

**AVAILABILITY AND UTILIZATION OF UNITED NATIONS PUBLICATIONS IN KASHIM
IBRAHIM LIBRARY, AHMADU BELLO UNIVERSITY, ZARIA.**

BY

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ABSTRACT

The study aimed at examining the availability and utilization of United Nations publications in Kashim Ibrahim Library. Data was collected from a sample of 63 library users. The study established that United Nations Publications were available in Kashim Ibrahim Library but only few of them were utilized by users and these few were only used for research purposes of thesis and dissertation writing. The study concludes that the United Nations publications were not utilized because most people in the University community were not aware of their existence in the library. The study suggests that the library management have to create awareness to both lecturers and students in Ahmadu Bello University on the existence of the United Nations publications in the library so that they can be accessed and utilized for familiarization, self -development and policy making and not for thesis and dissertation writing only.

INTRODUCTION.

United Nations is an intergovernmental organisation that is dedicated to promoting peace and security amongst nations and developing global efforts to fight economic, social, cultural and humanitarian problems. According to United Nations (2014), the purpose of United Nations Organisations is to bring all nations of the world together to work for peace and development based on the principles of justice, human dignity and the wellbeing of all people. It affords the opportunity for countries to balance global interdependence and national interests while trying to address international problems, like terrorism, diseases and poverty. Also part of the

mission of United Nations Organisations is to maintain international peace, security, safeguarding human rights, addressing international and social problems and also ensuring world economic, social and political development.

The United Nations publishes an overwhelming publications in order to achieve its mission and for people to be aware of its works. Sahl (2012) reported that United Nations publishes an overwhelming publications that reveals the ideals of the United Nations in the course of carrying out its actions. According to Duke law library (2014) explains the purpose and importance of United Nations publications as to

provide an extensive information on the history, organisation, structure and activities of the United Nations.

In a write up of Sahl (2012) defined United Nations Publications as any written material which is issued by or for United Nations to the general public, which is normally under the authorization of the publication board. Striner (1995) defined United Nations publications as information resources produced by the United Nations in carrying out its works organization. Its publications are meant to communicate to the world the ideals and work of United Nations.

United Nations publications are indispensable materials for researchers because of their wide coverage in almost all discipline. They embrace all the fields of human knowledge. Some of the United Nations publications cover areas like health, education, international law, economy, history, agriculture, peace keeping, engineering.

Statement of the Problem

The idea behind having a publication as an information resource is for it to be easily accessible and utilised by users. According to the United Nation research guide (2013), the United Nation organisation in its course of actions publishes an overwhelming volume of information resources. It has also been observed that the United Nations organisation is the most

prolific publisher, because of its wide coverage in almost all the discipline embracing all fields of human's knowledge.

However, as important as the publications of United Nations are for information, education and research needs of scholars and students, Marull Kioeing (1983) observed that United Nations publications sent to depository libraries are not well utilized due to lack of understanding of their scope and nature, while Abba (1989) is of the view that the United Nations publications sent to depository libraries are not properly organised and as such gaining access to them often becomes difficult. It is in view of this that the research was set to investigate whether United Nations publications were available and utilize by users in Kashim Ibrahim Library.

Research Questions

1. What type of United Nations publications are available in Kashim Ibrahim library?
2. What type of United Nations publications are used in Kashim Ibrahim library?
3. For what purposes are the United Nations publications used Kashim Ibrahim library?

Literature Review

Types of United Nations publications

The United Nations (2013) categorised its publications in to Sales publications, Officials records, Masthead or Mimeograph documents.

According to Oxford library (2013) the official records of the United Nations publications simply refers to the final records that emanate from the major bodies of the United Nations itself. The official records of the United Nations include resolution and decisions, committee reports and meeting records. However, the four main primary bodies that issue official records are General Assembly, Economic and Social council, Security Council and trusteeship council. The second category of the United Nations publications referred to as Mastheads documents are preliminary or precursor documents consisting of drafts, initial publications of certain items, working documents and a variety of miscellany. Some of the mastheads documents are eventually published as official records. The third category of United Nation publication known as Sales publications are on a variety of topic of interest, that are not included in the official depository system. They include annual publications, statistics studies. The last category of United Nations publications are mostly news related items such as periodicals and press releases. The press releases give a summary of decisions and resolutions that are yet to be officially released.

Jarett (2013), confirmed that though United Nations produces a variety of publications, its most notable publications are the Sales

publications, Official records, Mimeograph and Mastheads documents. The Duke law library (2013) is of the view that the United Nations produces only three types of documents which are official records, masthead documents (which used to be called "mimeographed documents"), and sales publications. The United Nations Official Records include: (i) records of the plenary meetings of the main organs; (ii) annexes containing the text of agenda items; and (iii) supplements containing reports and resolutions. The meeting records contain the full text of speeches, descriptions of actions taken on resolutions together with voting records, a list of delegations, and a checklist of documents issued on various agenda items discussed during the session.

Purpose of United Nations Publications

The purpose of having library resources in any academic environment is for it to support teaching, learning and researching in the institution. According to the United Nations (2010), United Nations provides the most authoritative reference work available on the activities and concerns of the organisation. It further explained that its publications are meant to communicate to the world the ideals and works of the United Nations. Dag Hammardgold library (2014) explained that the purpose of having the United Nations depository libraries is

to provide access to United Nations publications to users around the world and also to reveal the ideals of the United Nations organisations. Sahl (2012) reported that United Nations publishes an overwhelming publication that reveals ideals of the United Nations in the course of carrying out its actions.

According to Duke law library (2014), while trying to explain the purpose and importance of United Nations publications explained that the United Nations publications provide an extensive background information on the history, organisation, structure and activities of the United Nations. The Duke law library (2014) is also of the view that United Nations publications provides important and extensive information regarding to the various aspects of International and foreign law. Bovay (2014), explained that the United Nations publications are unique and reliable information and be considered as a reference source in diverse areas such as human rights, sustainable developments, HIV/AIDS, labour standard, intellectual property, political science, social science and economics.

Utilization of United Nations Publications

United Nations is the world's most prominent international governmental organisation that provides a vast amount of information resources on international security,

economic and social development, human rights, humanitarian affairs, environment, health, agriculture and international law. According to United Nations (2013), United Nations in its course of action publishes an overwhelming volume of information resources that are being utilized by mostly researchers and students in all the discipline its covers.

The British library (2013), reported that the United Nations publications are of value not only to those involved in the organisation and its work but are also utilized by researchers looking for information in the broader subject area of the social science, particularly in the field of comparative statistics. Bovay (2013), asserted that users of United Nations publications are mostly students, academics, governmental institutions, diplomats who need reliable data to feed in debates and policy making. Also according to United Nations (2014), the United Nations publications promote knowledge and work of the United Nations to scholars, researchers, information specialists, policy makers and influencers. The department of public information of the United Nations organisations (2014), while explaining the stake holders involved in the activities and users of United Nations organisation argued that, the United Nations fosters dialogue with global constituencies such as academia, civil society,

the entertainment industry, educators and students.

According to United Nations publication index (2014), the United Nations publication can be utilized in the field of health, agriculture, security, education, economics, law, and engineering.

Methodology

Survey research method was adopted for the study. The population of this study were the registered users for the 2014/2015 academic session which are seven hundred and thirty seven

(737). Similarly 10% of the number of registered users for the 2014/2015 academic session was used as the population sample. A questionnaire was used to collect data for the study, the descriptive statistics was used to tabulate the data collected and to analyze the report of the study. A total of 73 (100%) copies of questionnaire were distributed to the respondents in Kashim Ibrahim library. Only 63 (86%) copies were returned duly completed and found usable for the study.

Results and Discussion

Table 1. Types of United Nations Publications Available in Kashim Ibrahim library.

Types of United Nations Publication Available in Kashim Ibrahim library	Frequency	Percentage %
United Nations Reports	59	93.6
United Nations Resolutions	58	92
United Nations meeting records	51	80.9
United Nations press releases	58	92
Economic and Social Council	59	93.6
Security Council	61	96.8
International Monetary Fund (IMF)	48	76.1
International Labour Organisation (ILO)	62	98.4
Food and Agricultural Organisation (FAO)	60	95.2
World Bank	58	92
International Development Agency (IDA)	40	63
United Nations International Children Education Fund (UNICEF)	50	79.3
United Nations Development Programme (UNDP)	60	95.8
United Nations Environmental Programme (UNEP)	47	74.6
United Nations Population Funds (UNPF)	30	47.6
International Criminal Justice (ICJ)	34	53.9
United Nations Educational Scientific and Cultural Organizations (UNESCO)	59	93.6
General Assembly	62	98.4
World Health Organization (WHO)	56	88.8

Table 1 revealed that United Nations reports, United Nations resolutions, United Nations meeting records, United Nations press releases, General Assembly, Economic and Social Council, IMF, ILO, FAO, World Bank, WHO, UNICEF, UNDP, UNEP, UNESCO with frequency of over 70% response scores were the types of United Nations publications available in Kashim Ibrahim library.

The findings showed that United Nations Publications are available in Kashim Ibrahim

Library this is because Kashim Ibrahim Library is a designated depository library of United Nations Publications. According to Dag Hammarsjold library (2014) only depository libraries designated for United Nations publications get complete copies of United Nations publication after paying US\$250 per year for a regular deposit.

Table 2: Types of United Nations Publications Used in Kashim Ibrahim Library

Types of United Nations publication used in Kashim Ibrahim library	Frequency	Percentage %
United Nations Reports	0	0
United Nations Resolutions	35	55.5
United Nations meeting records	0	0
United Nations press releases	0	0
Economic and Social Council	30	47
Security Council	39	61.9
International Monetary Fund (IMF)	45	71
International Labour Organisation (ILO)	47	78.3
Food and Agricultural Organisation (FAO)	56	88.8
World Bank	57	90.4
International Development Agency (IDA)	0	0
United Nations International Children Education Fund (UNICEF)	30	47.6
United Nations Development Programme (UNDP)	50	79.3
United Nations Environmental Programme (UNEP)	0	0
United Nations Population Funds (UNPF)	30	47.6
International Criminal Justice (ICJ)	0	0
United Nations Educational Scientific and Cultural Organizations (UNESCO)	15	23.8
General Assembly	48	76.1
World Health Organization (WHO)	56	88.8

Table 2 revealed that General Assembly, IMF, FAO, World Bank, WHO, UNDP, UNESCO, UNICEF publications with frequencies of over 70% response scores of the respondents are the types of United Nations publications used by the library customers in Kashim Ibrahim Library. while United Nations reports, United Nations resolutions, United Nations meeting records, United Nations press releases, Economic and Social Council, Security Council, UNICEF, UNPF, UNESCO, with the least frequency of less than 40% response rate of respondents were the United Nations publications that were completely not utilized.

From the analysis, it can be clearly seen that, only few of the United Nations publications were utilized even when they are available. Lack of utilization of the publications could be attributed to lack of awareness of the publications and also the nature of some of the publications. This is because according to Boston law library (2014) for a researcher to be able to access and use United Nations publications available in the depository libraries, he must be able to understand the document series symbol given to each publication by the United Nations.

Table 3: Purpose of using United Nations publications in Kashim Ibrahim Library.

Purpose of using United Nations Publications	Frequency	Percentage
For research purposes	48	76.1
Teaching/lecture note	20	31.7
Thesis/ Dissertation/Project writing	46	73
Familiarization/ Self development	10	15.1
Policy making	8	12.6

Table 3 revealed the response of respondents on the purpose of using United Nations publications in Kashim Ibrahim Library. It was discovered that research activities and

thesis/ dissertation/ project writing were the purposes of using United Nations publications with highest frequency of over 50 % response scores by respondents

respectively. Similarly, it was also observed that, familiarization/ Self-development, teaching and lecture note has the least frequency below 40% response scores by respondents.

The finding showed that majority of the respondents use United Nations publications for only research activities and thesis/ dissertation/ project writing. However, this finding is not too far from that of Bovay (2007) who reported that United Nations publications, can be used and considered as a reference source for researchers in diverse areas of human rights, sustainable development, Hiv/Aids, labour standard, political and social sciences.

Conclusion

The study was carried out to investigate on whether United Nations Publications were available and utilized in the library. From the findings it reveals that United Nations Publications were available but only few of the publications were utilized by users. The study also revealed that users use the publications for the purpose of thesis, dissertation and project writing only but not for the purpose of familiarization or policy making. The study concluded that there is need for the library management to create awareness on the

existence of the United Nations publications so that it could be utilized by users, and the publications should be used for self-development, familiarization and policy making.

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