

Serials Management in University Libraries in Selected Universities in South-West Nigeria

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Abstract

This paper attempts to examine collection, organisation, maintenance and preservation of serials as well as provision of facilities, services and constraints to effective management, access to and use of serials in the library. Questionnaire method was employed to collect data for the study. The study shows that various types and forms of serials are subscribed to and kept in the libraries, but not filling the missing gaps and updating the issues. The finding reveals that facilities and services are provided in serials sections of the libraries, but inadequate. Serials management in the libraries is okay but incomplete. The paper therefore recommends that the university authorities should provide adequate fund for the library to make available relevant, current and adequate serials, facilities and services so as to be able to meet the users' needs.

Keywords: Serials, Serials management, University libraries, Nigeria.

1. Introduction

Serials, unlike textbooks and monographs, are resources issued serially or periodically. Agbaje (2002) opined that anything belongs to, form part, or consists of a series qualifies to be called a serials. Serials literature includes journals, magazines, newspapers, news bulletins, reviews, reports, proceedings and others alike. A serial is therefore, regarded as a material that is in a tangible format, that is, recorded on paper, microform, magnetic media or optical disk and retrievable. Serials, to researchers and librarians, are regarded as sources of information for research in universities. There is no gainsaying the fact that serials play important role in research activities. They are the most important and useful information resources kept by the library.

The origin of serials, according to Nisonger (1998), has been traced to antiquity. Annals written on the tombs of Egyptian Kings during the first dynasty (2750 – 2625B.C), according to Osborn (1980), may possibly be considered the world's earliest known serials. He also mentioned a decree by Julius Caesar in 60B.C requiring the proceedings of the Roman Senate to be published. The invention of movable print in the 15th century attributed to Johannes Gutenberg (Nisonger, 1998), undoubtedly helped lay the groundwork for the earliest journal. Since the 1820s when machine-driven typesetting began to develop, increasingly sophisticated technology, as remarked by Veaner (1985), has contributed to the production of print serials. Veaner (1985) emphasized further that microform technology invented in 1839 by John Benjamin Dancer has profound implications for serials. By the mid-20th Century, photographic typesetting played a major role; and in the recent decades, powerful computerised methods were developed. During the 1980s, authors started submitting journal articles in word-processed format; and also in the 1990s this was done via the Internet.

Serials are of great importance because they carry latest, current, up-to-date and useful information. For the latest and up-to-date opinions and development within the various subject disciplines, one would well to look in the appropriate journals. As reported by Elaturoti, Fagbeja, Kolade and Oniyide (1990), serials constitute an important part of library collections because the information contained in them is more current than those in published books. This claim is supported by Fayose (1995) that 'periodicals are useful because they are the most up-to-date resources in the library and that the articles in periodicals are often written by experts in the field, therefore, they are reliable and the articles are precise and not as cumbersome to read as textbooks'. Where recency of information is of prime consideration, the serials have a distinct advantage over the book (Adubika, 2007).

Proper management of serials in the university library is necessary. How well serials are managed in the university library can be a pointer to the success of the library in meeting its objectives.

2. Objectives of the Study

The Objectives of the study are to:

1. find out the types of available serials in Nigerian university libraries;
2. verify the forms of serials Nigerian university libraries have;
3. investigate how serials are managed in Nigerian university libraries;
4. ascertain provision of facilities for users in serials section of the university library;
5. identify services rendered to users in serials section of the university library; and;
6. Examine constraints to effective management access to and use of serials in Nigerian university libraries.

3. Literature Review

Serials should be properly managed in the Library for effective access and use by researchers. The elements of serials management are serials acquisition which involves selection, deselection and subscription; organisation and use which involve processing and display on racks for users; and maintenance which involves updating, filling the gap, preservation, binding of back issues and repair of damaged ones. Others are provision of facilities like finding aids, reading areas equipped with tables, chairs and air-conditioner; as well as provision of services such as current awareness service, photocopy, exhibition and translation from foreign language like German, French and Arabic to the language understood by the users.

Woodward (1999) opined that the major concepts of serials management are check-in/receipt, claiming, routine, binding, ordering and subscription renewal, financial control, management reports, union lists, online user access and circulation of serials. Agbaje (2002) asserted that the stages of serials management by any library include selection, order placement, delivery, processing, storage and retrieval of serials. Woodward (1991) reported that serials are expensive and difficult to manage and that their management needs special skills and experience from the serials manager. He stated further that the type of managerial responses depend on the types of library while methods and styles differ among various academic libraries, the principles of management remain the same all over the world.

Provision details of holding to readers, staff and other library users are important aspect of serials management. In small libraries, according to Nwalo (2003), the received records may be kept in the reading room for consultation by readers; intensive staff use makes this impossible for large collections and staff answer questions from record kept behind the scenes. Organisation of serials involves cataloguing, classification and display on the rack. Mullis and Gascoigne (1990) averred that the major objectives of serials cataloguing are to provide the most efficient, economical access to serials represented in the catalogue; and to provide the most comprehensive and understandable bibliographic description for each serial publication represented in the catalogue. After normal processing, serials are separated, arranged and organised accordingly. Nwalo (2003) observed that all journals are displayed either on the periodical display racks or in pamphlet boxes. Serials are arranged according to a classification system where all journals on the same subjects are placed together.

Serials collections require careful maintenance to ensure that the library's holdings of any particular serials are properly arranged for the readers. Falaiye (2004) posited that serials received late or not received at all are claimed by sending a note to the publisher or agent to inform and ask for the replacement of the missing issues. On the issue of preservation, Simmonds (1990) emphasised that serials are often kept in a number of sequences, perhaps one location for the current issues or issue, another for some back years and perhaps a stack closed to direct user access for the rest of the set. He added that the storage of microform reels is best accommodated in cabinets made for that purpose. Binding of serials, as pointed out by Clark and O'Driscoll (1990), can significantly prolong their shelf life, particularly if the library has a liberal loan policy.

Provision of facilities and services to facilitate easy access to and use of serials in the library are essential. In the libraries studied by Falaiye (2004), areas are set aside for the readers. Eighty per cent of the areas for reading newspapers have easy chairs and settees. In two of the libraries, there was specific provision made for reading tables for those who want to read magazines. Similarly, only two of the libraries have air-conditioner in their serials section reading area. Falaiye (2004) and Adebika (2007) reported that the current title/issue of serials received in the library are stamped and recorded in the appropriate places such as statistics files, kardex card, visible index, serials list and stripdex in place of cataloguing. They emphasized further that serials are usually controlled in tripdex and kalamazoo or kardex equipped with cards specially design for the purpose. Direct services, as described by Clark and O'Driscoll (1990), are circulation, indexing and abstracting, current awareness services, translation and photocopying services. Nwalo (2003) posited that current awareness services are provided to ensure maximum exposure and utilisation of the library's information resources.

For effective access to and use of library materials including serials, proper management is essential. Serials literature whether in printed or electronic format, according to Woodward (1999), merits attention in a study of academic library collection management.

4. Research Methodology

Questionnaire administration method was adopted in collecting data for this work. The questions were based on the concept and elements of serials management in the library. Closed form types of questions were used. Three copies of the questionnaire were distributed to three serials managers of three Universities in South West Nigeria, Kenneth Dike Library, University of Ibadan (U.I), Ibadan, 'Nimbe Adedipe Library, Federal University of Agriculture, Abeokuta (FUNAAB) and Olabisi Onabanjo University (OOU) Library, Ago-Iwoye. All copies (100%) of the questionnaire were duly completed, returned and analysed.

5. Findings and Discussion

Table 1: Educational Qualification of Respondents

Educational Qualification	Kenneth Dike Library, U.I.	Nimbe Adedipe Library, FUNAAB	OOU Library, Ago-Iwoye
DLS	-	-	-
BLS	-	-	-
PGDLS	-	-	-
MLS	Yes	Yes	Yes
Ph.D	-	-	-
Others	-	-	-

Table 1 presents the educational qualification of the respondents. Serials manager of the university libraries studied were qualified. According to the result, they all had Masters Degree in Library Science (MLS). It is mandatory for every professional librarian in university libraries in Nigeria to possess MLS and they all have it. This shows that they were all professionals and qualify to head a section in the library.

Table 2: Designation of respondents

Designation	Kenneth Dike Library, U.I.	Nimbe Adedipe Library, FUNAAB	OOU Library, Ago-Iwoye
Assistant Librarian	-	-	-
Librarian II	-	-	-
Librarian I	-	-	Yes
Senior Librarian	Yes	-	-
Principal Librarian	-	Yes	-
Deputy University Librarian	-	-	-
University Librarian	-	-	-

Table 2 presents designation of the respondents. The result shows that serials management personnel of university libraries studied are professionally qualified. They are librarian I and above. This is possible because the serials managers had MLS and it is only MLS holders that can rise to the rank of Librarian II and above in Nigerian university libraries. The implication of this is that with qualified staff in place, management of serials in the library would be effective. This is supported by Woodward (1991) that management of serials in the library needs special skills and experience from the serials manager.

Table 3: Types of Serials in the Libraries

Types	Kenneth Dike Library, U.I.	Nimbe Adedipe Library, FUNAAB	OOU Library, Ago-Iwoye
Journals	Yes	Yes	Yes
Proceedings	Yes	Yes	Yes
Reports	Yes	Yes	Yes
Magazines	Yes	Yes	Yes
Newspapers	Yes	Yes	Yes
Index	Yes	No	No
Abstract	Yes	No	No

Table 3 shows the types of serials in the libraries in Nigerian universities. The result revealed that the three university libraries have journals, proceedings, reports, magazines, newspapers, index and abstract except Nimbe Adedipe Library, FUNAAB and Olabisi Onabanjo University Library that stated that they did not have index and abstract in their serials section. In fact, some university libraries place their indexes and abstracts in reference section. This claim is supported by Nwalo (2003) and Aina (2004) who reported that kind of serials include journals, magazine, newsletters, accessions, reports, proceedings and transactions of societies and others like abstracts and indexes.

Table 4: Forms of Serials in the Libraries

Forms	Kenneth Dike Library, U.I.	Nimbe Adedipe Library, FUNAAB	OOU Library, Ago-Iwoye
Print Serials	Yes	Yes	Yes
Microform Serials	Yes	Yes	No
Electronic Serials	Yes	Yes	Yes

Table 4 reveals the forms of serials in the libraries in Nigerian universities. The result showed that university libraries in Nigeria have different forms of serials, print, microform and electronic serials. This implies that users have opportunity of choosing any form they like. Adubika (2007) reported that apart from the availability of serials in paper and electronic formats, serials can also assume the format of microforms. The finding is similar to the study of Dillon and Hahn (2002) on the use of journals by researchers at the University of Maryland. They found that 65% of the users read printed journals, at least, monthly while 80% read electronic journals, at least, monthly.

Table 5: Maintenance of Serials in the Libraries

Maintenance	Kenneth Dike Library, U.I.	Nimbe Adedipe Library, FUNAAB	OOU Library, Ago-Iwoye
Regular Subscription	Yes	Yes	Yes
Filling the missing gap	No	No	No
Up-dating the issues	No	Yes	No

The result presented in table 5 shows that subscription to serials is regular in the entire three university libraries. All failed to engage in filling the missing gap of serials in the libraries. Only Nimbe Adedipe Library, FUNAAB was engaged in updating the issues of serials in the library. Implication of this is that inadequacy, irrelevancy and outdated of serials in the library might adversely affect research activities of users. A study by Falaiye (2004) claimed that serials received late or not received at all are claimed by sending a note to the publisher or agent to inform and ask for replacement of the missing issues.

Table 6: Organization/storage of serials in the Libraries

Organization/Storage	Kenneth Dike Library, U.I.	Nimbe Adedipe Library, FUNAAB	OOU Library, Ago-Iwoye
Display of serials on racks	Yes	Yes	Yes
Display of bound volumes of serials on shelves	Yes	Yes	Yes
Keeping of back issues of serials in the store	No	Yes	No

Table 6 reveals the ways of organising serials in the university library. All the libraries studied display their serials on serials display racks and bound volumes on shelves. Of all the three libraries, only Nimbe Adedipe Library, FUNAAB engaged in keeping back issues of their serials in the store. The finding conforms to that of Nwalo (2003) who averred that all journals are displayed either on the periodical display racks or in pamphlet boxes. If journals are displayed on racks, the back issues to each title are stored away in the rack, behind the displayed copies.

Table 7: Preservation of serials in the Libraries

Preservation	Kenneth Dike Library, U.I.	Nimbe Adedipe Library, FUNAAB	OOU Library, Ago-Iwoye
Provision of air-conditioners	No	Yes	No
Regular cleaning of materials	Yes	Yes	No
Weeding of irrelevant issues	No	Yes	Yes
Repair of damaged issues	Yes	Yes	No
Binding of back issues	No	Yes	No

Table 7 presents methods of preserving serials in the university library. The result revealed that only Nimbe Adedipe Library, FUNAAB engaged in binding of back issues and provided air conditioner to preserve their serials while regular cleaning of materials and repair of damaged issues as methods of preserving serials in the library were adopted by only Kenneth Dike Library, U. I, and Nimbe Adedipe Library, FUNAAB. Only Nimbe Adedipe Library and Olabisi Onabanjo University Library, Ago-Iwoye were engaged in weeding of irrelevant issues. This indicates that some libraries are keeping irrelevant issues. The finding is in line with Clark and O'Driscoll (1990) and Simmonds (1990) that binding protects serials from wear and tear, and makes them far more convenient to shelve and order on the shelves, and so more accessible.

Table 8: Facilities in the Serials Section

Facilities	Kenneth Dike Library, U.I.	Nimbe Adedipe Library, FUNAAB	OOU Library, Ago-Iwoye
Reading area	Yes	Yes	Yes
Reading tables	Yes	Yes	Yes
Reading chairs	Yes	Yes	Yes
Carrels	Yes	No	No
Toilet	Yes	Yes	Yes
Lighting	Yes	Yes	Yes
Fans	Yes	Yes	Yes
Air-conditioners	No	Yes	No
Searching tools	Yes	Yes	No

Table 8 presents essential facilities needed in serials section to facilitate access to and use of serials in the university library. The finding shows that all the libraries provided essential facilities listed in table 8 to make access to and use of serials easier except Olabisi Onabanjo University Library, Ago-Iwoye that did not provide carrel, air-conditioner and searching tool in the serials section. The result is comparable to that of Akinbode (1996) that Library should provide adequate facilities such as finding aids, reading areas, reading tables and chairs, fans/air-conditioners, private reading carrels, toilets, signs and guides, racks, shelves, cabinets, computer facilities, cloak room, exhibition gallery and others alike. In the university libraries studied by Falaiye (2004), areas were provided for the readers. In the reading areas, easy chairs and settees were provided for the readers in the serials section. Similarly, only two of the libraries have air-conditioner in their serials section reading area.

Table 9: Services in the Serials Section

Services	Kenneth Dike Library, U.I.	Nimbe Adedipe Library, FUNAAB	OOU Library, Ago-Iwoye
Photocopying	Yes	Yes	No
Serials loan	No	No	No
Current Awareness	Yes	Yes	Yes
Inter-Library Service	No	No	No
Library Exhibition	Yes	Yes	No
Indexing and Abstracting	No	No	No
Electronic Journal Services	No	Yes	No
Translation Service on Serials	No	No	No

The result presented in table 9 shows that none of the libraries engaged in loaning services in serials section of the library. This indicates that serials are for consultation only in the library. All the three libraries were embarked on current awareness service. This is good for the libraries because their users would be adequately informed of the new arrivals in the library. Only Kenneth Dike Library, U. I. and Nimbe Adedipe Library, FUNAAB were rendering photocopy and exhibition services to their users. The result is in line with Clark and O'Driscoll (1990) who asserted that direct services to the users of serials are circulation, indexing and abstracting, current awareness services, translation and photocopying services. Woodward (1999) reported that most academic libraries restrict, at least, their current serials holdings and sometimes the whole collection to use in the library only so as to ensure that current issues are accessible and secure because missing issues are difficult to replace. This claim is supported by Nwalo (2003) that current awareness services are provided to ensure maximum exposure and utilisation of the library's information resources. The claim is also supported by Aina (2004) that having access to photocopying facilities in the library will reduce journal pilfering and mutilation of library materials.

Table 10: Constraints to access to and use of Serials in the Libraries

Constraints	Kenneth Dike Library, U.I.	Nimbe Adedipe Library, FUNAAB	OOU Library, Ago-Iwoye
Many serials are defaced	Yes	Yes	No
Stealing of serials by users	Yes	Yes	No
Mutilation of serials by users	Yes	Yes	No
Disorganisation of serials on the racks by users	Yes	Yes	Yes
Weeding of irrelevant issues by Librarian	No	Yes	Yes
Delay in processing of new issues	Yes	No	Yes
Removal of damaged issues from circulation for repair	No	Yes	Yes
Illegal loan to users	Yes	No	No
Erratic power supply affects use of electronic serials	Yes	Yes	Yes

The result presented in table 10 reveals that there are constraints to access to and use of serials in the libraries. The constraints are many but the major ones that are common in the three libraries are disorganisation of serials on the racks by users and erratic power supply. Though, what is constraint in one library is not in the other. The result is similar to the finding of Fasanu and Kinoshi (2012) that as much as serials users appreciated electronic journal use, myriads of challenges such as Bandwidth problems, infrastructural facilities, power failure and operational skill are some of the constraints limiting the use of electronic journal in various schools they studied.

Table 11: Constraints to effective Management of Serials in the Library

Constraints	Kenneth Dike Library, U.I.	Nimbe Adedipe Library, FUNAAB	OOU Library, Ago-Iwoye
Inadequate funding	Yes	Yes	Yes
Problem of foreign exchange	No	Yes	Yes
Inflation	No	No	Yes
Bad attitude of users	No	Yes	Yes
Inadequate infrastructure for electronic information	No	Yes	Yes
Inadequate of facilities	No	Yes	Yes
Lack of professional staff	No	No	No
Lack of adequate accommodation	No	Yes	Yes
De-selection	No	No	No
Others (Bad record keeping)	Yes	No	No

Table 11 presents constraints that affect effective management of serials in the university library. The finding revealed that the libraries faced one constraints or the other. The major constraint that is general is inadequate funding. Provision of adequate resources, facilities and services needs adequate funding. The result is supported by Salaam (2001) and Nisonger (1998) that major problem of serials collection is a drastic cut in the budget of Nigerian universities coupled with high inflationary trends in the present world's economy. A study of Lawal (1982) claimed that about 25% of university libraries have had to cancel some of their subscription due to inadequate funding. This claim is supported by Salaam (2008) that the libraries of universities of agriculture in Nigeria were not adequately funded and therefore affected the acquisition level of serials and services in the libraries.

6. Conclusion and Recommendation

The findings showed that the Nigerian university libraries acquired, processed, maintained, organised, stored, preserved and made available various types and forms of serials for research activities. To facilitate action, access to and use of serials in the libraries, professional personnel, essential facilities and services were provided in the serials section. As there were some constraints limiting access to and use of serials in the libraries so also the libraries had some constraints that affected effective management of serials in the libraries. Though, the libraries provided serials, facilities and services but not adequate. Serials management practice in the university libraries was okay but not complete.

Therefore, if the university libraries do not want to lose their value, it is recommended that the university authorities should provide adequate fund for the libraries to make available relevant, current and adequate serials, facilities and services in the libraries so as to be able to meet the users' needs.

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