

UTILIZATION AND ACCESS SERIALS MATERIALS BY UNDERGRADUATE STUDENTS, DELTA STATE, NIGERIA

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Abstract: This study was conducted to determine the extent to which Delta State undergraduate students utilized the serial collections of higher education libraries. Due to the nature of the subject, the descriptive survey research design was chosen, and the 800 students in the population were drawn from both Delta State Polytechnic Otefe-Oghara and Delta State University Science and Technology Ozoro. In order to conduct the research, 240 respondents, or 30% of the population, were chosen from among the students using random sampling. A straightforward stratified random sampling method was employed to choose 240 pupils, or thirty percent of the total population. The frequency table, which uses percentages, was used to examine the research's scores. In light of findings it was revealed that periodical is mostly used and there are factors militating against effective use. Thus recommendations were made which are provision of adequate funds and publications of new journals to help in their research work.

Keywords: Serial Collections, Polytechnic, University, Undergraduates students and Library

1. Introduction

Academic journals are important resources that undergraduate students in higher education frequently use for study. Delta State's academic libraries often make an effort to gather as many serial resource titles that would be beneficial to their patrons as they can. Serials are periodic publications with unique titles that are released at regular intervals and contain information that is separate from that found in books. It is anticipated to last indefinitely and can take any form, whether paper or electronic. Publications in any media released in successive sections at regular or irregular intervals, typically with numerical or chronological designation and intended to continue forever, are referred to as serials (Rogers, 2011, p. 57). They can be published daily, weekly, monthly, quarterly, bi-annually, annually, or infrequently. Their formats and frequency of publication also vary.

Published in volumes and numbers, serials are publications that, by virtue of their occurrence, include up-to-date information. For those who are curious about the state of a particular problem, serial publications are therefore valuable sources of information. One can, for example, obtain information on the current state of a country's economy via that nation's major newspaper. Similarly, conference proceedings or journal articles providing recent and current research and results can be consulted by a researcher interested in current studies and their findings. This was highlighted by Idhalama and Obi (2019), who said that because of the currentness of the information they provide, serials are significant publications in academic and special libraries. Because they offer the most up-to-date and pertinent information that can be utilized for both academic and research purposes, serials are valuable resources for both researchers and students. According to Komolafe, Gbotosho, and Odewole (2020), serial publications can be used by the general population for amusement and relaxation, making them essential information resources for members of society.

In libraries and information centers, managing serials is crucial because users require up-to-date information, which they can only obtain and utilize when the serials are efficiently maintained to grant users access to the data they contain. The increasing cost of serials and the shrinking library budgets make serial management essential. This means that financial resources must be used wisely and that acquired information resources, including serials, must be managed. This is corroborated by Ogunnuga (2013), who stated that the necessity to maintain current library information materials, such as serials, and the decrease in library budget have increased the relevance of serials management by libraries, making it one of the most difficult routines in the library. Keeping track of serial renewals, frequency, special issues, and new releases requires effective serial publication management. The ability to choose from the vast array of published serials depending on users' information needs, as well as how to obtain or subscribe to serials, makes serials management crucial for library staff. If these various tasks are not carried

out correctly, they will adversely impact the collection of serials by causing incorrect serial selection and, ultimately, poor user service. Therefore, in order to improve user service, library staff members need to take serials management seriously. Consequently, this will enhance the library's reputation.

From 1995 to 2006, journal prices increased by 215%, while libraries spent 260% more on journal titles. These issues with serials collections have plagued most libraries in recent years (Laffery, 2010). The cost of annual subscription serials has increased to the point where some libraries have almost entirely allocated their collection budget to serials at the detriment of other valued items. Serials can cost up to N10,000 (Cornell). Periodicals and other journals are becoming 100% more expensive. It's getting harder for academic libraries to subscribe to periodicals. In addition to the expense of subscriptions, serials put a strain on library budgets because they typically need to be bound, stored, obtained, and have potentialities repaired. (Saxton, 2007) Due to the increasing number of undergraduate students in higher education using and accessing serials, many libraries are subscribing to both print and electronic copies of journals, which frequently means they have to pay for both versions. Some serial titles are also available online. Circulation statistics are frequently used to determine how often library items are used and accessed; however, serial collections typically cannot be used in this way because they are frequently non-circulating (Blake and Schleper, 2004). The Library of Congress has the biggest collection of serials in the nation.

Serial recorder Samuel Lazerow, Division examined the issue of documenting data on serial delivery or non-delivery. Numerous libraries are testing automated methods. When a serial lacks a clear endpoint, there isn't any declared or apparent finiteness, like a restricted scope. A one- or two-issue serial that ends is still considered serial. The hardest part of the definitions is probably figuring out the publisher's goal, since it might not be made clear in the publication. Periodicals and non-periodicals are two classifications for serials. A non-periodical is a serial that is published at irregular intervals and lacks a regular frequency, whereas a periodical is a serial with a specified title and frequency of release, according to Idhalama and Obi (2019), citing Nwalo (2003). Periodical serials include things like magazines, newspapers, and journals. Monographic series and yearbooks are two instances of non-periodical serials.

Serials can be categorized daily, weekly, monthly, bi-monthly, quarterly, annual, or bi-annually, depending on how frequently they are published. A publisher's kind, such as an academic society, research institute, university, learned society, respectable publishing company, or professional association, can also be used to classify serials. Serials can also be categorized according to subjects, including general issues, science, engineering, humanities, medical, health, education, fashion, food, and current events.

Journals in particular, serials, can be printed or read online. Print journals are accessible in physical copy and do not require any kind of equipment for access; on the other hand, electronic journals, also known as e-journals, require the use of an electronic device, such as a computer or phone. Additionally, journals can be categorized as open and subscription-based. Online journals that are freely accessible to the public without any technical or legal barriers are known as open access journals. Increased free access to journals is the aim of open access journals, allowing more people who might not be able to pay for. According to Bankole (2019), the goal of authors of open access journals is to disseminate their research findings and discoveries to a broad audience that might not be able to pay for subscriptions to subscribed publications. Subscription-based serials, particularly journals, need payment before an individual can access the publication electronically. The majority of these are well-known, reputable publishers, and the articles that are published with them meet strict requirements. Therefore, payment is required, either by the author or by the institution's library, in order for anyone to access their papers.

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The bulk of electronic serials cataloged by CONSER libraries are online manifestations, even though many online serials are "born-digital." Publishers, database aggregators, and libraries involved in digitization projects make these online versions available. In 2003, CONSER modified its record-creation policy for titles offered in multiple provider packages and created the idea of the provider-neutral record. The guidelines for generating provider-neutral records are meant to be used for any e-serial, including free serials that aren't included in a commercial aggregation and those without a print equivalent (such as government publications).

They blame the continuous growth of tertiary institutions—federal, state, and private (universities, polytechnics, colleges of education)—as well as the rise in enrollment and faculty, the diversification of academic and research programs, and the lack of serials and other information sources for the lack of availability. These were noted as impediments to the library's information sources' accessibility. Emeka (2002) also studied the threat to academic achievement and the lack of information sources, particularly serials, in Nigeria. She was able to prove that teachers and students are not using library services because there aren't enough information sources available.

Burrow, cited in Chike, Amaoge, and Onyekweodiri (2015), skillfully examined and encapsulated the dissatisfaction and disappointment experienced by patrons who are unable to locate the desired information sources within the library. He then went on to outline four fundamental relationships that should exist between the availability of information sources and the user: the more popular the source, the less immediate availability; the longer the loan period, the less immediate availability; the shorter the loan period, the higher the immediate availability; the more popular the source, the shorter the loan period required; and, noticeably, the more copies available, the more availability of information sources, similar to shorter loan periods. Distinguishing accessibility from the availability of information sources like serials and other ongoing resources is necessary. As a result, this article explores how undergraduates in Delta State, Nigeria, use and access serial materials to further their studies.

2.0 Statement of the Problem

The value of serials in study and teaching cannot be emphasized because they include first-hand or original material. The academic staff at higher education institutions needs data from serials in order to do research efficiently. Not all serials in the college library are available to them either. It is well known that the main problem with serials collections and use is the high cost of getting serials and the drastic budget cuts made to Nigerian institutions; this issue is further compounded by the ongoing global economic crisis. Exorbitant subscription rates and inadequate finance have affected the global collection of serials held by academic libraries.

A greater amount of time is usually spent reading publications in serial form from learned journals and technical reports of specialized organizations and associations that compose volumes and monographs by lecturers, postgraduate students, and others. Due to the availability and accessibility issues, academic staff and students may not make significant progress in their research and publication output. Serials are either unavailable or inaccessible. Academic libraries' duties include processing, preserving, organizing, and disseminating information in addition to providing resources, such as serials, to support instruction and research. Appropriate and up-to-date serials seem to be lacking for Nigerian research. The study therefore investigates serials use and access by students of in two higher institutions, Delta State.

3.0 Objectives of the study

1. How are serials collections acquired in the academic libraries in both university and polytechnic used for the study?
2. what are the importance of serials collection in academic libraries?

4.0 Research Design

The population of this study, which uses a descriptive research approach, consists of 800 students from both institutions. Students from the Department of Library and Information Science at Delta State Polytechnic Otefe-Oghara and Delta State University of Science and Technology, Ozoro, make up this group. 240 students will make up the sample for this study; 40 students were chosen at random from each level of the different schools. In order to conduct the research, 240 respondents, or 30% of the population, were chosen from among the students using random sampling. The questionnaire is the main tool that will be utilized to gather data. The frequency table approach, which uses percentages, is the one to utilize when analyzing the data.

5.0 Data Presentation and Analysis

Table 1 results indicate that 240 (100%) of the respondents, or students from Delta State Polytechnic Otefe-Oghara and Delta State University of Science Technology, Ozoro, returned their copies of the questionnaires. This indicates that both universities have a high response rate.

Table 1: How are serial collections acquired in academic Library?

Response	Agreed No. of Respondents	Percentage (N)	Disagreed No. of Respondents	Percentage (%)	Undecided No. of Respondents	Percentage (%)	Total No. of Respondents	Percentage (%)
Subscription	100	79.2	20	8.3	30	12.5	240	100
Membership	90	37.5	50	20.8	100	41.7	240	100
Standing order	80	33.3	110	45.8	50	20.8	240	100
Local purchase	60	25	90	37.5	90	37.5	240	100
Gifts & exchange	120	50	50	29.2	70	29.2	240	100
Interlibrary Loan	100	41.7	60	33.3	80	33.5	240	100

Table 190 (79.2%) indicates that subscription serials account for the majority of purchases, followed by local purchases (60, 25%), gift and exchange (120, 50%), ordinary orders, and memberships (100, 41.7). This demonstrates that serial materials were primarily available through subscription.

Table 2: What are the importance of Serial in institutions?

Response	Agreed No. of Respondents	Percentage (N)	Disagreed No. of Respondents	Percentage (%)	Undecided No. of Respondents	Percentage (%)	Total No. of Respondents	Percentage (%)
Research	140	58.3	60	25	40	16.7	240	100
Teaching & learning	160	66.7	40	16.7	40	16.7	240	100
Pleasure	130	54.2	60	25	50	20.8	240	100
Reading	200	83.3	30	12.5	10	4.2	240	100
Reference and general info	75	31.3	60	25	105	43.7	240	100

The result on table shows that 200(83.3%) says that serial importance for reading according to the research question, teaching and learning 160(66.7%), research 140(58.3), pleasure 130 (54.2) and reference and general information 75(31.3). this study shows that for reading purpose.

6.0 Discussion of Findings

A foundation cannot be completed in isolation, and this study has been able to reveal certain significant aspects of the institution that were covered and whose value was evident at the time of establishment. They were anticipated to meet academic excellence as their primary goal. This highlights the necessity of having a well-stocked library that isn't lacking a serial section to meet undergraduate students' academic needs. According to the survey, undergraduate students at Delta State Polytechnic Otefe-Oghara and Delta State University of Science and Technology, Ozoro, are aware of the serial materials kept in their respective libraries. Their awareness is related to the value of serial research in academia because it is current and represents recent thinking. They understand

the importance of serial in the communication of new knowledge through their diverse fields. These results are consistent with Nwalo (2003).claim that the purpose of the library's current awareness services is to maximize usage and exposure of its information resources.

7.0 Conclusions and Recommendations

The library's serial publications provide access to up-to-date knowledge across all disciplines and are a good place to find out about recent developments in the media. Through the awareness that the articles raise, it highlights the scholarly activities that are going on throughout the world. Based on the researcher's findings, the following conclusions were drawn from the data analysis: one of the most urgent issues facing the serial section of the Polytechnics in Delta State libraries is the lack of exposure for new journals. Additionally, pupils are not given the chance to offer comments for improving the strategy. After going into great detail about how undergraduates utilize and access serial, the researcher is quick to provide some recommendations:

1. In both of the institutions s reviewed, the issue of insufficient funding in the serial division is still quite evident. Since there are not enough finances to support the projected undergraduate, money must be allocated to the library in order for it to be adequately stocked with serial materials.
2. Given the increasing number of students enrolled, the serial part of both university libraries ought to have a clearly defined undergraduate customer, with research being the primary benefit.

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