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**Users' Perception and Utilization of Serial Resources in the Academic Library, Kwara
State University, Nigeria**

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Abstract

Investigative research, focused on users' perception and use of serial materials, was conducted in academic libraries at Kwara State University library, Nigeria. The study population consisted of users in the respective faculties. A stratified random sampling method was used to select the sample. A questionnaire dealing with users' perception and use of serial materials was conducted on 4500 users registered in the Kwara State University library. The collected data was analyzed mainly by frequency counts and simple percentages. Study results indicate that university users occasionally use serial materials. The majority of users are somewhat satisfied with the reference materials available in the library. The paper concluded that the serials of materials should be easily accessible to users so that they are well prepared to use them.

Keywords: User perception, utilization, serial materials, library

Introduction

The primary purpose of an academic library is to provide sufficient information to enable users to make informed decisions. Academic libraries usually provide for the educational needs of students; support faculty members in their teaching role; and provide research activities for both students and faculty. Academic library collections should reflect the substantive interests of the institutions. It should also be sufficient in quality, quantity, and variety. The Library does this through the beneficial selection and acquisition of teaching, learning, and research materials; material handling and organization for easy retrieval; and disseminating information about groups and encouraging active exploitation.

The explosion of knowledge and publications of all kinds, traditional or non-traditional, means that the world of materials has grown much larger. One of the very important collections of library materials in the library is serials. The serial is a publication by any medium, issued in successive parts and intended to continue indefinitely. This definition includes periodicals, newspapers, annuals (reports, yearbooks, directories, etc.), journals, and memos; procedures; community transactions; monographic series, and unnumbered series. According to Anglo-American Cataloging Rules (1988), a "string" is "a continuous resource issued in a series of discrete parts usually bearing numbers that do not have a predetermined result; for example, print and electronic journals, continuing directories, annual reports, and newspapers." and individual services.

Literature Review

Aina (2004) also describes the serials as a premium title that's released in parts, with each issue being published indefinitely. They include periodicals, magazines, newsletters, newspapers, magazines, etc. A periodical magazine like a newspaper or magazine features a distinctive title, is published over once a year, and contains articles. While non-periodic series are publications that are issued in successive parts once a year or less, yearbooks, yearbooks, or mono-serials are samples of non-periodic serials. The terms "journals", "periodicals", and "journals" are used interchangeably to refer to the gathering of library materials that appear in serial at irregular intervals.

Fayose (1995) stated that, as its name suggests, a league could be a distinct title that's released at regular intervals: weekly, monthly, quarterly, or annually by a learning community, an educational or research institution, a knowledgeable body, or a reputable publishing organization. Periodicals are useful because they're the most recent resources within the library. Articles in journals are often written by experts in their field, in order that they are reliable. The articles are accurate and direct, in order that they aren't as stressful to read as textbooks.

Serial refers to the idea of subdivisions that make up the whole. It is the concept of implantation maturity. The idea of sequencing is not limited to printed materials. When referring to printed documents as serial, the idea of consecutively numbered publications that continue indefinitely exists. In its own view, Agbaje (2002) stated that periodicals are a type of chain organized around the concept of order, which attempts to give importance to the passage of time by defining and arranging information along a chronology. Thus, when products are referred to as "periodic," they are produced for a specified period of time, usually not less than twenty-four

hours. Serial materials are used by everyone in our lives for various purposes. The importance of serial materials for the library cannot be overemphasized. Private and academic bookstores dedicate much of their funds to the acquisition and management of soap operas. This is because a lot of the research work is going on at their parent institution. Titles in the serials of an academic nature are written by experts and reviewed by others.

Aiyepku (1988) revealed the importance of newspapers as a type of serial material. In his study on the use of information by policymakers, 84% of policymakers consulted newspapers and magazines, and this was ranked among the five most consulted sources of information by policymakers in Nigeria.

Olorunsola (1997) hypothesized that it helps students, researchers, and faculty be well informed of current events. In order for lectures in applied art to keep pace with recent advances in their individual fields, they needed sequential materials. Researching sources and ensuring that lecturers and students have access to serial materials is mandatory if an academic library is to live up to its commitment to providing efficient resources.

Academic libraries should not be concerned with acquiring, organizing, and maintaining the collection, but rather with the effectiveness of resources by collaborating with faculty members in their teaching and research activities. Kwara State University Library subscribes to seven daily newspapers. They include The Guardian, The Nigerian Tribune, Punch, the Sun, Nation, Vanguard, and an entire sports newspaper. All newspapers that come into the library are indexed while emphasis is placed on education, politics, crime, character profiles, health, agriculture, and financial hours. This is to enable clients to easily access these materials according to their area of interest.

The library also subscribes to the weekly magazines Tell, Newswatch, and Business Day. Some governmental and non-governmental organizations donate their journals to the library for free. Kwara State University Library holds journals covering all coursework in the institution's seven faculties. While parent organizations such as the Newsletter, Annual, conference proceedings, yearbooks, pamphlets, and summary books The Kwara State University Library has a private reading room that can hold a total of two hundred and fifty readers at a time for the sole purpose of reading newspapers and other serial materials as they are not allowed to take them out of the library.

Methodology

The survey method was found to be most appropriate for a study that focused on users' perception and utilization of serial materials. A total of one hundred and seventy-five (175) respondents were randomly selected for this study out of 4,500 users registered. Data was collected from selected users using a questionnaire as the main data collection tool. The questionnaire is designed to identify important variables to be measured. These included access to serial materials, use of serial materials, and user evaluation of the library's serial collections. It was also designed to elicit some other views relevant to the study. Copies of the questionnaire were distributed and collected in all seven faculties of Kwara State University, namely: the Faculty of Agriculture, Faculty of Education, Faculty of Engineering, Faculty of Humanities, Information & Communication Technology, Faculty of Law, and Faculty of Pure & Applied Sciences. The rate of return was 145, which represented 82.8% of the total number of selected respondents. The number of repetitions had to be taken to determine how many respondents gave the different responses. The frequency of these responses has been converted to a percentage.

Table 1: Demographic Distribution of Respondents

Gender	Frequency	Percentage {%}
Male	67	46%
Female	78	54%

Faculties	Frequency	Percentage {%}
Agriculture	18	12%
Education	20	14%
Engineering	21	14%
Humanities	24	17%
Information % Comm. Tech	23	16%
Law	15	10%
Pure & Applied Science	24	17%

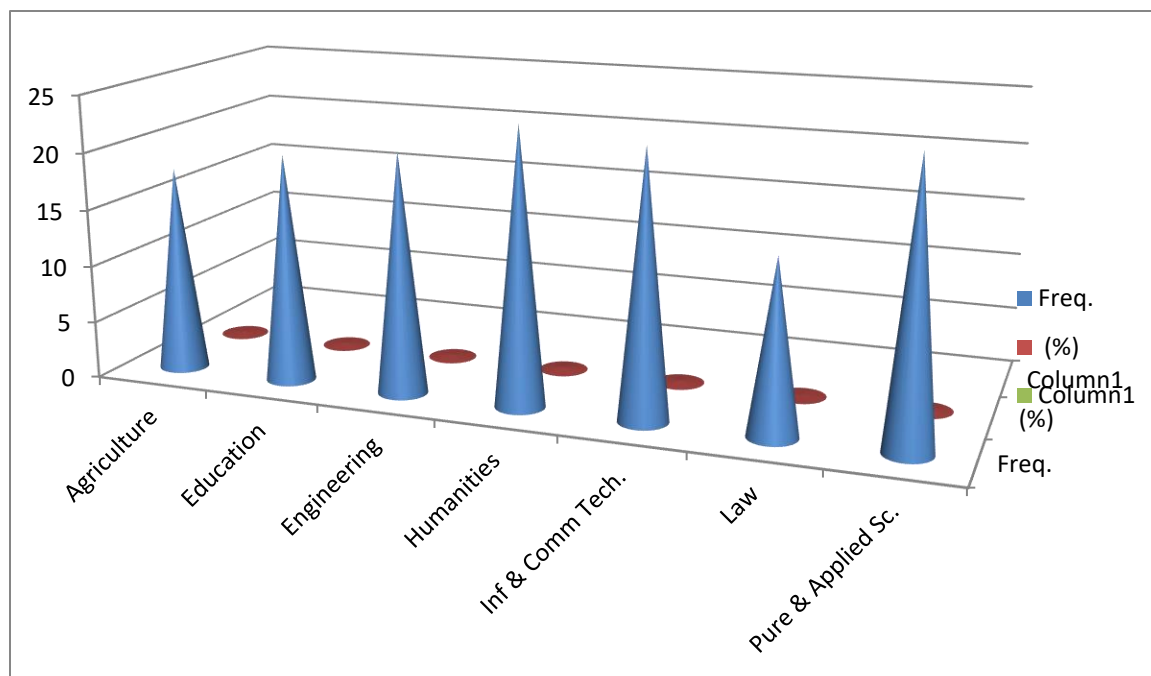


Table 2. Use of library resources.

Description	Responses	Percentage { % }
Text books	20	14%
Journal, Magazines, Newspaper	80	55%
Reference materials	25	17%
Special collections	15	10%
No response	5	4%
Total	145	100%

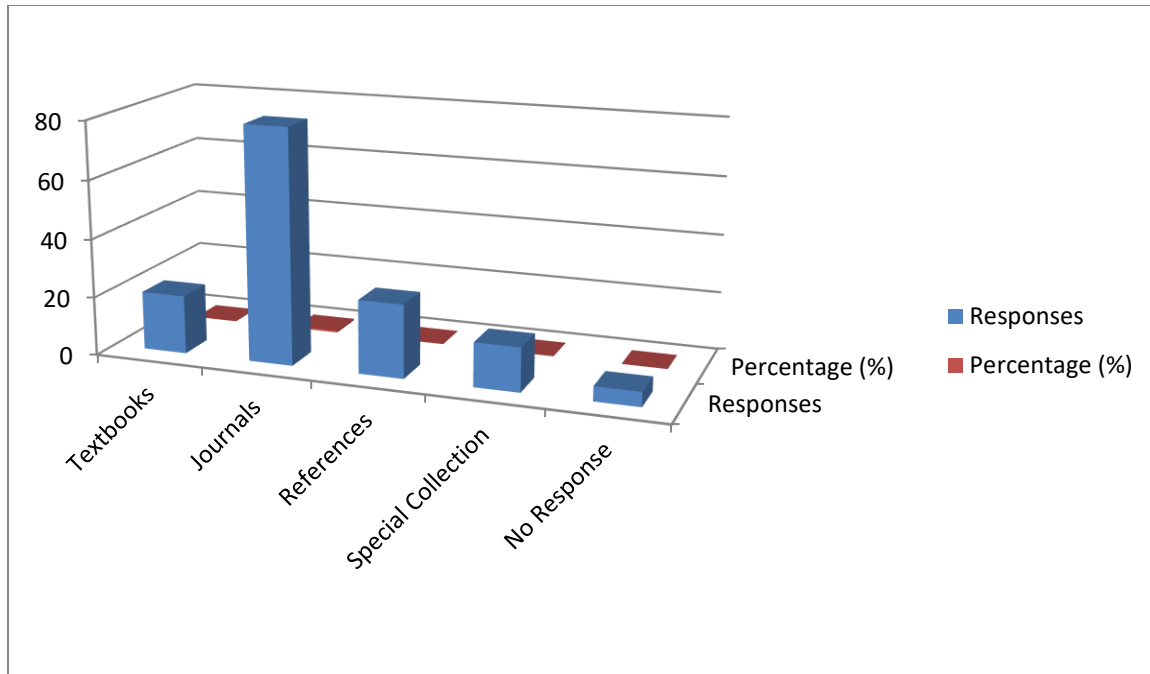


Table 3: Utilization of serials resources by library users

Relevance on Library

Description	Responses	Percentage (%)
Wholly	20	14%
Partly	100	69%
Not at all	25	17%

Use of serial resources

Description	Responses	Percentage (%)
Always	28	19%
Often	34	23%
Occasionally	72	50%
Never	11	8%

Nature of use

Description	Responses	Percentage (%)
Leisure	20	14%
Assignment	22	15%
Examination	45	31%
Research	58	40%
Total	145	100%

Table 4: Frequency of used of serial resources in the library

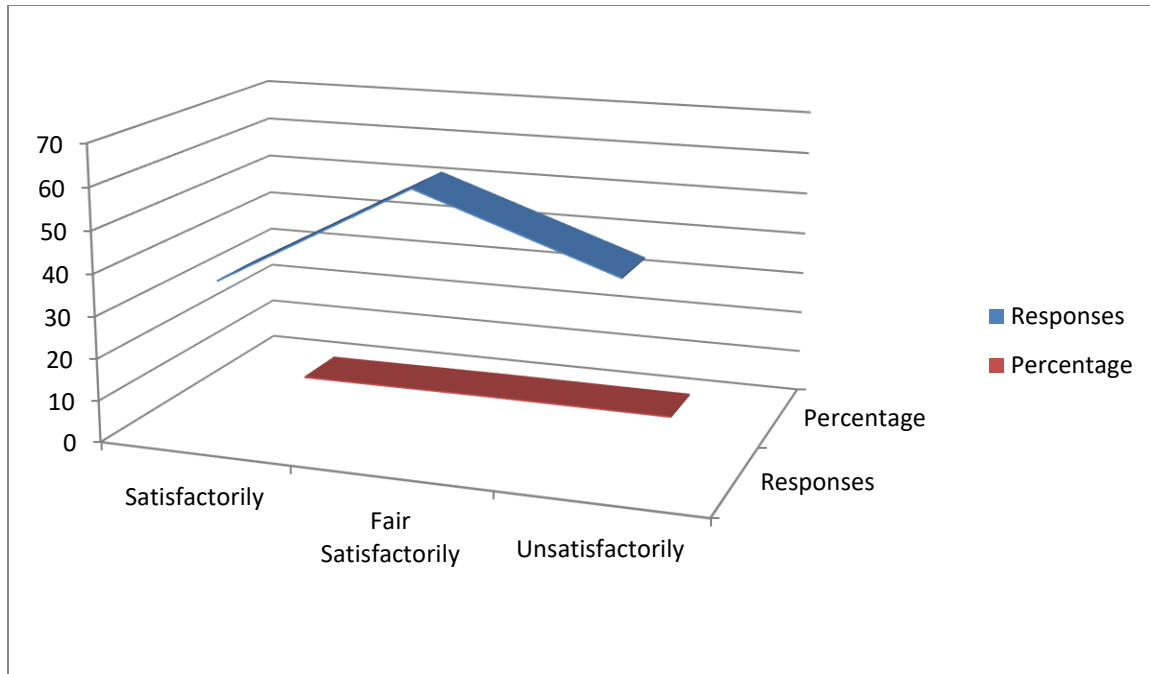
Description	Regularly		Occasionally		Never		Total	Percentage (%)
	Resp.	%	Resp.	%	Resp.	%		
Journals	24		38		83		145	100
Newspapers	74		30		41		145	100
Magazines	19		54		72		145	100
Bulletin	11		8		126		145	100

Newsletter	14		11		120		145	100
Annuals	3		4		138		145	100

Table 5: Users' rating of library on serial resources

Description	Responses	Percentage (%)
Rating of serial resources in subject area:	-----	-----
Very good	16	11%
Good	51	35%
Fair	69	48%
Poor	9	6%
Total	145	100%

Description	Responses	Percentage (%)
Rating of serial resources for teaching & research:	-----	-----
Satisfactorily	37	25%
Fair satisfactorily	62	43%
Unsatisfactorily	46	32%
Total	145	100%



Results and discussion

The distribution of Kwara State University library users who participated in the study is shown in Table 1 above. However, the results indicate that a higher proportion of female users use serial materials than male users. This can be attributed to the fact that more female users visit the serials section of the library than male users to read journals, newspapers, magazines, and other

types of serial publications. The presentation in Table 2 relates to the use of library resources. All users, at one time or another, have used library resources available. But most of them used journals. Few respondents used reference resources and textbooks; more than 5% of serial resources were used. Most users indicated the use of serial materials either occasionally or often. This was based on the fact that a large proportion used the Kwara State University library from time to time. If they did not see the importance of relying on the library for resources, it was unlikely that they relied on it to access serial resources. Most users rely on their lecture notes.

Most users indicated the use of serial resources either occasionally or often. This was based on the fact that a large proportion used the university library from time to time. Users used the serial resources more in their research work and for examination purposes. According to Osunrinade (2007), Nigerians have poor reading habits and primarily use the library for reading resources. One can infer from this study that undergraduates in our higher institutions engage in utilitarian reading because society focuses on paper qualifications. Thus, they engage in serious reading when they have research work to do or an examination purpose. The objective of the question was to elicit the rate at which students in higher institutions use the serial resources included in the library. The study found that journals, magazines, and newspapers were used more regularly than others. More users indicated that they had never used the annual and newsletters. As shown in Table 4, magazines and newspapers were sometimes used. The largest proportion of all respondents did not read the annual and newsletters. This may be due to the fact that the newsletters and annuals were mostly internal publications of governments, NGOs, industry, etc., and had little relevance to their research work.

The study indicated that a large number of lecturers convert their students only occasionally to sequential subjects. When rating the performance of the Kwara State University library in collecting serial resources in their subject areas and in general for teaching and research, a low percentage of users found it satisfactory. 25% of all respondents rated the library as poor and unsatisfactory in terms of collecting serial resources to meet their teaching and research needs. The fact that users found library performance in sequential collections somewhat satisfactory could be responsible for their lower use. As previously reported in the study (Samgowus, 2004),

Conclusions and recommendations

Based on the findings in this study, it is possible to conclude that users in higher institutions are aware of the existence of a serial section in the library but fail to make full use of the serial resources available. It was discovered that good reading habits were not formed among the users. This led to a decrease in the use of the library by users. Users also rated the library's performance on serial resources as fairly satisfactory (43%), indicating that the library still needed to improve its current performance in order to meet the users' needs.

In order for Kwara State University and other academic libraries to manage their serial materials well, they need more funding, material resources, and commitment on the part of the library. They also need to provide students with easy access to the study of serial materials so that they can be well prepared to use them in order to improve their academic performance. The Kwara State University library should be more involved in collaborative activities with other libraries. Finally, to encourage the reading habits of students, the library environment should be adequately equipped with basic equipment such as internet connectivity, air conditioners, and

adequate power supplies, and should appoint library staffs who are suitable for the students without losing sight of their work ethic.

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