaires. Findings revealed that among all the serial resources available in the libraries, the newspapers were the most consulted (88.4% respondents) because it encourages early awareness of daily happenings in the society. It was also revealed that most users locate needed serial resources by browsing on the shelves/rack at the Serials Section of the libraries. Recommendations put forward include the need for the provision of enough security personnel for adequate monitoring of the serial materials, as well as the need for authors and stakeholders in education to donate more serial materials in order to enrich the collections in the library and enhance academic performance.

KEYWORDS: serial resources, utilization, tertiary institutions, academic performance,

Introduction

The importance of serial resources in libraries cannot be overemphasized, especially in academic libraries; they contain the latest information on research findings which are of great importance to any academic community. The importance of serial resources has been universally found to be very vital, they are known to keep researchers up-to-date on current information and development trend in various professions and most often than not, information in journals, magazines, and even newspaper never find their way into books. Journals and other serial resources provide a continuous discussion forum and reporting service in specific topics and lines of interest of particular user, thus enabling researchers to keep abreast with all shades of opinion in their subject area instead of having to wait for a very long time before these pieces of information appear in book format. .

Serials are published at different intervals, that is, daily, weekly, monthly, bi-monthly, quarterly, bi-annually, and annually by an academic or research institution, a learned society, reputable publishing organization or professional body. Some serials are published on subject bases while

some are on general topic. It is the serialization that distinguishes serials from books and monographs, and it is the period that dictates format and price.

Serial resources are of great importance because they carry latest, current and up-to-date information. For the latest and up-to-date opinions and development within the various subject disciplines, one would do well to look in the appropriate journals. As explained by Elaturoti, Fagbeja, Kolade and Oniyide (1990), serials constitute an important part of the library collection because the information contained in them is more current than those in published books. Fayose (1995) affirmed that, periodicals are useful because they are the most up-to-date resources in the library and that the articles in periodicals are often written by experts in the field, therefore, they are reliable and the articles are precise and not as cumbersome to read as textbooks. Where recency of information is of prime consideration, the serials have a distinct advantage over the book (Aduhika, 2007).

According to Anunobi et al. (2010), access to serial resources in academic institutions is primarily through the university library. Library is regarded as a storehouse of information where serials are stocked for research activities. The university library is established with the mandate to support research, teaching, learning and extension services. The university library acquires, processes and make available library materials including serials to accomplish its role of providing information to the university community. The job of the librarian, according to Loho (1992), is to interact with the users to find out what they need or want to know, and to provide clients with the relevant information needed. He further emphasized that for effective use of the library and its materials, users can be alerted of the information available in the library by operating a number of current awareness services.

Agbaje (2002) reported that anything that belongs to, forms part, or consists of a series qualifies to be called a serial. Nwalo (2003), Onatola (2004) and Aina (2004) stated that kinds of serials include journals, magazines, newspapers, newsletters, accessions, reports, memoirs, proceedings and transactions of societies and other periodicals like abstracts and indexes. Serials are often thought of as a distinct format. They are in print, non-print or electronic format. A serial is, therefore, regarded as a material that is in a tangible format, that is, recorded on paper, microform, magnetic media or optical disk and retrievable. Giwa (2004), states that serials publication, including journal and other periodicals constitutes the most important class of materials found in an academic library, because they contain the most up-to-date information.

Adeoya (2004) opined that journals should serve as fountain of knowledge, sources of vital information, and they should be highly intellectual. He further stated that journals are meant to fill a specific gap in communication. Newspapers and magazines treat news items with some sense of urgency, but journals later analyze the issues critically to the implication for specific industries. Specialized journals are research – based depending on its areas of focus.

Komorous (2002) in his analysis of importance of newspaper and magazines, sees them as

sources of information recognized worldwide. In his words “The value of newspaper (magazine inclusive) as a source of information on the history of a nation has been recognized in both national and international level,” (pp.24).

Aina (2001) confirmed that journal is the principal medium for reporting research findings because of the wide publicity it gives to the author. Nwalo (2003) averred that much of the information in journals are products of research and may never appear again in any other form. This shows the great importance attached to serial publications by libraries and researchers.. Serials can be regarded as the nerve-centre of any university library because they contain the most up-to-date information on research and knowledge. Agbaje (2002) also affirmed that serials constitute one of the most, if not the most important information resources of the information age. Alemna, Chifwepa and Rosenberg (2000) found that African – published journals are valued most of all for their research potential. In particular, they are used to assist in ongoing research to identify possible topics of future research and to publish the results of completed research. Apart from the confirmation that scholarly journal is the principal medium for reporting research findings and used to assist in ongoing research to identify possible topics for future research, there are other types of serials such as magazines, newspapers, memoirs, indexes abstracts, reviews, news bulletins, proceeding and reports that carry first hand reports of scholarly research and theoretical discussions.

The importance of serial resources in academic research environment lies in the fact that they are conveyors of current ideas investigated by scientific community. Serials are also noted to be the source of information in some areas especially where library is lacking books on new subject or obscure area. Serials also help to strengthen the library’s cultural reading collection and perform educational services, thereby, making students take cognizance of the development in their chosen field. It is in this light that this study attempts to investigate the use of serial resources in selected academic libraries in Ogun state, south west, Nigeria.

Methodology

Using stratified randomization method, data were collected from all the respondents in the university libraries of three selected tertiary institutions in Ogun State. These tertiary institutions are Federal University of Agriculture, Abeokuta (FUNAAB), Olabisi Onabanjo University, Ago-Iwoye (OOU) and Babcock University, Ilisan Remo. Out of the 1,464 users which constitute the total population, 146 respondents were selected as the study sample. The sample was derived by calculating 10% of each library users of the selected tertiary institutions.

The questionnaires for users of serial resources were filled by the students of the selected libraries. A total of 146 respondents which includes the undergraduate students of 2014/ 2015 session of the selected libraries were used for the survey. Data was analysed using descriptive statistics.

Table 1: Study population

Selected libraries	Number of Serial Users	10%
Federal University of Agriculture	700	70
Olabisi Onabanjo University	264	26
Babcock University	500	50
Total population	1464	146

Source: Serial Traffic statistics, 2014

Table 1 showed that a total of 146 respondents took part in this survey after sampling 10% out of the total population from each section of the selected institutions in Ogun State (Babcock University Ilisan Remo, Federal University of Agriculture Abeokuta and Olabisi Onabanjo University Ago-Iwoye). 50 respondents representing serial library users from Babcock University, 70 respondents representing serial library users from Federal University of Agriculture and 26 respondents representing serial library users from Olabisi Onabanjo University were selected for this study.

Table 2: Response by gender

Gender	Frequency	Percentage
Male	80	54.8
Female	66	45.2
Total	146	100

Table 2 indicates the distribution of the respondents by sex with 80 (54.8%) representing the male respondents, while 66 (45.2%) represents the female respondents.

Table 3: Age of respondents

Age	Frequency	Percentage
16 – 20 years	75	51.4
21 – 25 years	57	39.0
26 – 30 years	14	9.6
Total	146	100

Table 3 shows the age of respondents, the majority of the respondents are between 16 – 20 years (51.4%). This may be explained by the fact that the respondents are basically university undergraduates.

Table 4: Respondents by year of study

Variable	Frequency	Percentage
100 Level	36	24.7
200 Level	37	25.3
300 Level	38	26.0
400 Level	35	24.0
Total	146	100

Table 4 above shows that 36 (24.7%) of the students are from 100 level, 37 (25.3%) are from 200 level, 38 (26.0%) are from 300 level while remaining 35 (24.0%) are from 400 level.

Table 5: Availability of serial resources

Serial Collections	A (%)	NA (%)	NH (%)
Journals	129 (88.4)	6 (4.1)	11 (7.5)
Newspapers	143 (97.9)	0 (0)	3 (2.1)
Magazines	140 (95.9)	3 (2.1)	3 (2.1)
Annuals	65 (44.5)	62 (42.5)	19 (13.0)
Newspaper/magazine cuttings	118 (80.8)	21 (14.4)	7 (4.8)
Newsletters	85 (58.2)	41 (28.1)	20 (13.7)
Conference proceedings	89 (61.0)	24 (16.4)	33 (22.6)

Key: A – Available NA – Not Available NH – Not heard about it

It was discovered from Table 5 that newspapers, magazines and journals are the most common serial materials available in that same order.

Table 6: Utilization of serial resources in the library

Serial materials	Yes (%)	No (%)
Journals	123 (84.2)	23 (15.8)
Newspapers	129 (88.4)	17 (11.6)
Magazines	112 (76.7)	34 (23.3)
Conference proceedings	30 (20.5)	116 (79.5)
Newsletters	49 (33.6)	97 (66.4)

Table 6 shows the level of utilization of serials in libraries of Ogun State tertiary institutions. It was discovered that Newspapers were the most utilized among all the serial materials, while the proceedings was the least utilized.

Table 7: Frequency of use

Types of Serial	VF %	F %	O %	R %
Journals	45(30.8)	36(24.7)	24(16.4)	41(28.1)

Conference proceedings	21(14.4)	38(26.0)	47(32.2)	40(27.4)
Newspaper/magazine cuttings	26(17.8)	62(42.5)	19(13.0)	39(26.7)
Magazines	45(30.8)	44(30.1)	28(19.2)	29(19.9)
Newspapers	56(38.4)	38(26.0)	23(15.8)	29(19.9)

Note: VF – Very Frequently F – Frequently O – Occasionally R – Rarely

Table 7 shows the types of serials use by users in libraries of the institutions. It was discovered that the newspapers were also the most frequently used, while the proceedings was consulted only rarely.

.Table 8: Location of needed serial resources in the library

Statements	Yes (%)	No (%)
Browsing on the shelves/rack	143 (97.9)	3 (2.1)
Checking the catalogues	88 (60.3)	58 (39.7)
Asking the library staff	91 (62.3)	55 (37.7)
Checking the online public access catalogue	43 (29.5)	103 (70.5)

Table 8 shows that (97.9%) of serial users mostly browse on the library shelves/rack in order to get access to the serial materials of their choice. Many others (60.3%) also check the library catalogues in order to get access. It was also noticed that the Online Public Access Catalogue (OPAC) is not being fully utilized in getting access to serial materials in the tertiary institutions under this study.

Table 9: Factors affecting the use of serial resources

Factors	Yes (%)	No (%)
Non-availability of current serials	41 (28.1)	105 (71.9)
Inaccessibility of available issues	53 (36.3)	93 (63.7)
Poor lighting in the library	24 (16.4)	122 (83.6)
Inconvenient opening/closing hours of the library	33 (22.6)	113 (77.4)
Poor attitude of staff to the users	26 (17.8)	120 (82.2)
Inadequate reading facilities in the serials section	33 (22.6)	113 (77.4)
Inadequate infrastructure for accessing serials electronically	53 (36.3)	93 (63.7)
Many of the serials are defaced	38 (26.0)	108 (74.0)
Many of the serials are misplaced	33 (22.6)	113 (77.4)
Lack of current awareness services	36 (24.7)	110 (75.3)

Table 9 shows many of the factors that affect the use of serial resources of tertiary institution libraries in Ogun State.

Conclusion and recommendations

Serial resources play a very prominent role in research. They contain the most current and vital information on various disciplines. The emergence of serial resources as an effective tool in modern information and research has called for serial managers with in-depth knowledge of their peculiarity and techniques for controlling them. However the users have limited access to these resources due to poor collection management practices of university libraries. Lack of basic infrastructure pertaining to internet connectivity put users at a disadvantage in accessing electronic full text journals. The problem of availability and access affect the use of serials in the libraries. For effective access and use of serial materials including other library materials, proper management is essential

Based on these research findings, it is recommended that government should increase budgetary allocation to tertiary institutions so as to boost the funding of library resources and its effective management which in turn will make the management provide needed serials and other library materials to users so as to help enhance academic performance of undergraduate students and other researchers.

The library surroundings should be secured adequately so as to avoid stealing or mutilation of serials and other library materials.

Library staff should ensure that the serials are well shelved after utilization, this factor will make the materials to be more accessible to the users and much time will not be consumed in locating them.

Management of libraries should look into the problem of serial management such as difficulties in archiving back issues of journals, storage space and the delay in the delivery of subscribed serial resources.

References

- Adeoya, A. (2004). The importance of specialised journals to Professionals. *The Punch*. July 13, 46.
- Adubika, T. (2007). Serials management in polytechnic libraries in Nigeria: a comparative study of Kaduna Polytechnic and Yaba College of Technology Libraries. *Samaru Journal of Information Studies* 7 (2):28-33.
- Agbaje, A.A. (2002). Great expectations: serials management and information technology. *Information Science and technology for library schools in Africa*. Eds. E.C. Madu & M.B. Dirisu. Ibadan: Evi-Coleman Publications. 25-36.
- Aina, L.O. (2001). Resources sharing and serials acquisition in African university libraries: adoption of new strategies. Paper presented at the SCAULWA Conference held at

GIMPA, Achimota on 10th-11th, September.

Aina, L.O (Ed.) (2002). *General issues in research. Research in information sciences: an African perspective*. Ibadan: Stirling-Horden Publishers. Pp.185-200.

Akinbode, R. O. O.(2011). Influence of serial management practices and use in libraries on publications output of lecturers in Nigerian universities. *A PhD pre-field seminar*

Alemna, A.A. Chifwepa. V. & Rosenberg, D. (2000). African journals: an evaluation of their use in African universities. *African Journal of Library, Archives and Information Science* 10.(2):93-111.

Fayose, P.O.E. 1995. School library resource centres for educational excellence. Ibadan: AENL Educational Publishers.

Adeola Esther Olutoki and **Monisola Adebanke Osoba** are librarians at the Tai Solarin University of Education, Ijagun, Ogun State, Nigeria. They can be reached at olutokiadeola@gmail.com and moniosoba22@gmail.com respectively.