Availability and use of serials by students in Festus Aghagbo Nwako library, Nnamdi Azikiwe University, Awka

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Abstract

The study examined the availability and use of serials by students in Festus Aghagbo Nwako Library, Nnamdi Azikiwe University, Awka. Six objectives guided the study. The research adopted a case study research design. The population of the study comprised all the 3,031 registered postgraduate and undergraduate library users for 2014/2015 academic session. Purposive sampling technique was used to select one hundred and fifty (150) final year and postgraduate students. Questionnaire was the instrument used for data collection. Frequency, percentages and mean were used to analyze data. The result of the findings showed that journals and magazines were the most available serials; newspapers, journals, e-journals and magazines were available to a very high extent; journals and newspapers had the highest extent of use; serials were mostly used for research/writing projects or theses; lack of awareness of the existing journals in both the digital and traditional Serial Sections and insufficient number of copies and titles in some disciplines were the major challenges; provision of enough copies of serial titles in the library and creating proper awareness of the existing serials were the major strategies for enhancing the availability and use of serials in the library. Based on these findings, some recommendations were made which include among other things that the library management should

take necessary steps to intensify its awareness campaign of the Serials Section by placing signposts of the Section from the ground floor. Publicity campaigns should be increased in the news bulletins, students' forum, orientation programmes, and social media platforms.

Keywords: Serials, Festus Aghagbo Nwako Library, University Libraries, Digital Library

Introduction

University libraries are the service centres of their parent institutions and they sustain the teaching, learning and research mission of the university by providing information resources in both print and non-print formats for their faculty, non-teaching staff and students. Oguniyi, Akerele and Afolabi (2011) state that a well-stocked library is the pride of any educational institution since it is critical to the performance of its core functions. Research is an essential function of universities and serial publications form the bulk of resources which provide information that are needed for scholarship and research to thrive. Serials are essential and integral components of every major academic and research libraries' collections because the information they contain reflect the most current developments in all fields of learning. They are regarded as the backbone of every university library because they bear the most up–to-date information on research findings. They also constitute a very important source of information in academic environments because they support the curriculum and aid research. Okiy (2008) records that serials constitute an important part of the resources of an academic library this is because they provide the latest information on research and current affairs. They play a

vital role in the dissemination of reports of completed and ongoing research.

Serials are a unique kind of publication because they offer a wealth of reading materials which represent a variety of points of view from several authors on various topics. They contain materials of new value. Moreover, most serial articles undergo stringent and rigorous peer review before they are published and are more rapidly done than books. They bear primary sources of information with first-hand information in any field of knowledge. In addition serials frequently discuss in-depth, highly specialized topics and include information that may never appear in a book. These attributes make serials indispensable to a library's collection.

Nwalor (2003) citing Osborn describes serials as publications issued in successive parts, at regular or irregular intervals and intended to be continued indefinitely. Moreover, The International Organization for Standardization (ISO) (2010) defines it as a publication in any medium issued under the same title in a succession of discreet parts, usually numbered or dated and appearing at regular or irregular intervals with no predetermined ending. The parts are often differentiated from one another by numerical or chronological designations. Serials are defined and discussed in various ways within the library profession by various authors. The National Serials Data Program (NDSP) (2010) defines serials as print or non-print publications issued in parts, usually bearing issue numbers and /or dates.

The availability of serials in the library's collection is significant because they support and aid research. Availability is defined as the quality of being at hand when needed, capable of being gotten and ready for use (American Heritage Dictionary of the English Language, 2014). Use on the other hand is defined as

the act of using something or the purpose for which something may be employed (The English Online Dictionary, 2014). Akambge (2010) asserts that serials whether in print or electronic merits attention and the need to acquire and provide the means of their use is paramount. The need to cater for all the disciplines offered in the university and to acquire relevant titles is of utmost concern in the choice of serial publications.

Serials are published frequently in extensively great titles and rates that it poses concern to the librarians and the library users alike in terms of its provision, organization and management. The assurance of the use of serials that are available in the library is not guaranteed because they are kept in a closed access system. Moreover, the titles are as varied as do their frequency of occurrence. Most library clients do not know how to use the contents of these research resources. Serials must be essentially acquired, most libraries commit a great proportion of their finance to the acquisition of serials and they must be appropriately processed for maximum utilization.

Serial publications aid research which is among the core functions of the university hence its   availability in the library's collection is critical. Akambge (2010) asserts that serials whether in print or electronic merits attention and the need to acquire and provide the means of their use is paramount. Moreover, the need to cater for all the disciplines offered in the university as well as to acquire relevant titles is of utmost concern in the choice of serial publications.

Background of the serials section of Festus Aghagbo Nwako library

The Serials Section has resources which includes four different titles of newspapers (Guardian, Sun, This Day and Orient), journals in various disciplines, special collections made up of World Bank Publications, UNESCO and its agencies-UNISIST, UNICEF, WHO, FAO; International Geosphere Biosphere Publications and magazines formed part of the collection of the resources of the library. In April 2009, the Digital library took off with about four thousand full text resources; created links to over twenty one online resources and bibliographic entries of over five hundred CD-ROMS, theses, dissertations, lectures, proceedings and university bulletin, inaugural lectures as well as internally generated digitized resources from faculties and departments of the university referred to as institutional repository. The Online gateway gives users access to resources in the following sites**:** Hinari-Health Internetwork Access to Research Initiative; Agora-Access to Global Online Research in Agriculture; Oare-Online Access to Research in the Environment; EBSCO host; Prota-Plant Resources of Tropical Africa; World Digital Library; Bioline International; Bibliomania; British Library; DATAD- Database of African Theses and Dissertations; DOAJ-Directory of Open Access Journals; Educational Resources Centre; Earth Sciences Resources; Biology and Life Sciences Resource; Chemistry Resources; JSTOR-Journal storage. Other resources are non-internet bases resources which include: Massachusetts's institute technology of ((MIT) courseware, e- granary and TEEAL-The Essential Electronic Agricultural Library Database).The Read Newspapers link helps users to read newspapers (Ogbonna and Anunobi, 2013). These resources are predominantly serials resources. The mission of this venture was to move the university to a higher level of global competiveness through the provision of

access to real time, state- of- the- art, global and indigenous information resources (Anunobi and Ezeani, 2011).

Statement of problem

Students who write research projects mostly cite textbooks and little of journal articles in their research work. Moreover, throughout the researchers' years of working in the library, it was observed that the Serial Section witnessed very low level of patronage. It became necessary to understudy this section of the library where the serial resources are housed to examine the availability and   use   of serials by students.

Objectives of study

The general objective of the study is to determine the availability of and use of the serials publications in Festus Aghagbo Nwako Library in Nnamdi Azikiwe University, Awka. Specifically, the study sets out to find out the following:

1. Find out the serials available in Festus Aghagbo Nwako Library.
2. Determine the extent of availability of serial publications in Festus Aghagbo Nwako Library.
3. Examine the extent of use of the serial publications by the students in Festus Aghagbo Nwako Library.
4. Determine the purposes for which serial publications are used by students in Festus Aghagbo Nwako Library.
5. Identify some of the factors militating against effective availability and use of serial publications in Festus Aghagbo Nwako Library.
6. Suggest strategies for enhancing the identified problems.

Literature review

The Serials Section manages the journals, newspapers, magazines and other periodicals that support the curricular needs and complement general monograph and reference collections. Availability entails acquiring information resources and providing the mechanisms by which users could access them when they are needed by ensuring that they are present for immediate use and that they satisfy the quest for information of the user. It is the justification for the existence of the library. Aguolu and Aguolu (2002), note that availability of an information resource does not necessarily imply its accessibility because access to an available resource could be prevented by one factor or another. This is in line with Aghauche (2007) who argued that it is not every available resource that is utilized. Iyoro (2004) in a perception study looked at how serial availability and accessibility in libraries contribute to students' learning process and they were found to play a significant role in the acquisition of new knowledge because the serials were easily and conveniently available and accessible. He identified availability and accessibility as prerequisites of information use. Users tended to use information resources that require least effort to access. It is what is available and accessible that is deemed usable.

Accessibility is used to describe the degree to which a system is useable by a wide range of users as possible. Abdulsalami and Salami (2013) posit that information resources could be made accessible through the use of ICTs. He believes that electronic serial resources are fast becoming more acceptable and its usage is on the increase. This implies that serials are more readily available as electronic resources but observed that this required that library users must attain high level of expertise if they have to utilize them effectively or efficiently.

Serial publications occur as periodicals, journals, newspapers, magazines, proceedings, transactions of societies, dissertations, numbered monographic series, memoires, annuals (reports and yearbooks), indexes and abstracts (Nwalor, 2003 citing Osborn). In addition, Iyoro (2004) citing Davison categorized serials into four classes based on the type of information they contain and the nature of the publishers. They include: learned, scholarly or professional journals, commercial oriented serials, house journals and newspapers. Among all these, scholarly journals are popular because they provide a platform on which research output and impact of individual authors, institutions or countries are measured. Serials have catered for the information needs of researchers and professionals ever since they were first published.

Information explosion, recent trends in the developments of ICTs and users expectations in acquiring serials have caused libraries and librarians to change. Many university libraries have replaced print serials with e-versions of serials remarked, Islam and Chowdhury (2006) especially e-journals which are the most popular and common serial format that have been regarded as a very important library resource. They provide their users with a wide range of electronic options of serials occurring as e-journals-theses/dissertations, e-abstracts, e-indexes, e-magazines, e-newspapers, e-books and online databases. Electronic serial resources are fast becoming more acceptable and its usage is on the increase. They can be accessed via electronic transmission and are usually published on the web.

Many electronic journals are listed in the Directory of open access journals (DOAJ) and the articles are indexed in bibliographic databases and search engines for the various academic disciplines. Many universities subscribe to bulk

packages of electronic journals in order to provide access for their users. Some of the e-journals are available as open access journals requiring no subscription while offering free full text articles and reviews to all.

The extent to which library materials are used is of paramount importance to academic libraries' service delivery. Okafor and Ukwuoma (2010) observe that it is extremely important that students throughout the world are encouraged to make good use of serial publications that the library is able to acquire as they are indispensable in the furtherance of research, teaching and recreation. The frequency of use of serials varies, it could be regularly, once a week or monthly. The effectiveness of a library does not depend on only providing the collections and other facilities per se but also on the success of the frequent exploitation and use of the resources. Students constitute the major category of users. Agbola (2009) revealed in her study that with reference to extent of use, only 192 (21.1%) of respondents used print journals regularly as against 320 (35.1%) that used it occasionally and 190 (20.8%) that never used it.

The extent of frequency of use depends on many factors which include: awareness of the existence of the resources by the users, packaging, presentation, ease of use, the role of the librarian in setting the environment for use and discovery of the content. Research has shown that the use of journals in the Serials Section of the library is drastically reducing among undergraduates and postgraduates as they consistently resort to Google to save themselves the trouble of going to the library (Hampton-Reeves, *et al*, 2009).

The library is one of the information providers that make available print and electronic serials for undergraduates, postgraduate students, lecturers and non-teaching staff. Agboola

(2009) observe that the purpose of use of serials include writing coursework, essays and term papers as well as personal self-development. Oyewusi and Oyeboacle (2009) further state that serials are in use in areas such as carrying out research, personal study, personal cognitive development, writing school assignments, term papers, project or theses, historical studies, for leisure and entertainment. Bamidele, Omeluzor and Amadi (2013) in their study found out that majority of the respondents 21 (70%) used serials for research purposes while 1.33% used it for relaxation and to be acquainted with current affairs.

The constraints to the availability and use of serial publications are varied. Abubakar (2010) identified lack of funds as a clog in the wheel of progress of collection development of resources including serials in Nigeria. Mabawonkon and Aina (2005) contributing to this discourse noted that irregularity of journals published in Africa in various fields of knowledge is another major constraint. Others include difficulty in maintaining subscription to all the journals that library users may need and want to have access to which affects availability and accessibility of serial resources (Mason, 2007), physical and administrative barriers such as lack of bibliographic facilities and circulation policies; attendant features of underdevelopment such as power failure, machine breakdown and ICTs related setbacks (Aguolu and Aguolu, 2002) and inadequate services provision by the librarians as a result of nonchalant attitude of librarians (Abubakar, 2010).

Solutions to these problems include provision of adequate funding for increased development of serial publications, including electronic resources that will increase access and availability of serials.

Aghadiuno, Agbo and Onyekweodiri (2015) however, agreed that provision of funds is pertinent to the availability and management of serials in libraries. Contributing to this discourse, Stephens (2010) suggests user education through bulletin boards and discussion groups, document delivery services, indexing and abstracting services as panacea to the problem of access and availability of serials in libraries.

Infrastructures such as electricity, increased bandwidth should be provided for access to electronic serials. In agreement, Aghadiuno, *et al*, (2015) revealed that the provision of infrastructures like generator/power plant and electricity supply will increase the availability and management of serials. Librarians must develop their ICTs and personal/interpersonal skills to reposition them for improved services delivery that will ensure adequate availability and use of serials collections in the library. There is urgent need for adequate training of librarians to acquire more skills needed for management of databases, updating loose-leaf, websites and software which is required for effective application of serial in libraries. Provision of Website, good bandwidth, qualitative computer system, ICT manager and CD-ROMs will increase the use of online in accessing serial and other information resources (Aghadiuno, *et al*, 2015).

Methodology

The research adopted a case study research design. The area of the study is Festus Aghagbo Nwako Library, Nnamdi Azikiwe University, Awka. The population of the study comprised all the registered postgraduate and undergraduate library users for 2014/2015 academic session. The population of the undergraduate regular students is two thousand, five hundred and

thirty (2,530) while postgraduate students is five hundred and one (501), totalling three thousand and thirty –one (3,031) registered regular students. Purposive sampling technique was used to select one hundred and fifty (150) students from final year and postgraduate levels for the study. A questionnaire titled Availability and Use of Serials in the Library by the Students (AUSLSQ) was the instrument used for data collection. It was administered and collected from the students who came to use the library by one of the researchers who was the Head of the Serials Section at the time of the study. Data collected was analysed using percentages for objectives 1 and 2 with a benchmark of 50% and descriptive statistics (Mean) was used for objectives 3-6 using a four point rating scale with a criterion mean of 2.50. The data collected were presented in tables based on the six objectives formulated for the study. A total of one hundred and fifty (150) questionnaires were distributed but one hundred and forty (140) were retrieved and utilized in the study.

Analysis and discussion of findings
Table 1: Availability of serials publications in Festus Aghagbo Nwako library

S/N	Items	Frequency of Respondents	% Percentage of Respondents
1	Journals	134	95.7%

2	Newspapers	133	95%
3	Magazines	134	95.7%
4	Annual reports	128	91.4%
5	Proceedings	124	88.6%
6	E-journals	127	90.7%
7	E-projects	127	90.7%
8	E-indexes	120	85.7%
9	E-abstracts	122	87.5%
10	Inaugural lectures	106	75.7%

The responses in table 1 indicated that journals and magazines (95.7%) were most available; followed by newspapers (95%); annual reports (91.4%); e-journals and e-projects (90.7%); proceedings (88.6%); e-abstracts (87.5%); e-indexes (85.7%) and inaugural lectures (75.7%). This implies that both print and non-print serials are provided in the library. This is in line with the items enumerated by Islam and Chowdhury (2006) as types of serials found in libraries. The non-print or e-resources are predominantly found in the digital library as resources on the various sites on the Gateway and institutional repository of the university library. However, the hard copies are accessible because they can be seen and used from the shelves but the e - resources are   only reachable and usable for students who are registered and have the password to access the documents that are in soft copies.

Table 2: Mean responses of students on extent of availability of serials in Festus Aghagbo Nwako library
N=140

S/N	Items	VHE	HE	LE	VLE	Mean	Decision
1	Journals	68	54	15	3	3.30	A

2	Newspapers	83	49	6	2	3.50	A
3	Magazines	43	81	14	2	3.10	A
4	Annual Reports	31	76	28	5	2.90	A
5	Proceedings	10	79	49	2	2.60	A
6	E-journals	59	54	20	7	3.10	A
7	E-Projects	22	60	51	7	2.60	A
8	E-Abstracts	8	10	80	42	1.80	R
9	E-Indexes	4	8	80	48	1.70	R

Note: Very High Extent (VHE) = 4; High Extent (HE) = 3; Low Extent (LE) = 2; Very Low Extent (VLE) = 1.

Table 2 above shows that serials such as newspapers, journals, e-journals and magazines with mean scores of 3.50, 3.30, 3.10 and 3.10 respectively are available to a very high extent in the library while annual reports (2.90), proceedings (2.60) and e-projects (2.60) are to a high extent available in the library. The table also shows that e-abstracts (1.80) and e-indexes (1.70) are available to a low extent in the library. This implies that newspapers, journals, e-journals and magazines are more available in comparison to other serial publications and are mostly used by students. The findings corroborate earlier findings by Iyoro (2004) who noted that serials availability and accessibility in the library contribute to students' learning process and play significant role in the acquisition of new knowledge.

Table 3: Mean responses of students on extent of use of serials in Festus Aghagbo Nwako library
N=140

S/N	Items	VHE	HE	LE	VLE	Mean	Decision
1	Journals	63	60	14	3	3.30	A

2	Newspapers	58	39	31	12	3.00	A
3	Magazines	39	59	29	13	2.80	A
4	Annual Reports	19	54	49	18	2.50	A
5	Proceedings	14	48	51	27	2.30	R
6	E-Journals	17	48	61	14	2.40	R
7	E-Projects	14	48	51	27	2.30	R
8	E-Abstracts	9	43	54	34	2.10	R
9	E-Indexes	8	30	64	38	2.00	R

Note: Very High Extent (VHE) = 4; High Extent (HE) = 3; Low Extent (LE) = 2; Very Low Extent (VLE) = 1.

On the extent of use of the serials as indicated in table 3, journals were regularly utilized and had the highest extent of use with a mean rating of 3.30; followed by newspapers 3.00, magazine 2.80 and annual reports 2.50.Others were not frequently used as indicated for e-journals (2.40), e-projects (2.30), e-abstracts (2.10), e- indexes (2.00). Most of the students are not registered with the digital library and rarely use the e-resources. The print copies are very regularly used. This contradicts the expectations in the new paradigm but agrees with the study carried out by Agboola (2009) which indicated that 56.2% of the respondents in her study used the print version of serials regularly and occasionally, other than the 20.8% who did not use print copies at all. This confirms the finding on greater use of print copies over serials that are electronic information resources (EIRs).

Table 4: Mean responses on the purpose for which students use serials in Festus Aghagbo Nwako library
N=140

S/N	Items	SA	A	D	SD	Mean	Decision
1	Research	96	44	-	-	3.60	A
2	Writing assignments	72	66	1	1	3.40	A
3	Personal cognitive development	27	72	33	8	2.80	A
4	Writing term papers	36	87	16	1	3.10	A
5	Historical studies	36	78	22	4	3.00	A
6	Leisure(recreation)	47	32	40	21	2.70	A
7	Writing project/theses	96	39	5	-	3.60	A

Note: Strongly Agree (SA) = 4; Agree (A) = 3; Disagree (D) = 2; Strongly Disagree (SD) = 1

Table 4 presents result on the purpose for which students use serials in the library. The table indicated from the mean rating that the respondents strongly agreed that they used serials mostly for research/writing projects or theses (3.60), writing assignments (3.40), writing term papers (3.10), personal cognitive development (2.80) and lastly for leisure (2.70). However, this finding contradicts the proposition by some studies which report that students turn to Google for research (Hampton –Reeves, *et al*, 2009) and the problem that was observed showing that students cite few journal articles in their research works. On the other hand, students resorting to Google do not hinder the use of serials in their academic activities. It is worth mentioning that many journals are available in Google in the open access domain. It is in line with the findings of Bamidele, Omeluzor and Amadi (2013). This study also revealed that leisure is the least among the

purpose for which serials are used. This   also contradicts my personal observation in the Unit as most users predominantly come to the Unit to relax while reading the various titles of magazines and newspapers including the popular fashion base *This Day Style Magazine.* This is confirmed by table 3 which shows newspapers and magazines as two serials that are mostly used after journals.

Table 5: Mean Responses of Students on the Problems of Availability and Use of Serials in Festus Aghagbo Nwako Library
N=140

S/N	Items	SA	A	D	SD	Mean	Decision
1	Insufficient number of copies and titles in some disciplines	41	76	18	5	3.00	A
2	Insufficient current serials	37	64	20	19	2.70	A
3	Inadequate opening/closing hours	2	59	38	20	2.60	A
4	Staff related problems (such as poor attitude of staff to users, inadequate numbers and lack of qualification of staff manning	47	50	33	10	2.90	A

	the serials)						
5	Inaccessibility of current journals	16	80	33	11	2.70	A
6	Lack of awareness of existing journals in both the Digital library and traditional Serials Section	63	56	14	7	3.20	A

Note: Strongly Agree (SA) = 4; Agree (A) = 3; Disagree (D) = 2; Strongly Disagree (SD) = 1

The problems associated with availability and use of serials as revealed by the study include lack of awareness of the existing journals in both the digital and traditional Serial Sections (3.20), insufficient number of copies and titles in some disciplines (3.00). The researchers observed that the Library has a science based origin and its serials are tilted to the sciences with a deficiency in the arts especially in language and literature. Another major challenge is staff related problems (such as poor attitude of staff to users, inadequate numbers and lack of qualification of staff manning the serials) with the mean score of 2.90. Staff related problems manifest in poor attitude of staff in the service delivery. This agrees with Abubakar (2010) who noted that inadequate services provision by the librarians as a result of their nonchalant attitude is a constraint to the availability and use of serial publications. It is sad to note that non-professional personnel who are working in Serial Section lack the required personal and interpersonal skills to assist users in the use of serial resources which are peculiar and difficult to handle. Understaffing of the

Section is another critical factor that contributes to the lack lustre use of the serials publications. The Section is headed by one librarian who is supposed to perform all the in-house tasks of cataloguing the resources, indexing the newspapers and offering all the needed services. She is assisted by library assistants who have no training in librarianship. Other challenges include non-availability of current serials (2.70) and inaccessibility of current serials (2.70)- this low mean rating could be attributed to the inadequacies of catalogues and indexes in the Section which resulted in underutilization of the Serials Section. In addition, although there are current serials in the Digital library they are not accessible, they are online in soft copies and only officially registered students can access them using their passwords. Moreover, they can download the copies but they must pay a fee for the value added service offered them. These pose a threat to accessibility and agree with the fact that availability does not imply accessibility because it could be hampered by one factor or another. This is in line with the assertion by Aguolu and Aguolu (2002) who noted that availability of an information resource does not necessarily imply its accessibility because access to an available resource could be prevented by one factor or another. The least mean problem is Inadequate opening/closing hours with the mean score of 2.60.These factors cumulatively, constitute a hindrance to the use of the serials in the Library understudy.

Table 6: Mean responses of students on the strategies for enhancing the availability and use of serials in Festus Aghagbo Nwako library

N=140

S/N	Items	SA	A	D	SD	Mean	Decision

1	Provision of enough copies of serial titles in the library	98	39	2	1	3.60	A
2	Provision of current volumes of existing journal titles and acquisition of new titles that are on high demand as new departments are created, photocopying, downloading e-copies and binding them for use.	87	52	1	-	3.50	A
3	Extending closing hours by creating shift working periods for staff in the unit as is obtainable in circulations department and other reading areas.	65	64	10	1	3.30	A

4	Training librarians on interpersonal skills and positive attitude for effective service delivery to users.	84	48	7	1	3.50	A
5	Current journals should be made accessible through exhibition and displays, indexing, cataloguing, circulating content list and providing reading spaces for newspapers and magazines.	84	54	2	-	3.50	A
6	Creating proper awareness of existing serials by sending lists of new arrivals to faculties and departments, organizing user education,	99	38	3	-	3.60	A

orientations and
signposting the
serials Section.

Note: Strongly Agree (SA) = 4; Agree (A) = 3; Disagree (D) = 2; Strongly Disagree (SD) = 1

Table 6 highlighted the various strategies for enhancing the availability and use of serials in the library. The students strongly agreed by the mean rating (3.60) that provision of enough copies of serial titles in the library and creating proper awareness of the existing serials by sending lists of new arrivals to faculties and departments, organizing user education, orientations and signposting the serials section (3.60) are the major strategies for enhancing the availability and use of serials in the library. This supports the views of Stephens (2010) that user education through bulletin boards and discussion groups, document delivery services, indexing and abstracting services are panacea to the problem of access and availability. This is closely followed by provision of current volumes of existing journal titles and acquisition of new titles that are on high demand as new departments are created, photocopying, downloading e-copies and binding them for use (3.50); training librarians on interpersonal skills and positive attitude for effective service delivery to users (3.50) and current journals should be made accessible through exhibition and displays, indexing, cataloguing, circulating content list and providing reading spaces for newspapers and magazines (3.50). Extending closing hours by creating shift working periods for staff in this section as is obtainable in Circulations Department and other reading areas (3.30) is the least strategy.

Recommendations

Based on the findings of this study, the following recommendations were made:

- There is urgent need for the library management to take necessary steps to intensify its awareness campaign of the Serials Section by placing signposts of the Section from the ground floor because essentially, the collections are different from books. This also applies to the digital library. Publicity campaigns should be increased in the news bulletins, students' forum, orientation programmes, and social media platforms including Facebook, extending it to all the students by obtaining their telephone numbers through the portals.

- There is need to mount displays and exhibitions to showcase the contents of the institutional repository that are strategic but may not be available online. Downloaded versions of e- resources could be displayed on such occasions.

- The library should increase the number of professional librarians in the Serials Section and should insist on developing the personal/interpersonal skills of the staff assisting users for improved service delivery. The staff should be knowledgeable as serials are not like textbooks.

- Serials are flux and difficult to manage. They must be properly shelved and bounded into proper volumes to increase their availability, accessibility and use.

- Since they are kept in a closed access system, the catalogues, indexes to newspapers and other bibliographic data must be kept up to date to increase the access and use of the serials.

- ▪ Improved signposts and labels will greatly enhance the visibility of the hard copies of the serials in the Section.
- ▪ The Section should be weeded of obsolete resources regularly to make the shelf attractive and inviting.
- ▪ In line with international best practices, photocopiers and printers should be provided in the Section while reading relaxation spaces should be made available to users.

Conclusion

Serials resources in academic libraries are indispensable because they further research however, to justify the huge financial investments made into them, they must be seen to be optimally utilized. The limitations observable in the traditional Serials Section has been taken care of by the provisions inherent in the Digital library. However, to meet up with expectations for enhanced availability and use of the serials, the library management and librarians need to adopt creative and transformative strategies that would reposition their giant strides towards the provisions of effective service delivery of the 21st century paradigm by going out to reach the users wherever they could be found.

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