

Students' Perception on the Utilization of Serial Materials in Federal College of Education, Zaria

Ahmed Tijjani Abdul

Serial materials are publications that come at regular interval: it could be daily, weekly, monthly, quarterly, bi-annually or annually. The utilization of these materials such as newspapers, journals and magazines in private and government organizations cannot be overemphasized because it improves user's awareness on current issues around the globe. Therefore, this paper assesses student's perception on the utilization of serial materials in F.C.E, Zaria. A Survey research was conducted on a student population of 3,480 in which 10% of the population, that is 348, were sampled using simple random sampling technique for the study. A total of 348 copies of questionnaire were distributed and 348 were duly filled and returned as response rate. The findings of the study indicate that the college students made use of serial materials occasionally. Majority of the students were fairly satisfied with the serial materials that were available in the library. The paper concludes and recommends that the serial materials should be well disposed towards their usage for effective and efficient patronage while students should be enlightened and encouraged in the use of serial materials for academic and research purposes.

Keywords: *Students perception, utilization, serial materials, library.*

Introduction

The basic purpose of an academic library is to provide adequate information for making informed decisions by users. Academic libraries provide for the educational needs of students, and the teaching staff in their teaching and provide for research activities of both the students and teaching staff. The academic library collection must reflect the subject interest of the institution. It must also be adequate in terms of quality, quantity and variety of information resources. The library does this through useful selection and acquisition procedures of stocking the library with relevant information resources for teaching, learning, and research. The processing and organization of these materials facilitate easy retrieval and dissemination of information about the collections and encourages their active utilization (Olorunsola, 1997).

Serial materials form very important information resources in the library and their utilization has improved user awareness on current issues around the nation

and the globe at large. Fayose (1995) defines serial publications as information resources that comes at regular interval and intended to be continued indefinitely either daily, weekly, monthly, quarterly, bi-annually or yearly. These materials include annual reports, journals, monographs, magazines and newspapers. Aina (2004) describes serial as a distinctive title which is issued in parts, and each issue is published indefinitely. Serials such as newspapers and magazines have a distinctive title and are issued more frequently than once a year containing articles. Serials are very useful because they are the most up-to-date information resources in the library and the article in it are often written by experts in the field: therefore, they are viable and reliable to use in the library (Fayose, 1995).

Yazeed (2012) suggests that serials are types of publications organized around preordination which attempt to impart significances to the passage of time by identifying and ordering information along chronological sequences. Thus when the materials are referred to as serials, they are produced at fixed interval of time, usually not less than twenty-four hours of the day. Serial materials are used by all for different purposes. The importance of serial materials cannot be overemphasized. Special and academic libraries are really investing a lot of fund to the acquisition and management of serials. This is because a lot of research works go on in their parent organization. Titles in serials of academic nature are written and reviewed by experts (Agbaje, 2002). Benjamin (1999) remarks that serials are indispensable materials in the library especially on academic based one, because of their rich contents in current research and also providing retrospective information about all human activities which may not exist in any other form or may be too small to be published in book format.

Aiyepoku (1998) reveals the importance of newspaper as one of serial materials. In his study on information utilization by policy makers of which 84% of the policy makers consulted newspapers and magazines which ranked among the five most consulted information sources utilized by policy-makers in Nigeria. Serials assist students, lecturers and researchers to be well informed about current events and also keep lecturers abreast with latest development in their individual fields. Formerly, the college library was subscribing to five newspapers and two magazines but presently reduced to two newspapers and one magazine which are significantly inadequate for users considering the increased population of staff and students in the College. The daily newspapers are *Daily Trust* and *The Nation* newspapers while the magazine is *Tell*. The reduction was made because of the availability of internet which make newspaper s to be accessible via internet connectivity. All newspapers that come into the library are indexed while emphasis is placed on health, education, politics, agriculture and crime using free indexing

language. This is to enable library users' easy access to the newspapers and magazines in accordance with their area of interest.

The College library also acquires subject based and multi-disciplinary journals that cover general and specific disciplines of knowledge as the College recruits and admits different lecturers and students with their varied schools, departments and disciplines. While newsletters, conference proceedings, bulletin and book of abstract were donated by parent bodies such as NCCE bulletin, College newsletters, First Bank annuals among others, some government and nongovernmental organizations send their magazines to the library free of charge. These materials are not to be taken out of the section except with permission usually given to staff and properly documented for tracing when the need arises. Students are also given permission to make photocopy of article(s) found relevant to their area of specialization within the library as photocopying machine is not available in the section.

Objectives of the Study

The objectives of the study are to;

- Find out the serial materials that are available in F.C.E, Zaria College library;
- Ascertain the kind of serial materials used in F.C.E, Zaria College library;
- Investigate how often serial materials are used in F.C.E, Zaria College library; and
- Find out how effective serial materials provided are used in F.C.E, Zaria College library.
- Investigate the challenges encountered in the use of serial materials in F.C.E, Zaria College library.

Methodology

The survey method which focused on the student's perception and utilization of serial materials was used in this study. The population of the study consist of 3,480 students. 2,870 were males while 610 were females students. Out of these population, 10% was used to sample the respondents using simple random sampling technique. The outcome of the sampling gave the male 287 while the female were 61 as respondents for the study. Questionnaire was used as instrument for data collection. The 348 copies of questionnaire distributed were retrieved and found useable for the study. The collected data were analyzed using frequency table and percentages.

Presentation of Tables, Results and Discussion

Table 1: Gender Distribution on the use of serial materials

Gender	Frequency	Percentage(s)
Male	287	82.5%
Female	61	17.5%
Total	348	100%

Source: Fieldwork 2016

Table 1 above indicates that a high proportion of male students use the serial material than the female students, this could be attributed to the fact that male students use the serial section to read newspapers and journals than the female students.

Table 2: Serial materials provided in F.C.E, Zaria College library

Variables	Frequency	Percentage(s)
Newspapers	36	10.3%
Journals	17	4.9%
Magazines	10	2.9%
Newsletters	5	1.4%
All of the above	280	80.5%
Total	348	100%

Source: Fieldwork 2016

In Table 2 above, 36 respondents indicated that newspaper are available, 17 of the respondents ticked journals, 10 respondents ticked magazines while 5 respondents show cased the availability of newsletters, 280 students indicated as response to the availability of all tabulated serial materials in the College library. This implies that newspapers, journals, magazines, newsletters are provided in F.C.E., College Library, Zaria.

Table 3: Kind of serial materials use in F.C.E, Zaria college library

Variables	Frequency	Percentage(s)
Journals	125	35.9%
Newspapers	185	53.1%
Magazines	38	10.9%
Newsletters	0	0%
Total	348	99.9%

Source: Fieldwork 2016

Table 3 shows the kind of serial materials that are used in F.C.E, Zaria. The representation shows that majority of the students use newspapers than other serial materials. However, the largest proportion of the respondents has never used newsletters. This could be attributed to the fact that the newsletters does not give them current information on present situation around the globe.

Table 4: Frequency of use of serial materials in F.C.E, Zaria College Library

Variables	Frequency	Percentage(s)
Daily	33	9.5%
Weekly	80	22.9%
Monthly	225	64.7%
Quarterly	10	2.8%
Total	348	99.9%

Source: Fieldwork 2016

The representation on Table 4 is on frequency of use of serial materials. Most of the students indicated using serial materials occasionally. This could be attributed to the fact that majority of the students rely on their lecture notes, not knowing the benefit they can derive in using serial materials, particularly the journals that treat general and specific area of studies.

Table 5: Purpose of using serial materials in F.C.E, Zaria

Variables	Frequency	Percentage(s)
Assignment purpose	120	34.5%
Examination purpose	13	3.7%
Leisure purpose	65	18.7%
Research purpose	150	43.1%
Total	348	100%

Source: Fieldwork 2016

Table 5 presents issues on the purpose of using serial materials. The analysis shows that large percentage of the students use serial materials for their research work and assignment purposes. Many scholars have confirmed that Nigerians have poor reading culture and habit and they use the library for achievement reading during test and examination period (Osunrinde, 2007).

Table 6: Effectiveness on the use of serial materials in F.C.E, Zaria.

Variables	Frequency	Percentage(s)
Effective	102	29.3%
Fairly Effective	205	58.9%
Not effective	41	11.8%
Total	348	100%

Source: Fieldwork 2016

The presentation of table 6 is on effectiveness of the use of serial materials which shows that majority of the students 58.9% reported fairly effective and the next proportion of the students 11.8% posited not effective on the use of serial materials.

Table 7: Challenges encountered in the use serial materials in F.C.E, Zaria.

Variables	Frequency	Percentage(s)
Insufficiency	150	43.1%
Users Persistency in the use of serial materials	80	22.9%
Irregularities of serials materials	16	4.6%
Problem sitting capacity	102	29.3%
Total	348	99.9%

Source: Fieldwork 2016

The challenges encountered in the use of serial materials is presented in Table 7 above where the majority of the students declared insufficiency of the use of serial materials as the major challenges encountered in the college library. This could be attributed to their low level of usage (Sangowisi, page 80).

Discussion of Findings

The study reveals the following findings towards students' perception on the utilization of serial materials in F.C.E, Zaria.

1. it reveals that all the serial materials itemized in the course of finding answers are provided and these materials are newspapers, journals, magazine, and newsletters. In view of this, 280 respondents representing 80.5% acknowledged the findings;
2. the study also discovered that the students used newspapers more often than journals and magazines which had the highest frequency of 180 respondents

representing 53.1%. However, it is surprising to note that newsletters are not being used by students in the college library;

3. majority of the students use serial materials for assignments and research purposes having a frequency count of 120 and 150 respondents respectively;
4. on the effectiveness of using serial materials, it revealed that 205 respondents reported fairness on the effectiveness of using serial materials with 58.9%. and
5. It also revealed that the challenges faced by the use of serial materials are majorly insufficiency of the serial materials and the problem of sitting capacity which had the highest response rate of 150 and 180 respondents respectively.

Conclusion

Based on the findings of this study, it is possible to report that students using the college library are aware of the existence of serial materials in the library but under utilize the serial materials effectively to its fullest. It was discovered that many of the students need to be enlightened and encouraged in the use of serial materials at all time so as to meet their research needs so as to be productive in their academic pursuits. There is also the need of advising the students to inculcate good reading habit among themselves and the library should provide good reading atmosphere consisting of good chairs and reading tables, air conditioners, adequate power supply for effective management of serial materials. The library needs more funding to acquire sufficient serial materials to improve maximum utilization by the students and also provide adequate sitting capacity for the users. They also need to make serial materials easily accessible to the students so that they will be favourably disposed toward its usage for better academic performance. The library should also be more involved in cooperative activities with other libraries by forming consortium on resource sharing.

Recommendations

The following recommendations were offered:

1. the college library should maintain ampute provision of serial publication for users' patronage;
2. the students should be enlightened towrds the uses of journals and magazines for current awareness and knowledge development;
3. the students should also be educated during orientation on what they stand to benefit using serial materials other than for assignments and research purpose;

4. the mindset of users toward fair effectiveness in the use of serial materials should be discouraged by staff to be proactive in providing the needed information of the users in the college library; and
5. The college library should intensify the availability of sufficient serial materials and expand the capacity to accommodate more users at a time towards the use of serial materials.

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Ahmed Tijjani Abdul is an academic Librarian, Federal College of Education, Zaria, Kaduna State, Nigeria.