

Influence of Mac Arthur Journal Donation Project on Serial Resources of Selected University Libraries in Nigeria.

By

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Abstract

This study was carried out to assess the Mac Arthur Journal Donation Project in Selected University Libraries in Nigeria. Four research questions were posed in order to assess the Mac Arthur Journal Donation Project before, during and after the Donation. The research adopted survey method using questionnaire as instrument for data collection. Data collected were subjected to a descriptive analysis using frequency tables with graphical illustrations. The study discovered that the serial resources in these university libraries were inadequate before the intervention of Mac Arthur but improved substantially during and after the intervention. Consultation of serial resources was low before the intervention as majority of readers were dissatisfied with the serial resources that were available. The intervention brought an upward reversal in the resources and level of consultation. The study concluded that the intervention positively impacted on these university libraries through increased acquisition of current resources and their use. It recommended improved funding, training of staff, formation of consortia groups, library donations etc as measures to keep these university libraries alive.

Introduction

Universities globally promote the conduct of scientific research to promote social, political, economic and technological development in societies.(Odekunle, 2001). In contemporary society, the quest for personal and societal development has made the demand for university education imperative and making establishment of universities pervasive. Consequently, Nigerian universities have increased from one at independence to 138 with many more awaiting National Universities Commission's approval (Wakili, 2015). Aguolu and Aguolu (2002) observed however that these universities cannot attain their goals without a vibrant university library. The university library is an important component in any academic community. Emokiniovo and Ogunrombi (2012) observed that university libraries are established primarily to support the teaching, learning and research activities of their parent institution. As a result, both academic staff and students rely heavily on their resources to satisfy their quest for information.

Obviously, no university can attain academic excellence without the support of a standard library to reinforce its teaching, research and public service mandates. In contrasting terms however, Ogundipe (2005), after a thorough survey of prevailing situation of most Nigerian university libraries had described their resources as a sorry, (disgraceful) exhibition of 'incoherent' sets of out - dated journals. Tijjani (2001) similarly stated that university collections became irrelevant and out- dated while Agada (1989) did not mince words in declaring that most university libraries had only archival collections of books and journals. . The need to address the dwindling fortunes of universities and their libraries in Nigeria therefore becomes urgent and compelling

necessitating the intervention of Mac Arthur Journal Donation from 2000 to 2006 in ABU, Zaria, University of Ibadan, B U K, Kano and Uniport, Port Harcourt.

Statement of Problem

Students and lecturers in Nigerian Universities require information from current serial resources in order to profitably engage in teaching, learning and research activities. However it appears that most university libraries find it difficult to make adequate, current and relevant serial resources available to their customers from decades of chronic under-funding of universities, aggravated by growth in students' enrolment and the ever increasing cost of journal publications.

With the global economic meltdown, most Nigerian Universities beginning from mid-1980s could no longer provide the basic essentials for learning including library resources; most readers only use the library mainly to read their notebooks. Textbooks for students were largely obsolete as a result, many view the library as weak and unable to support the teaching and research missions of the university (Mac Arthur Report, 2005).Confronted with dwindling library budgets and inflationary trends in the economy, the best most university libraries could do was to embark on constant title cancellation exercises in tune with available library budget which has become unrealistic for acquisition purpose.

Ogundipe (2005) described library resources in this era as 'libraries of diminishing resources', while Emilian (2004) concluded that Nigerian University libraries could no longer provide adequate resources for their customers. The dilapidated state of serial resources in most university libraries necessitated the intervention of Mac Arthur Journal Donation which

assisted in making current serials available at highly discounted costs. The problem is what is the quantity of serial resources in these university libraries before the Mac Arthur Donation Project? What is the quantity during, and after the Project? With the end of this project in 2006, there is the need to find out if the project made any impact on the resources of these selected university libraries.

Objectives of the Study

The general objective of this study is to assess the Mac Arthur Journal Donation Project in selected university libraries in Nigeria. The specific objectives are:

1. To determine the adequacy of serial resources in Nigerian university libraries before, during and after the Mac Arthur Journal Donation Project;
2. To ascertain the currency of serial resources in Nigerian University libraries before, during and after Mac Arthur Journal Donation.
3. To determine the relevance of serial resources in Nigerian University Libraries before, during and after Mac Arthur Donation Project.
4. To determine the impediments to use of serial resources in these university libraries before, during and after Mac Arthur Journal Donation Project.

Literature Review

Until the mid-1970s, University libraries in Nigeria were strong in resources as indicated by Nwuke (2005) that the period between 1960s to early 1970 marked the golden age of university education in Nigeria when adequate funding was provided. This was further buttressed by Onyeonoru (2004) who attributed the international reputable standard of Nigerian university graduates' exploits in postgraduate studies abroad to the favorable situation existing in these universities. Unfortunately years of neglect starting from the 1970s gradually weakened these institutions and their facilities. According to Sanni (2009).

Most university libraries lack adequate funding for collection development... most of the collection stopped growing substantially in the 1970s, Journal subscriptions have halted. In general, the collections can no longer support the research and teaching needs of faculty and students.

He further added that the resources are under unsuitable accommodation with inadequate facilities. Osuntokun (2004) in a similar view stated that

Our citadel of higher education ceased being centers of academic excellence from the 1970s. We started the journey in 1948, but we went back to the starting point by the 1970s and we have hardly moved since then. We have remained stationery in one spot while the rest of the world has passed us by.....

Lawal and Okwueze (2007) noted that Nigerian University Libraries had a rosy period from independence to mid-1980s as most of their information resources were acquired in foreign currency. Adverse economic situations reversed the situation such that annual library votes became inadequate to satisfy essential needs for collection development purposes.

Adamu and Dawha (2008) asserted that "a university may stock all the required titles in its serials collection but if they are not up to date and relevant to the needs of its users, the effort may be entirely in vain". Customers will be satisfied when the library provides adequate, current serial resources to meet their needs. Emerole and Ogugua (2007) agree that the major task of the library is to ensure that available resources are current and used. They further added that the 21st century library will proactively provide current resources to satisfy customers' diverse requirements.

However, a preponderance of literature has indicated that inadequate library budget has adverse effects on the provision of adequate, current library resources. Anyanwu and Akanwa (2001) reported that Nigerian libraries are faced with a myriad of problems associated with inadequate funding. For instance, the provision of current library resources especially serials has been very poor as current materials, according to Adedibu (2001), are unavailable for lack of funds to acquire them. In agreement with this view, Ifidon (2006) also observes that this has been a major problem confronting heads of libraries in developing countries especially in the area of acquisition. Popoola (2001), and Aguolu and Aguolu (2002) argued that information availability does not mean accessibility and use. They advised that libraries should initiate demands for their primary products and services.

After the MacArthur Journal Donation Project, it is necessary to keep the university libraries in proper form rather than allowing library fortunes to degenerate like before. Fortunately, the MacArthur Journal Donation Project through its goodwill among world publishers is willing to negotiate generous discounts for interested libraries. The process of

sustaining serial resources in university libraries will ensure the acquisition of current serials in the library.

Methodology

The research design adopted for the study is survey. In order to achieve the objectives of the study, a structured questionnaire was designed. The instrument was administered to the four university librarians and four serial librarians who were direct recipients of the serial resources in the respective libraries. Out of the eight respondents, only six returned the completed questionnaire. The data collected were subjected to a descriptive analysis using frequency tables with graphical illustrations.

Findings and Discussion

The study which is to assess the contributions of Mac Arthur Journal Donation Project to the resources of selected university libraries have been expressed in three research questions. The data generated through the responses to these research questions were analyzed

and discussed using frequency tables and simple percentages to present the results. Diagrams were also used to illustrate some of the data pictorially.

Adequacy of Serial Resources in Nigerian University Libraries

This section tried to establish the state of serial resources in the selected university libraries for academic purposes by assessing the quantity of serial materials acquired in each of these University Libraries as presented with responses obtained in Tables 1, and Figures 1, respectively. The status of the serial resources in these university libraries in the three periods was assessed from the point of view of the respondents and their opinions on the adequacy of resources are presented in tables. The adequacy was assessed in terms of the quantity of resources available to the users who patronized the libraries in the three periods, that is, before the intervention, during, and after the intervention with graphical illustrations.

Quantity of Serial Resources Before, During and After the Mac Arthur Donation Project

Table 1: Opinions of the Respondents on the Quantity of Serial Resources in the Libraries Before, During and After the MacArthur Journal Donation Project.

Before, During and After the MacArthur Journal Donation Project.

Quantity of serial materials	Before		During		After	
	Freq	%	Freq	%	Freq	%
3000 and below	3	37.5	1	12.5	0	0
3000 – 5000	0	0	2	25	1	12.5
5001 – 7000	3	37.5	0	0	2	25
7001 and above	0	0	3	37.5	3	37.5
Total	6	75	6	75	6	75

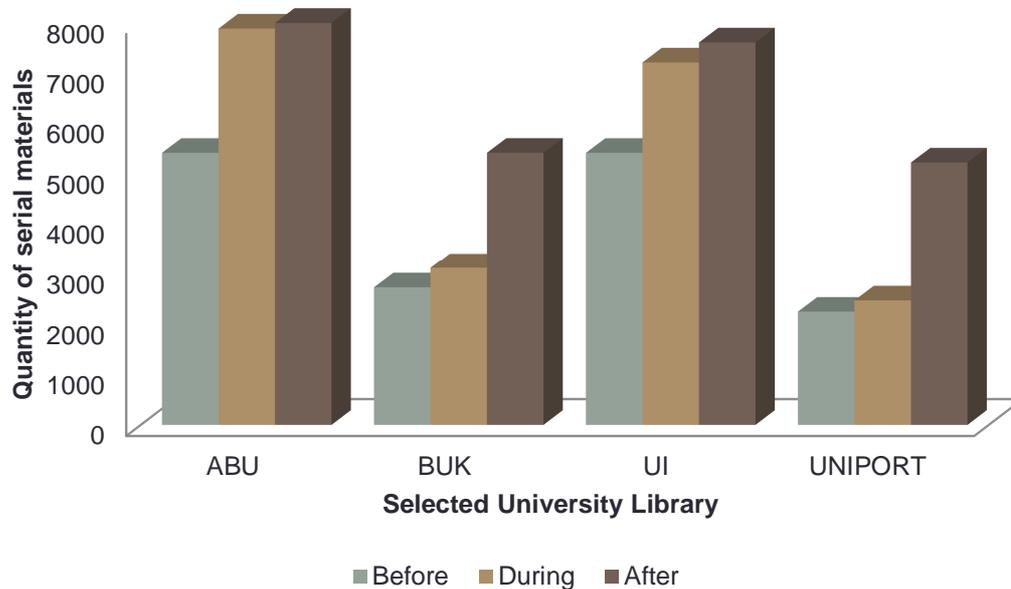


Fig 1: Percentate Representation of the Quantity of Serial Resources before During and After the Mac Arthur's Intervention

Table 1 and Figure 1 show the Mac Arthur Journal Donation. A.B.U had serial materials of 5,985 vols. B.U.K 2730 vols. and Uniport 3246 vols. while U.I has 5417. From the response, it shows that the stock levels of all the universities were lowest before the intervention. This agrees with the report of Ogundipe (2005) where serial resources in most Nigerian University libraries were described as libraries of 'diminishing resources'. The observation also tallies with the views of Akobo (1988) who asserted that libraries could no longer subscribe or renew their journal subscriptions because they were cash-strapped which further justifies Ekundayo's (2006) remarks that despite government's claims of generous allocation of funds to educational sector annually, it has never satisfied the United Nations Educational Scientific and Cultural Organization's (UNESCO) recommendation of 26% of total budget commitment to education for developing countries.

During the Mac Arthur Donation Project, the situation showed an up-ward trend with A.B.U .having 7,889 volumes, U.I 7,224, B U K 3,316 vols. and Uniport 4,253 vols. respectively. After the intervention no university had a stock lower than 5000 volumes, this means, the intervention brought appreciable increase in the quantity of serial resources acquired in all the University libraries during and after the donation. This agrees with the view of Lawal and Okwueze (2007) who described as

frustrating the situation in which most university libraries had few current journals in their collections.

Currency of Serial Materials Before, During and After the Donation

Table 2 shows the opinions of the respondents on the currency status of the serial materials in these university libraries during the three periods under assessment. The percentages are graphically presented in Figure 2.

Table 2: Opinions of the Respondents on Currency of Serial Materials Before, During and After Intervention

Currency Status	Before								During								After							
	ABU		BUK		UI		UNIPORT		ABU		BUK		UI		UNIPORT		ABU		BUK		UI		UNIPORT	
	Freq	%	Freq	%	Freq	%	Freq	%	Freq	%	Freq	%	Freq	%	Freq	%	Freq	%	Freq	%	Freq	%	Freq	%
Very current									2	25	2	25	1	12.5	1	12.5	2	25	2	25	1	12.5	1	12.5
Current			2	25	1	12.5	1	12.5																
Obsolete	1	12.5																						
Very Obsolete	1	12.5																						
Undecided																								

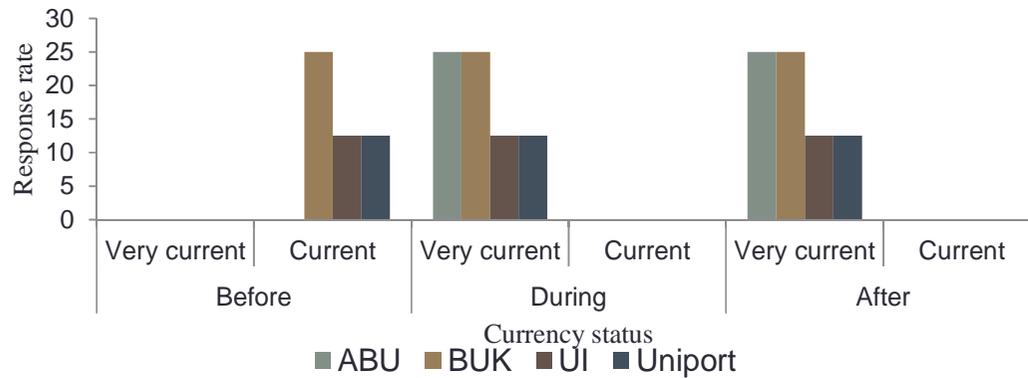


Fig 2: Percentage Representation of the Currency of Serial Resources Before, During and After the Mac Arthur's Intervention

As indicated in Table 2 and Figure 2, none of the respondents agreed that the available serial materials in the libraries were very current before the Mac Arthur's intervention in the University libraries. At most, BUK, UI and Uniport libraries maintained their serial materials were current before the intervention. This finding agrees with the report of Tijjani (2001) that Nigerian university collections became irrelevant and outdated. This situation has some inherent dangers as pointed out by Aguolu (2002) that "when university libraries are no longer able to get current journals, one wonders if such institutions could rightly be called universities since research as the frontline of knowledge cannot be carried out in such institutions".

During the intervention and after however, a contrasting situation arose in which all the

respondents agreed that their serial resources were 'very current'. The finding here agrees with Ajayi's views (2006) who reported that current serial resources were made available to recipient libraries who in turn appealed to MacArthur Foundation to extend the gesture to other libraries. The observation is consistent with Adamu and Dawha's (2008) assertion that Nigerian university libraries like other developing countries rely heavily on foreign journals which are expensive due to foreign exchange rates as local titles are unreliable substitutes because they are irregular and not easily available.

Relevance of Serials Resources Before, During and After Mac Arthur Donation Project

Table 3 shows the relevance of the serial resources during the periods under assessment. The percentages are graphically presented in Figure 3.

Table 3: Respondents' Opinion on the Relevance of Serial Materials Before, During and After the Intervention

Relevance of materials	Before								During								After							
	ABU		BUK		UI		UNIPORT		ABU		BUK		UI		UNIPORT		ABU		BUK		UI		UNIPORT	
	Freq	%	Freq	%	Freq	%	Freq	%	Freq	%	Freq	%	Freq	%	Freq	%	Freq	%	Freq	%	Freq	%	Freq	%
Very relevant					1	12.5	1	12.5	2	25	2	25	1	12.5	1	12.5	2	25	2	25	1	12.5	1	12.5
Relevant	2	25	2	25																				
Undecided	0	0	0	0	0	0																		

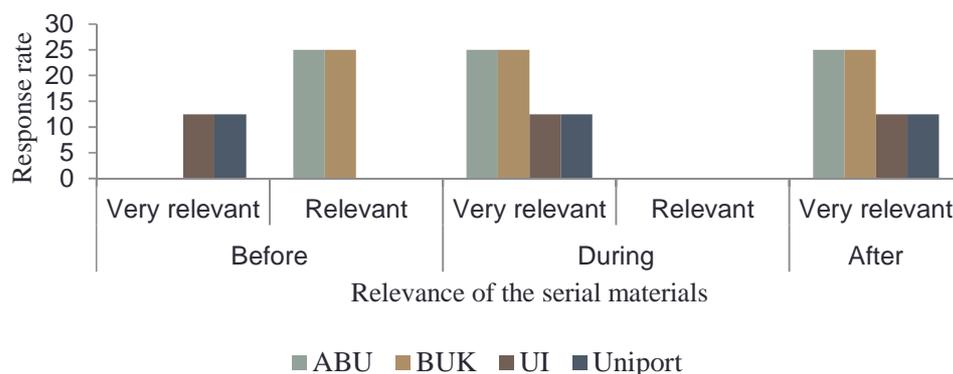


Fig. 3: Percentage Representation of the Relevance of Serial Resources Before, During and After the Mac Arthur's Intervention

Table 3 and Figure 3 show the level of relevance of serial materials in the three periods. Before the intervention, the level of relevance of serial resources was not very high as A.B.U. and B.U.K indicated their serial resources were “relevant”, while U I and Uniport declared theirs were “very relevant “.This cannot be compared with the period of intervention (during) and after when all respondents agreed the available serial materials in their university libraries were “very relevant”. This would imply that MacArthur’s intervention greatly improved the relevance of serial resources in the selected university libraries which agrees with the views of Nwalo (2000) that availability of relevant information materials is the hallmark of a library while Oyelude (2004) also consented that it is one of the good qualities of a library. Summary of the Study

.Nigerian University Libraries from the beginning were highly rated until late 1980s when economic difficulties crippled the national economy which made provision for basic essentials for learning including library resources impossible in most federal government - funded universities. The poor state of these universities necessitated the intervention of Mac Arthur to assist these selected university libraries in Nigeria (A B U Zaria, University of Ibadan, Uniport, Port Harcourt, and B U K, Kano) in making current serials resources available. This study therefore assesses the impact of the project on these selected university libraries by comparing their serial resources before, during and after the project.

The study discovered that serial resources in each of these university libraries before the intervention were AB U 5,985 volumes, B U K 2,730 volumes, U I 5,417 volumes and Uniport 3,246 volumes. During the intervention A B U increased to 7,889 volumes, B U K 3,316 volumes, U I 7,224 volumes, and Uniport, 4,253 volumes. After the intervention no University

had less than 5,000 volumes of serial resources ,therefore the project increased serial resources generally in the selected university libraries. Currency of serial resources in the libraries was relatively low before the intervention but the situation was completely reversed positively during and after the Mac Arthur’s intervention. Relevance of serial resources was equally low before Mac Arthur Intervention but became ‘very high’ during and after the intervention in all the four university libraries.

Conclusion

From the findings of this study, it can be concluded that:

Mac Arthur’s intervention have really increased the currency of serial stock in these selected universities libraries. Their stock level has also been raised more than before and the libraries tended to have maintained the status quo after the intervention. The intervention led to increase in the use of serial resources of the libraries and enhanced the users’ satisfaction than was obtained before. However, donation project cannot run forever, therefore, Nigerian university libraries will fare better with or without donation if they can form consortia groups. It is through sharing resources, library customers can have regular access to adequate, current and relevant serial resources for their academic needs in spite of increasing journal costs, inflationary trend and budget cuts.

Recommendations

The following recommendations are made based on the findings and conclusions reached in this study:

1. The University Management of these selected University libraries (A B U Zaria, B U K, Kano, U I, Ibadan, and Uniport) should

as a matter of priority improve the funding of University libraries with special consideration for acquisition of serial resources to meet adequate needs of users.

2. There is a need to further create awareness of current serial resources by these selected university libraries by constantly uploading these issues on their library websites apart from publication in the library bulletin.
3. There is a need for these selected university libraries to form library consortium with other libraries in Nigeria for the purpose of information sharing for despite any budget increase, no library can be self-sufficient in information provision for readers.

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