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# Use of Serial Publications by the Academic Staff of School of Arts and Social Sciences in Adeyemi College of Education Ondo State, Nigeria

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### Introduction

The library is an integral part of any educational institution, most especially at the tertiary level (Popoola, 2006). A well stocked and organized library is a pride of any educational institution which will definitely help in meeting its teaching, learning and research needs through availability of contemporary serial publications alongside other library resources. Nwalo (2003) cited Osborn (1980) to describe serials as publications issued in successive parts, at regular or irregular intervals and intended to be continued indefinitely. There are many kinds of serials. These include; newspaper, magazines, newsletters, accessions, journals, indexes, abstract, reports proceedings and transactions of societies etc. Out of them all, journals are the most important to researchers because much of articles therein are products of research and it may never appear in any other publications. According to Ogunrombi (1997) serial publications form the backbone of any academic library because of their nature of informational value. Academic and research libraries acquire, organize, store, retrieve and disseminate information contained in journals for researchers, educators, students and other interested persons in their various disciplines.

Academic libraries must therefore provide the latest journal titles in all the subjects/courses covered by its parent institution and also, staff and students are expected to make use of the library most especially the serial section of the Library to get current information in their chosen field of study. In the words of Olanlokun and Salisu (1988), journals are accorded prominence in

the library because they provide the latest information in a discipline and if people want to be current in their field they have to read relevant journals.

It is therefore a matter of concern to note that, paltry number of academic staff of Adeyemi College of Education, Ondo consult the serials resources in the College Library. This could be due to non availability of journals, professionals, recency, and other factors. It is in light of this, that this article intends to investigate the utilization of serials resources in the College Library by the academic staff of School of Arts and Social Sciences, ACE, Ondo.

## Objectives

The specific objectives of the research are:

- i. To determine the number of academics staff that use the serial section of the library,
- ii. To investigate the frequency of the use of the serial section,
- iii. To assess the problems confronting the academic staff in the use of the serial publication, and
- iv. To proffer solution to every identified problem.

## Literature Review

Madu and Adeniran (2005) gave characteristics of serials as:-

- The publisher might change
- The content of each issue is different
- The publication interval varies. Some are bi-annual, monthly, quarterly, fortnightly, weekly, daily and annually,
- No planned end to the sequence,
- They are current and up-to-date,
- They are more expensive than books, and
- They are subscribed to.

In the same vein, Tedd (1984) wrote on the inherent problems of serials which include:

- Elusiveness, as most of them are not published by commercial organizations
- The tendency of serials to change name, divide into two or three separate publications, die or lay dormant for several years,
- The difficulties in being aware of which issues have not yet been received,
- Possible changes of publisher,
- The fact that some serial, especially in research libraries, are not bought but are gifts or exchange,
- The physical problems of storing and circulating individual issues, and
- Being aware of when all the issues of a volume have been received and so ready to be sent to the binders.

Research has shown that academic staff prefer electronic journals to print. Brown (2007) who worked on academic staff use of e-journal, found that 84% of the respondent prefers e-journal. According to him, having access to journal is seen as important by majority of the respondents. Sarasvady (2007) corroborated this further when he posited that, 58% of his respondents preferred electronic journals to print version.

On the issue of collection development policy for serials, the Australian College of Physical Education (2007) stressed that, the collection policy of the Robert Dunnet Library comprises of approximately 400 serial titles in which 80 of these are current subscriptions. Above assertion means that 320 journal titles are old journals. The decision of acquisition of serial depend on the institution policy, According to the University of Aukland (2007), each year each faculty is allocated a proportion of library money available for serials procurement. Also details of proposed new serial are sent to the liaison officer of the Library periodically by the departments.

## Methodology

**Research Design:** The study's design was descriptive research design in which the use of serials publication by academic staff of a College was investigated.

**Population and Sampling:** The population of this study consisted of all the forty-nine academic staff of the School of Arts and Social Sciences of the Adeyemi College of Education, Ondo. Complete enumeration sampling method was used to distribute the questionnaires in the school.

**Research Instrument:** A structured questionnaire was used to collect data. The four sections of the questionnaire collected data on respondents' (1) demographic attributes, (2) use of serial section (3) non-use of serial section (4) suggestion for improvement.

**Questionnaire Administration and Responses:** This is well illustrated in the table below:

TABLE 1: Distribution of Questionnaire by Department

DEPT	NO OF LECTURERS	NO OF QUESTIONNAIRE RETURNED	%
Economics	9	7	77.8
Social Studies	8	4	50.0
History	10	6	60.0
Geography	14	10	71.4
CRS	8	3	37.5
Total	49	30	61.2

Table 1 show that Academic Staff from Economic Department had highest response of 77.8% while CRS had the least response of 37.5%.

## Results and Discussion

Out of the 30 respondents, 24 (80%) were males while 6(20%) were females It is alarming to note that, out of the 6 female respondents, only 1 has ever visited the Library. Also 12(40%) of them were Lecturer 111 while 1 (3.3%) was a Principal Lecturer.

Table 2: Use of Serial Section.

OPTION	RESPONSE	%
Yes	20	66.7
No	10	33.3

Table 2 indicates that 66.7% of the respondents used the serial section

while 33.3% did not. On the frequency of use of the section 2(6.6%) 6(20%) and 12 (40%) used it very often, often and rarely respectively. Majority of the respondents 21 ((70%) used the section for research purpose while 1(3.3%) used it for relaxation and current information.

Table 3: Reasons for not using the Serial Section.

OPTION	RESPONSE	%
(i). There are no recent journals in my area of interest	11	36.7
(ii) I am not aware of the availability of journals in the library.	6	20
(iii) I have enough journals in my area of interest.	4	13.3
(iv) There is no professional staff to assist me.	2	6.6
(v) Majority of the journals are old	11	36.7
(vi) Others	2	

Above table shows that majority of the academic staff who were not using the serial section did so because of lack of recent journal in their area of interest. Other factors as independently indicated by the respondents were improper arrangement of materials and preference of electronic journals to hard copies. It may be noted that there are new journal published between 2004 and 2007 in the serial section of the library and there is a Serial Librarian in the section to assist numerous users in the section. Those that prefers e-journal is in line with the findings of Brown (2007) where 84% of the respondents indicated so.

Table 4: Suggestions for Improvement

OPTION	RESPONSE	%
(i) Sending photocopies of content pages of recent journals to relevant department	23	76.7
(ii) Compiling recent journals and sending them to relevant departments.	22	73.3
(iii) indexing of journal articles	7	23.3
(iv) Involving lecturers in the selection of relevant journals	13	43.3
Others/Specify	4	13.3

From table 4, options 1&2 were chosen by majority of the respondent as suggestion for improvement of the serial section services. Moreover 4 respondents further suggested journal recency, relevance, serial readership promotion and establishment of virtual library.

## Conclusion

From the analysis, it could be concluded that there are some academic staff in the College who do not use the serial section of the library because of the notion that the journals are old scanty, improperly arranged and lack of professional. The Library management is fully aware of these shortcomings and it is ready to correct them as it recently procure additional journals and employ a professional to manage the affairs of the section. The serial section should endeavour to send photocopies of contents' tables of recent journals and title list of same to the relevant departments. This will definitely improve the use of the section by the academic staff of the College. We therefore suggest that the College Management should release more funds for the procurement of more recent journals into the library for the use of the staff, students and other interested users in the community.

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