

# User's Utilization of Newspaper Media in a Nigerian University Library

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## Abstract

This study was designed to assess user's utilization of newspaper media in Federal University of Petroleum Resources Effurun libraries. The design adopted for the study was a survey design. The total population of the study was 1,816 library users of Federal University of Petroleum Resources (FUPRE). A total of 816 of respondents were selected out of the total population. The stratified random sampling technique was used to select respondents across the central and the two colleges libraries in the University. These colleges are college of technology and college of science. Questionnaire was used for data collection. 816 questionnaires were distributed to library users, with multiple responses from figure 2 to 5 respectively. The Questionnaire were correctly filled and returned. In analyzing the data obtained, percentage, frequency, and graphs were used. The results obtained from the findings revealed that library users of FUPRE consult 1 to 2, 3 to 4, and more than 5 different types of newspapers daily in order to solve their information needs, the newspapers includes Vanguard, Guardian, Punch, Pointer, Complete Sport, and the Nation respectively. The different purpose of reading newspapers in the library was to provides them with information, others are to broaden the horizon of general knowledge, from searching new jobs, for educational purpose, for entertainment, to know the sport news, as usual task of the day, to pass the time, it improves status in the society, to keep abreast with present happenings of all over the world, for getting various scholarship, to improve the health consciousness and other reasons known to them. In another development, library users' focus strictly on the following information in a newspaper media, they are sensational new, advertisement, editorial page, international news, politics, sports, entertainment, business news, educational news, agriculture, health issues and letters. Different challenges confronting user's utilization of newspaper media was also revealed, they are lack of reading space, high cost of newspapers, limited copies of newspapers in the library, lack of qualify personnel to man the library, excessive heat or cold in the library and interruption of electricity.

**Keywords:** Users, Utilization, Newspaper Media, Nigerian University Library.

## Introduction

Newspaper is the imperative media which play a vital role in disseminating and spreading information concerning the latest trends and happenings on the national and the international events. Newspapers not only update us; they even coach us and facilitate us, persuade us to figure our attitude on significant matters. Newspapers according to Onwubiko (2005) have been accorded a great deal of importance in the transmission of government policy, priority changes and even interest changes. Newspapers are noted as regular source of primary and up to-date information. Newspapers help to improve reading habits, gain knowledge and improve awareness. They can be part of good study habits for students in any area of specialization. This is a serial publication usually printed on newsprint and issued daily, on certain days of the week, or weekly, containing news, editorial comment, regular columns, letters to the editor, cartoons, advertising, and other items of current, often local, interest to a general readership. Some national newspapers are issued twice daily in early and late editions, or in different editions for different regions of the country (ODLIS, 2002). A newspaper can also be defined as a publication issued periodically, usually daily or weekly, traditionally containing the most recent news, because radio, television, teletext and other media can now offer immediate news coverage, newspapers in many industrialized countries are increasingly dominated by feature material. Anaeto (2009), Waal (2005) & Iney (2008) opined that newspapers carry information on current events that are attractive to readers; its main function is informing, educating and entertaining the public, but some private newspapers contain articles that are not reliable and therefore not good or useful for the youth. Newspaper reading, therefore, can infuse a sense of social responsibility among the readers while providing news, views and analyses on various issues important to the advancement of the society. By undertaking a survey-based empirical study focusing on the newspaper reading habits of students, this paper aims at providing important information and insights which, in turn, would help us strengthen and popularize reading habits among the larger-cross sections of people in the society.

## Study Area

The Federal University of Petroleum Resource Effurun (FUPRE) in Delta State Nigeria was established and approved by the Federal Executive Council meeting of 14 March, 2007 and admitted its first set of undergraduates in 2008.

The university was established under the Federal Government of Nigeria initiative to build a specialized university in the Niger Delta to produce manpower and expertise for the oil and gas sector.

FUPRE Library is the hub of academic activities of the Institution. Students, staff and researchers make use of the library for learning, teaching, research and development.

The library operates shift duties in order to ensure that staff, student and researchers make maximum use of the material. Relevant information are downloaded from database and made available to researchers and students. The library organizes orientation program and also referral letters to student for research activities to other libraries. The library consists of the main library and two branch libraries at the college of technology and science respectively. The library has vast materials on petroleum engineering, marine engineering, electrical engineering, computer science, mathematics, geology, physics and chemical engineering among others.

### **Statement of the problem**

Newspapers are publications issued in successive parts and intended to be continued indefinitely with no termination planned or envisaged, they carry current information of new ideas or discoveries been it politics, education, sports, etc Clarke (1998). For instance, the information carried by newspapers may take many years before they appear in books and in some cases, they may not appear at all, again, newspapers keeps users abreast of growth of knowledge in their areas of investigation. Researchers have carried study on the importance of newspapers media in libraries, yet user's utilization of newspaper media in Federal University of Petroleum Resources Effurun Libraries seems to have been unexplored. The study therefore deems it necessary to investigate the present state of user's utilization of newspaper media in the university library under study in order to unravel the challenges confronting users in utilization newspaper media in the library under study.

### **Objectives of the study**

The following research questions were formulated to guide the study:

1. To find out the number of newspapers users consult daily;
2. To identify the type of newspapers that users consult daily;
3. To find out the purpose of utilizing newspapers in FUPRE libraries;
4. To investigate the sections of newspapers that users usually prefer to consult; and
5. To find out the challenges confronting user's utilization of newspaper media in FUPRE libraries.

### **Research Questions**

1. What are the numbers of newspapers users consult on a daily basis?
2. What type of newspapers do users usually consult daily in FUPRE libraries?
3. What is the purpose of utilizing newspapers in FUPRE libraries?
4. What sections of the newspapers users usually prefer to consult?
5. What are the challenges confronting user's utilization of newspaper media in FUPRE libraries?

### **Research Methodology**

A Survey research method was used to carry out this study because of its large population. The instrument used for data collection in this study was questionnaire. Questionnaires was used for collecting data for this research because Cohen and Morrision (2012) opined that the questionnaires is widely used and it is a useful instrument for collecting survey information providing structured, often numerical data, being able to be administered without the presence of the researcher and often comparatively straight forward to analyze. The target population of this study comprises of the students, academic and non-academic staff of the Federal University of Petroleum Resources. The total population of the study was 1,816library users of Federal University of Petroleum Resources Effurun (FUPRE). A total of 816 respondents were selected out of the total population. The stratified random sampling technique was used to select respondents across the central and the two colleges libraries in the University. These colleges are college of technology and college of science. The researcher administered and collected the questionnaire from the respondents. Data were subjected to descriptive analysis such as frequency counts, percentages and graphs.

### **Literature review**

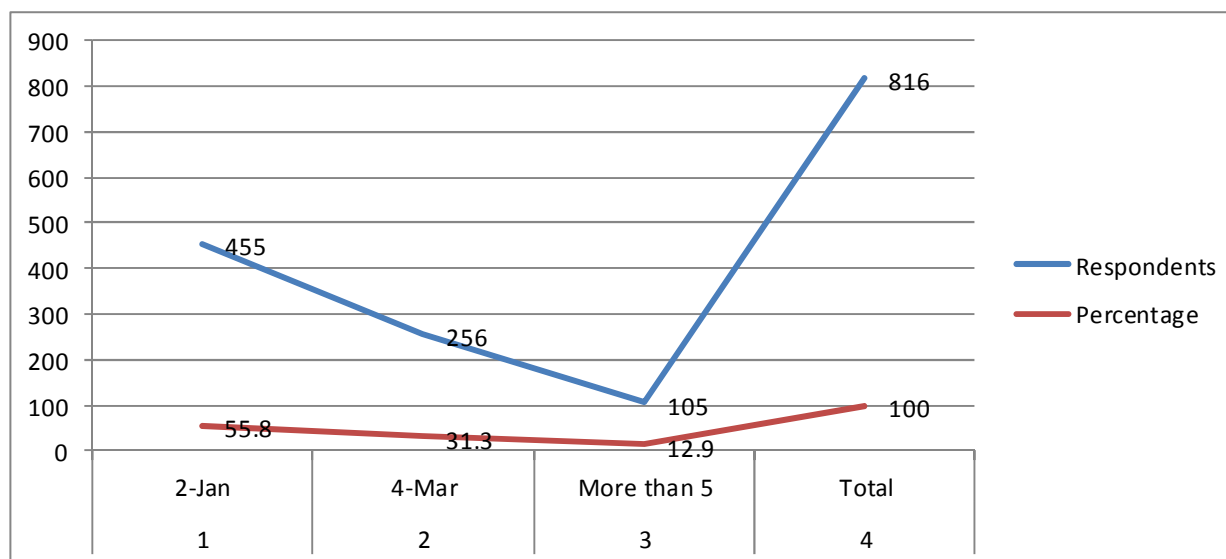
The newspaper industry is large, multinational and to an increasing extent cross-owned with other media industries; in some countries it is severely constrained by state censorship (International Encyclopedia of Information and Library Science, 2003). MNE (2011) and Pandey (2010) noted that newspapers have been the most conventional and popular medium for conveying local, regional, national and international news to the readers, they serve us with the latest happenings in different parts of the world through a network of correspondents and news agencies. A survey study on the use of newspapers by students of Olabisi Onabanjo University shows that majority of the students read newspapers to obtain information and as recreation, thus

serving as a way of taking their mind off the negative activities such as cultism. The range of specific information sought by the students from the newspapers include information on politics/governments, sporting events, entertainment, health matters, world affairs and their academic work (Bankole & Babalola, 2011). Another study carried out in Delta State University, Anwai Campus on the use of Newspapers by Nigerian University Students showed that newspapers continue to be a useful source for the academic, recreational, and information needs of Nigerian students. The study also establishes students' preferences for particular newspapers and the reasons for such preferences. The Vanguard and Guardian newspapers, which are preferred by a majority of the students, are preferred for information relevant to academic disciplines and job advertisements, respectively (Igbeka & Ola, 2010). Quite a lot of research has been done on the newspaper reading habit of different categories of people in the world. But in Bangladesh, research on the status of newspaper reading habit of the university students is lacking, particularly with regard to that of the graduate students. Studies on newspaper reading habits carried out elsewhere are discussed here. Kumar, Singh & Siddiqui (2011) found that majority students of Chaudhary Charan Singh University read Hindi newspapers and spent 1-2 hours every day and most of them individually subscribe to the newspapers and prefer the editorial, sports, and politics sections of the newspaper. Bankole & Babalola (2013) studied the use of newspapers by students of Olabisi Onabanjo University in Nigeria, they observed that majority of the students prefer libraries as a place to read and their main aim was to obtain information on public affairs, politics/governments. Furthermore, when the respondents were asked to indicate the barriers they mentioned that the newspaper section was often overcrowded. Zerba (2011) investigated on the young adults' reasons behind avoidances of daily print newspapers and their ideas for change where the researcher conducted the study with young adults (ages 18-29) to understand why they don't read daily print newspapers. The study examined news media avoidances, like "inconvenience" and "lack of time," to uncover underlying meanings. Participants also suggested ways newspapers could improve. Participants were studied as two age groups, 18- 24 and 25-29. Small group differences did emerge. The older group wanted less negative news, while the younger group justified it; the younger age group was more skeptical of the news and mentioned needing greater effort to understand it. Larkin & Grotta (1976) did a study on Consumer Attitudes toward and Use of Advertising Content in a Small Daily Newspaper where they indicated that the advertising content of the newspaper in the study was viewed as local news by its subscribers and consequently has the highest readership of any type of content in this paper. While it was assumed that the advertising content of this newspaper would be well-read, the magnitude of readership and reader-interest in advertising was surprising. It was also found that rather than feeling there was too much advertising in the paper; the majority felt that it was either "just right" or those they wanted more advertising in the future. Fendrick (1941) worked on newspaper reading interests of high school and college students and found that Illustrations and amusements appear to predominate among the reading interests of both high school and college students. High school girls do not appear to be particularly concerned with news covering politics and government. Labor, Industrial and Farm News are more likely to be disliked than liked by the girls in high school. A sex difference postulating the preference of girls for such topics as Book Reviews, Religion, Vital (births, marriages, etc.) News, Poetry, Scandal, and Society News was found. Speeches and Financial News topics were consistently disliked by high school and college students. Sivankutty & Sudhakaran (2011) have investigated on the use of online newspapers among librarians in India and found that librarians are aware of online newspapers. These newspapers whether international, national, regional or local, can be accessed with just a click of the mouse; among them the librarians prefer the national digital dailies as their first choice. The survey shows that librarians are aware of the developments that happen around them and they circulate and archive the important news items appearing in the newspaper sites. The survey confirmed that the online edition of the Times of India is the preferred newspaper site.

### **Data Presentation and Analysis**

The presentation of data is based on the responses gotten from the research questions formulated to guide the study on User's Utilization of Newspaper Media in Nigerian University Libraries under study.

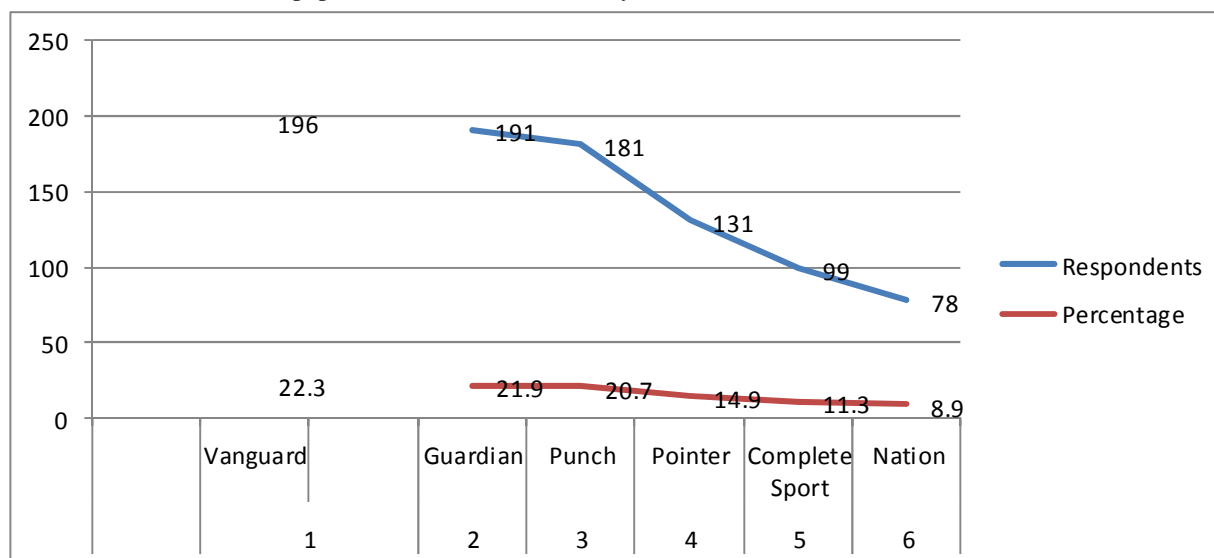
**Research Question 1:** What are the numbers of newspaper users consult on a daily basis?



The result in figure 1 reveals the information on the number of newspapers that the users read daily, where the majority number 455(55.8%) of the respondents read 1-2 newspapers, 256(31.3%) respondents read between 3-4, while 105(12.9%) read more than 5 newspapers daily. This is supported by Singh (2005) when he posited that the choice of every library users differs.

**Research Question 2:** What type of newspapers do users usually consult daily in FUPRE libraries?

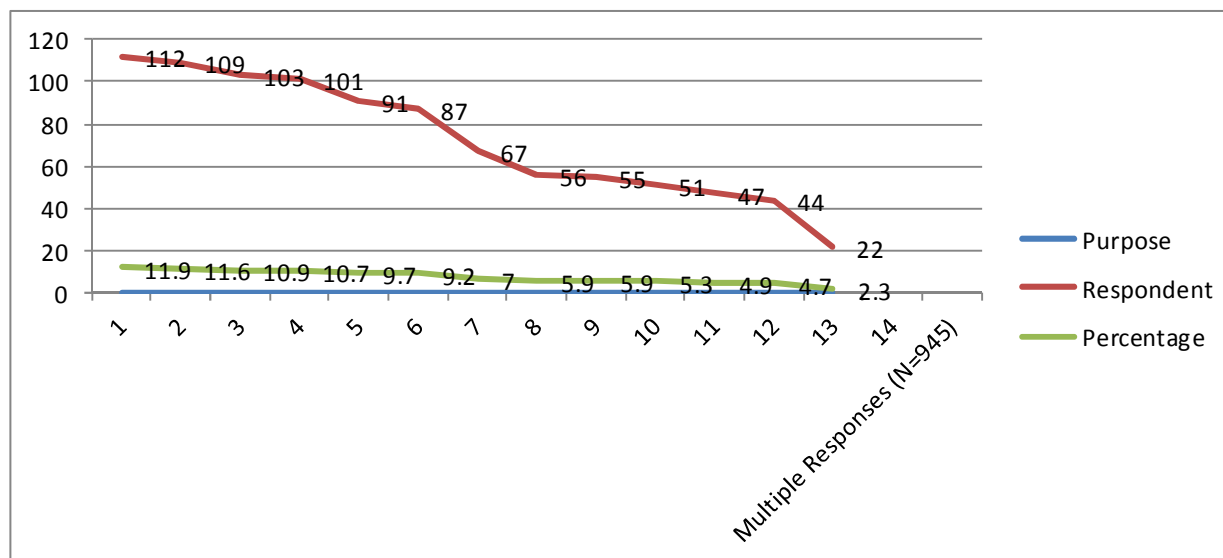
Table 2: Name of the Newspaper that the Users Read Daily



Multiples responses (N=876)

Figure 2 attempts to disclose the information on the type of the newspapers that the users read daily where the majority number of respondents 196 (22.3%) read the daily Vanguard, while the second largest number 191 (21.9%) of users prefer the Guardian newspaper. Moreover, the Punch is being preferred by 181 (20.7%), 131(14.9%) respondents read the Pointer, while 99(11.3%) respondents prefers the Complete Sport, 78(8.9%) prefer Nation. This is in line with Anaeye (2009) when he opined that information need of individual differs.

**Research Question 3:** What is the purpose of reading newspapers in FUPRE libraries?

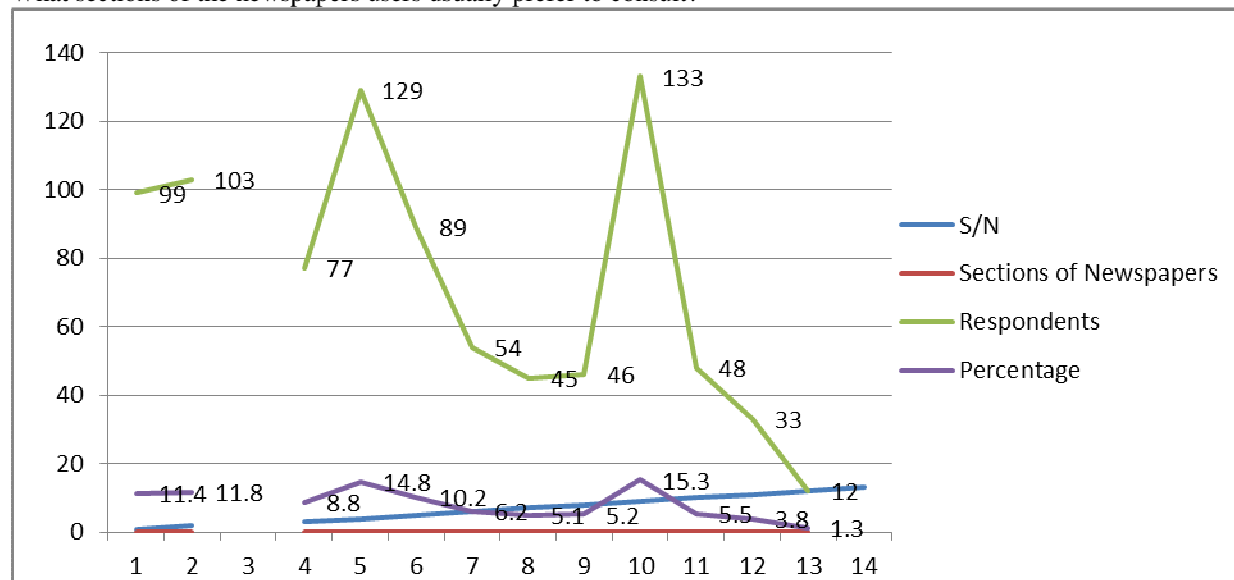


**Multiple Responses (N=945)**

Newspapers are a vital source of information in enlightened societies; providing the most recent information to readers. Newspapers serve various purposes for different categories of users (Bankole & Babalola, 2011). Students were asked about the various purposes of reading newspapers and they mentioned different reasons for reading newspapers. Figure 3 expresses that majority 112 (11.9%) number of the respondents read newspaper to obtain information while the second largest 109 (11.6%) respondents read newspaper to broaden the horizon of general knowledge and 103 (11.9%) respondents read for searching new jobs, while 101 (10.7%) respondents read for achieving educational purpose, 91(9.7%) is for entertainment respectively. The least number of respondent’s i.e. 22(2.3%)is for other purpose.

**Research Questions 4:**

What sections of the newspapers users usually prefer to consult?



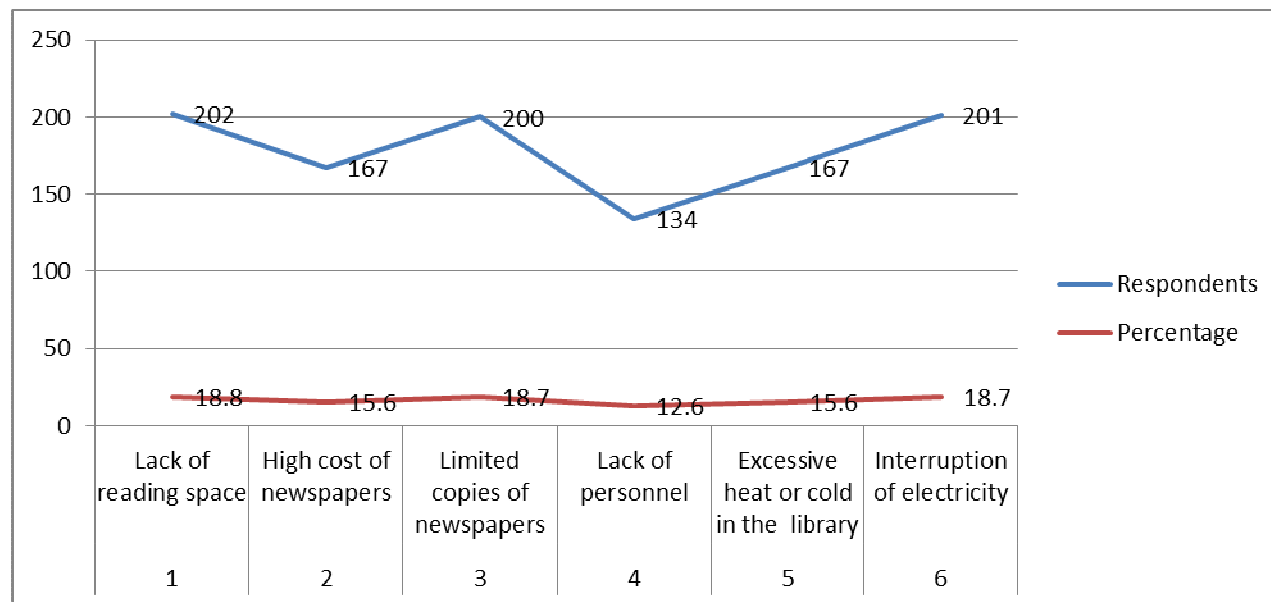
**Multiple Responses (N=868)**

The above figure4 represents the information regarding the section of newspaper that the users usually wish to read their day to day newspaper reading. Different people prefer to read different sections of newspapers. Figure 4 shows that the highest number 133(15.3%) consult newspapers for educational purpose followed by 129(14.8%) in international news, advertisement is 103(11.8%), sensational news is 99(11.4%), politics is 89(10.2%), editorial page is 77(8.8%), sports 54(6.2%), other are 48(5.5%) agriculture, 46(5.2%) business,

45(5.1%), entertainment section, 33(3.8%) health section and 12(1.3%) for letter respectively. This is in line with Clarke (2008) when he asserted that library users concentrate on their various information needs in other for them to solve their various research problems for academic development and understanding.

**Research Question 5:**

What are the challenges confronting User’s utilization of newspaper media in FUPRE libraries?



Multiple Responses (N=1071)

Figure 5 shows that there are various challenges confronting user’s utilization of newspaper media in FUPRE libraries. The major problems they face are – lack of reading space 202 (18.8%), interruption of electricity 201(18.7%), limited copies of newspapers is 200(18.7%), high cost of newspapers and excessive heat or cold in the library is 167(15.6%) respectively and lack of personnel to man the serial section of the libraries where you have newspapers is 134(12.6%). This is supported by Ineh (2008), when he opined that library users required a very conducive atmospheric environment to learn, read and to research.

**Conclusions**

Newspapers not only provide current news, they also contain thought-provoking and informative article, features, editorial and sub-editorials, analyses and observations. In today’s highly competitive world, newspapers could equip students with necessary information, knowledge and insights which will give them the much needed edge for being successful not only competitive examinations or job interviews, but also in their professional and social life. Newspaper reading also improves the communication skills and creative faculties and help the readers achieve an unbiased and informative worldview. Therefore, newspapers are considered essential for university students. This study reveals that majority of the library users of FUPRE consult 1 to 2, 3 to 4, and more than 5 different types of newspapers daily in order to solve their information needs, the papers include Vanguard, Guardian, Punch, Pointer, Complete Sport, and the Nation respectively. The different purpose of reading newspapers in the library was equally unravel, majority of the respondents agreed that it provides them with information, others are to broaden the horizon of general knowledge, from searching new jobs, for educational purpose, for entertainment, to know the sport news, as usual task of the day, to pass the time, it improves status in the society, to keep abreast with present happenings of all over the world, for getting various scholarship, to improve the health consciousness and other reasons known to them. In another development, library users’ focus strictly on the following information in a newspaper media, they are sensational new, advertisement, editorial page, international news, politics, sports, entertainment, business news, educational news, agriculture, health issues and letters. Different challenges confronting user’s utilization of newspaper media was also posed, they are lack of reading space, high cost of newspapers, limited copies of newspapers in the library, lack of qualify personnel to man the library, excessive heat or cold in the library and interruption of electricity.

**Suggestions**

In spite of the numerous challenges confronting user’s utilization of newspaper media in the libraries under



study, the following measures are recommended to enhance effective dissemination of information through the newspapers media in FUPRE library. The school management should try as much as possible to adhere strictly to the problems mentioned above.

1. Adequate and spacious reading space should be provided in the library to enable library users to comprehend and make good use of the library
2. Publishers of media house should try to reduce the price of their newspaper so that libraries all over the world could be able to purchase them at affordable price
3. The library under study should add more copies to their newspapers subscription in order to have multiple copies that will go round all library users, again timing of users to make use of a particular newspapers should be adhere strictly to.
4. A normal atmospheric condition to user should be considered to enhance effective use of the library under study.
5. There is urgent need for the improvement of power supply in the libraries in order to enhance maximum use of the newspapers media because they depend on light (electricity) to function.

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