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International Journal of Academic Library and Information Science

Full Length Research

Factors Affecting Preservation of Serial Resources in Francis Sulemanu Idachaba Library University of Agriculture Makurdi

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The study was designed to identify the factors affecting preservation of serial resources in academic libraries in Benue State with particular reference to University of Agriculture Makurdi. Four objectives were set to achieve and 4 research questions guided the study. The population for the study comprised of all 122 staff of University of Agriculture Makurdi library. There was no sampling for the study since the whole population of 122 library staff was effectively handled as sample size. Data was collected and anlysed using mean and standard deviation. Findings of the study revealed that serial resources have great impact on students' academic pursuit. The findings also reveal that there are types of technology that influence the use of serial resources in libraries. Similarly, the findings revealed that there are many problems affecting the use of serial resources in University of Agriculture Makurdi library. The findings equally revealed the strategies that could be adapted to minimize the problems of serial resources in University of Agriculture Makurdi library. The study concluded that serials resources are one of the most important academic resources used by the University of Agriculture for teaching and learning process. It was recommended that the University should ensure regular maintenance of serials holdings to meet users' needs in the library environment, provide assisted serials resources like generator/power plant, electricity supply, ICT manager, funds, Website, good bandwidth qualitative computers system and CD-ROMs, to increase the use of online that influence the use of serial resources, give proper orientation on use of library should be given to new students on admission and strictly adhere to punishment of library defaulters to ensure proper use of serial resources.

Keywords: Preservation and Serial Resources

INTRODUCTION

Preservation of deteriorating information resources in academic libraries has become a global phenomenon to which libraries must aggressively respond if their mission of providing information needs of their patrons would be

met (Akande, 2009). Libraries preserve resources to meet the informational or recreational needs of its clientele. When the m resources in one's care is allowed to deteriorate unchecked or become damaged in anyway, it may be difficult and may be ultimately difficult or the information it embodies available for use. It is the responsibility of the library staff to keep these resources in good physical condition so that they are available for users at all times. Resources in many libraries and archives throughout the country are still housed in conditions that leave much to be desired (Olatokun, 2008). A large portion of information recorded on audio or videotape about important events, people, etc., has been routinely wiped out in our electronic media houses (Popoola, 2003). This is a sad situation and one that is found in many libraries of African higher institutions. The deterioration of information-bearing material has a long history. Unless something is done to stop the process, library collections deteriorate and will continue to deteriorate. This is a battle that has to be waged against to prevent the deterioration of our intellectual heritage. Preservation is the action taken to anticipate, prevent, stop, or slow deterioration. It can also be described as the art of anticipating and preventing decay (Baker, 1981). Preservation is an act of protecting and shielding material from destructive influences that shorten their life span. The library plays a crucial role of protecting and preserving information-bearing resources from distortion, deterioration, and eventual loss because the materials are imperative. Academic libraries acquire information resources to meet the needs of their community. People use the collections as a result of increasing enrolments in higher education. There are shortages and decline in book budgets arising from the poor funding of the institutions as well as the high cost of books and other information resources. As a result, the libraries are left with damaged books, distorted tapes and scratched CDs (Popoola, 2003).

The issue of preservation is as old as invention of writing, thus man in quest to maintain records has devised places to preserve such records for future use. The most difficult problem that has pressured the minds of librarians from time immemorial till date is the ability to ensure that safety of library information resources against threats such as floods, fire, mutilation, rodents, insects and so on are taken care of. According to Bamigboye and Burriamo (2008), libraries acquire and preserve resources books, periodicals, maps etc to meet potential information or recreational need. They further stated that it is the responsibility of the library staff to maintain these materials in good physical condition so that they can be readily available for use at all times.

The unflinching capacity of institutions of higher learning to teach, research published scholarly materials, and even to perceive the heart beat of peers beating space and time is founded on the publication called

serials. Since 1609 when the first newspaper was published and the publication of the first periodical in 1665, it has become very easy for researchers to communicate their findings and apply those of others in their research works. Hence, a university is adjudged high class when it can provide adequate information materials especially current serials. This is expected since research at the undergraduate and postgraduate levels have serials as their bedrock. Burch (1990) described serials as a central force in scholarly communication because researchers prefer it for publication of their research results and for retrospective scholarly review.

Also majority of texts/monographs produced for knowledge have their contents derived from serials articles. In the university community, access to this important research material is primarily through the university library. The latter sources, acquires, processes and make available library materials including serials to accomplish its roles of providing knowledge products to the university community.

The academic library is a key focal point for teaching, learning and research activities. According to Hayles (2003), University libraries are established to serve as support to faculties in their teaching, research and learning activities.

University libraries are repositories of information and knowledge from all kinds of fields of learning to the academic communities. Miracle EkaNjeze (2012), opined that library materials consists of media, non-book and non –print resources. She gave examples on media resources which includes computer hardware drive, data bases, library software, non book materials which include CD ROMS, audio and video tape, while print materials include pictures, newspapers, magazines, books, maps and photographic materials. Library materials therefore must last as long as possible and be preserved for active use for posterity.

University of Agriculture, Makurdi was established by the Federal Government of Nigeria in 1988. In addition to the traditional tripartite mission of universities which is teaching, research and community service, the university engages in the scientific transformation of agriculture and provision of services needed to raise the quality of life of rural dwellers. This mandated the university to establish a library.

The University Library which is named after the pioneer Vice-Chancellor of the university professor Francis Idachaba like any other university library is headed by the University Library who is the head of Library administration and a principal officer of the university answerable to the Vice Chancellor. There is a Library Committee inaugurated by the University Administration in formulating library policies. There are five major divisions in the library namely, Collection Development, information and communication technology, Readers

Service, Serials and technical Services divisions. In addition, the main library has established six college libraries in the colleges of forestry/fisheries, engineering, Food Science and technology, Science, Management Sciences, Veterinary Medicine and Veterinary Teaching Hospital. Under these Divisions, there are 15 units.

The Library has a total collection of 41,224 volumes of books covering Agriculture, Science/Technology, management sciences. Other material include reference materials and postgraduate students' these and dissertations. There are also 2,542 Volumes of journals. All the materials are acquired centrally and distributed to the college libraries in their various disciplines. The Library is connected to the Internet online services in some database like Access to Global online Research in Agriculture (AGORA), Health Internetwork Access to research Initiative (HINARI), EBSCO host and online Access to research in the environment (OARE) it offers training opportunity Inverter that can last for one week without public power supply. It also has Lan20, the Essential Electronic Agriculture Library (TEEAL) network locally (i.e. LAN). It has National information Technology Development Agency (NITDA) Domain which is used as computer laboratory/workshop where ICT related activities are done. Such activities include digitization, uploading of bibliographic details, about textbooks in the library journals, downloading and printing.

There are in addition two e-libraries. The one at the ground floor has 22 computers and is meat for undergraduate students while the one on the 1st floor is meant for postgraduate students and staff and has 33 computers. The e-library on the first floor has 20 reading chairs, tables and fans strictly for postgraduate students for private use as each room has a key. The library also offers photocopying and laminating service.

The library opens to readers from 8am-9pm from Mondays through Fridays. Opening hours on Saturdays are from 8am -1pm and 3pm -8pm on Sundays. The main library has a sitting capacity of 1,500 readers at a time. There are a total of 78 computer and 16 laptops in the library inclusive college libraries and a 150KVA generator to ensure uninterrupted power supply from 9am to 9pm. There is a library staff bus that conveys staff especially those on shift duty to and from the library. The Library currently has staff strength of 103 including those in the six college libraries and Veterinary Teaching Hospital library. These staff is made up of academic librarians, library officers, administrative staff and library assistants.

Observation by the researcher shows that there are problems of preserving serial resources in the library. Therefore, it is in a bid to identify the problems of preserving serial resources in the library thereby making useful suggestions to the problems facing preservation of serial resources that the researcher is motivated to carry out this study.

STATEMENT OF THE PROBLEMS

The aim of any academic library is to enhance academic activities of any given institution. However, observation has shown that the University of Agriculture Makurdi library does not preserve Serial resources in their custody. Most of the staff employed are not qualified librarians. They cannot carry out the smooth operation of preservation of serial resources. Most of the staff cannot do the job of inspecting the reading areas. This leads to deterioration of serial resources in the library. The resultant effect of this menace is on students and lecturers who run to other library for search of library resources for use. There is also decline in academic performance of students as many students cannot afford the prices of internet facilities provided by private libraries. It is against this background that the researcher intends to identify the factors affecting preservation of Serial Resources in academic libraries in Benue State with reference to University of Agriculture Makurdi.

OBJECTIVE OF THE STUDY

The fundamental objective of the study is to determine factors affecting preservation of serial resources in academic libraries in Benue State with particular reference to University of Agriculture Makurdi. The specific objective of this study includes the following:

1.   To examine the impact of serial resources on University of Agriculture Makurdi library.
2.   To identify the types of technology that influence serial use in University of Agriculture Makurdi library
3.   To identify the factors affecting preservation of serial resources of University of Agriculture Makurdi library.
4.   To suggest solutions to the problems of preservation of serial resources in University of Agriculture Makurdi library.

RESEARCH QUESTIONS

The following are the research questions:

1.   What are the factors affecting preservation of serial resources in University of Agriculture Makurdi library?
2.   What are the factors responsible for the preservation of serial resources of the University of Agriculture Makurdi library?
3.   What are the impacts of these factors on the services of the University of Agriculture Makurdi library?

4.   Are there solutions to the problems of preservation of serial resources in University of Agriculture Makurdi library?

MATERIALS AND METHODS

Research design

The design for this study was survey research design. The choice of this method is because descriptive survey obtains data from a given population and describes it in a systematic manner.

Area of the study

The study is conducted in University of Agriculture Makurdi. The University of Agriculture in Makurdi (UAM) is a higher education institution in Makurdi, Benue State, Nigeria. The university was established in 1988, following the recommendations of a 1987 federal government White Paper on Higher Education curriculum and development in Nigeria. The school is located 7km along Makurdi-Gbajimba road on the North Bank side of Makurdi. The University occupies more than 7979.578 hectares of land at the North Bank area of Makurdi. In addition, there is the College of Management Sciences located in the town along Katsina-Ala Street and Veterinary Teaching Hospital in North Bank. Arrangements are in top gear to establish Colleges of Medicine and Pharmacy in Oturpo, Benue State.
There are 10 Colleges in the university namely; College of Agronomy, College of Agricultural Economics and Extension, College of Engineering, College of Animal Science, College of Food Technology, College of Sciences, College of Agricultural Science Education, College of Veterinary Medicine, College of Forestry and Fisheries and College of Management Science. The University also has Staff Schools (Primary and Demonstration secondary Schools) to cater for the primary and Secondary education needs of the host communities.

Population and sample of the study

The target population for the study was 122 staff of Francis Idachaba library, University of Agriculture Makurdi. There was no sampling for the study. The entire population of 122 library staff was used in the study as sample because the population size could be handled effectively by the researcher.

Instrument for data collection

Data was collected using a structured questionnaire titled

"Factors affecting Preservation of Serial Resources in Library". The questionnaire was divided into two parts; 1 and 2. Part 1 deals with demographic data of respondents. Part 2 has 4 sections and was used to elicit information on the impact marketing resources on higher institutions. The questionnaire was an open-ended-structured with restricted responses options of strongly agree (SA), agree (A), disagree (D) and strongly disagree (SD) with corresponding values of 4, 3, 2 and 1 respectively.

Validation and reliability of the instrument

The instrument was validated by 3 experts in Library science, Benue State University Makurdi. In order to ensure the reliability of the instrument, a sample size of 20 library staff of the Benue State University Makurdi who were not included in the sample for the main study were used. The purpose of this was to test-try the instruments that will be used in the study. A reliability coefficient of 0.89 was found ideal for the study.

Method of data collection

Data collected was analyzed using descriptive statistics; precisely arithmetic mean. Bench mark for decision making was 2.50 (4+3+2+1=10/4=2.50).

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

Presentation of results

All the 4 items of table 4 were accepted with a bench mark above 2.50

DISCUSSION OF FINDINGS

Result in table 1 shows the impact of serial resources on students. Findings reveled that serial resources teach users to be better, lifelong, sophisticated users of information with mean ratings of 2.62, help students do their work even more successfully and achieve their goals in greater numbers or more quickly (2.72), assist students to gain faster and more lucrative employment (2.83), recruit more and better new faculty (2.96), help faculty produce more articles in higher-impact publications and get more and bigger grants (2.69) and grow the profile, prestige, reputation of the institution/organization in the global and local community (3.03). This implies that serial resources play major roles in students' academic pursuit in University of Agriculture Makurdi, library. This affirms the study of Faluwoye

Table 1: Mean and standard deviation of respondents on the impact of serial resources on students

S/N	Item Statement	SA	A	D	SD	N	Mean	Std. Dev.	Remarks
1	Teach users to be better, lifelong, sophisticated users of information?	56	30	30	6	122	2.62	1.33	Agree
2	Help students do their work even more successfully and achieve their goals in greater numbers or more quickly	58	12	12	40	122	2.72	1.35	Agree
3	Assist students to gain faster and more lucrative employment	20	77	9	16	122	2.83	0.86	Agree
4	Recruit more and better new faculty	44	50	7	21	122	2.96	1.06	Agree
5	Help faculty produce more articles in higher-impact publications and get more and bigger grants	44	22	31	25	122	2.69	1.16	Agree
6	Grow the profile, prestige, reputation of the institution/organization in the global and local community	45	49	15	13	122	3.03	0.96	Agree

Source: field survey, 2016
All the 6 items of table 1 were accepted with a bench mark above 2.5

(1995) on Serials management in academic and special libraries. The study found out that acquisitions and organization of serials and other continuing resources are for the benefit of users and they should know this. Also the study emphasized the fact that only if use is intensive and takes place under optimal condition can all efforts and funds be justified that are spent on the acquisition and organization of serials. The finding are also similar to the result of Chiou-sen (1995) who said that the advancement of science depends to a large extent on the accumulation of past findings, and every scientist builds on the knowledge of scientists. This has to do with use. In fact; there are hundreds of millions of print serials, Web pages, bibliographical databases, and full-text databases available on the Internet. The use of these resources is the ultimate objective of the acquisition and processing of serials in a library. In a similar study conducted by Elliot (2003), the study highlight that the of use of serials and other continuing resources for information by research scholars and students informed management decision to lay greater emphasis on their acquisitions and organization in the university's collection development policy. The authors found that scholars use serials on the internet for research and communication purposes, and conclude that more awareness about electronic resources and training in their use should be provided by library professionals. The study further observed that the use of serials is the fundamental rationale behind all the effort in the serials department and in the absence of usage the unit should be shutdown.

Result in table 2 shows the types of technology that influence the use of serial resources with 5 items. Findings revealed that respondents agreed sensory technologies such as mouse, keyboards, scanners, and touch or digital boards with mean ratings of 2.75, communication technologies such as e-mail, fax, telephones, teleconferencing (2.97), display technologies such as computer screen, printers and television (2.77), analysis technologies such as micro, mini and mainframe computers (2.61), storage technologies such as magnetic tapes, hard disk and cassettes (2.87) are types of technology that influence the use of serial resources in University of Agriculture Makurdi, library. This agrees with the findings of to Iwu (2003). The study found out that information communication technology has tremendously changed the society from its inception in the 1940s. Electronic based technology is generally used to retrieve store, process and package information as well as provide access to knowledge. According to Iwu (2003) the types of information communication technology include: Sensory technologies such as mouse, keyboards, scanners, and touch or digital boards, communication technologies such as e-mail, fax, telephones, teleconferencing, display technologies such as computer screen, printers and television, analysis technologies such as micro, mini and mainframe computers and storage technologies such as magnetic tapes, hard disk and cassettes. In a similar study conducted by Uwaifo (2010) a major way ICT has influenced the use of library services and inevitably serials services is the use of Online Public Access Catalogue (OPAC). OPAC is a computer form of library catalogue that can be used for the catalogue of serials. OPAC also gives patrons the opportunity to view catalogues of other libraries that are in cooperation with the library. The finding also affirms the study of Afolabi

Table 2: Mean and standard deviation of respondents on the types of that influence serial use in libraries

S/N	Item Statement	SA	A	D	SD	N	Mean	Std. Dev.	Remarks
1	Sensory technologies such as mouse, keyboards, scanners, and touch or digital boards	19	73	11	19	122	2.75	0.90	Agree
2	Communication technologies such as e-mail, fax, telephones, teleconferencing	26	76	10	10	122	2.97	0.79	Agree
3	Display technologies such as computer screen, printers and television	11	82	19	10	122	2.77	0.72	Agree
4	Analysis technologies such as micro, mini and mainframe computers	27	49	18	28	122	2.61	1.07	Agree
5	Storage technologies such as magnetic tapes, hard disk and cassettes	22	71	20	9	122	2.87	0.79	Agree

Source: field survey, 2016
All the 5 items of table 2were accepted with a bench mark above 2.50

Table 3: Mean and standard deviation of respondents on the problems facing preservation of serial use in libraries

S/N	Item Statement	SA	A	D	SD	N	Mean	Std. Dev.	Remarks
1	Lack of current serials and continuing resources	54	41	10	17	122	3.08	1.04	Agree
2	Inaccessibility to serials and continuing resources	54	33	9	26	122	2.94	1.173	Agree
3	Lack of borrowing facilities in serials section	25	80	15	2	122	3.05	0.63	Agree
4	Inconvenient open/closing hours of serials	36	61	14	11	122	3.00	0.88	Agree
5	Poor attitude of staff to users	25	75	6	16	122	2.89	0.88	Agree
6	Inadequate reading facilities in the serials section	64	29	14	15	122	3.16	1.05	Agree
7	Many of the serials are defaced	85	20	5	12	122	3.46	0.96	Agree
8	Many of the serials are mutilated	88	9	11	14	122	3.40	1.05	Agree
9	Many of the serials are not well displayed	28	69	17	8	122	2.96	0.79	Agree
10	Power failure/interruption affect continuing resources	24	82	7	9	122	2.99	0.74	Agree
11	Poor network connection affect continuing resources	29	72	9	12	122	2.97	0.84	Agree

Source: field survey, 2016
All the 11 items of table 3 were accepted with a bench mark above 2.50

and Abidoye (2012). In their study of the impact of ICT on library services noted that OPAC is a great relief to patrons in the sense that different patrons can access the same catalogue at the same time using different terminals which is impossible using card catalogue. Also, OPAC allows for the use of additional access points for searching for publications such as ISSN numbers with a combination of author and title. Another influence is the access to electronic resources such as open access journals; open access journals are available online to readers without financial and technical or legal barriers. Others are e-books, online newspapers, online magazines etc. Inter library loan services is made easier as serials can be sent through e-mails and courier services within the shortest time.

Result in table 3 shows the problems facing

Table 4: Mean and standard deviation of respondents on the strategies to improve serial use in libraries

S/N	Item Statement	SA	A	D	SD	N	Mean	Std. Dev.	Remarks
1	Proper orientation on use of library to students	46	57	12	7	122	3.16	0.83	Agree
2	Provision of library resources	60	31	13	18	122	3.09	1.09	Agree
3	Increase of library hour for user	22	73	13	14	122	2.84	0.85	Agree
4	Punishment of library defaulters	60	44	9	9	122	3.27	0.89	Agree

Source: field survey, 2016

preservation of serial use in University of Agriculture Makurdi library. Findings revealed that lack of current serials and continuing resources (3.08), inaccessibility to serials and continuing resources (2.94), lack of borrowing facilities in serials section (3.05), inconvenient open/closing hours of serials (3.00), poor attitude of staff to users (2.89), inadequate reading facilities in the serials section (3.16), many of the serials are defaced (3.46), many of the serials are mutilated (3.40), many of the serials are not well displayed (2.96), power failure/interruption affect continuing resources (2.99) and poor network connection affect continuing resources (2.97) were problems facing preservation of serial resources in University of Agriculture Makurdi library. The finding agrees with a study carried out by Sangowusi (2003) on Problems of accessing scholarly publications by Nigerian scientists. The study revealed that some of the difficulties encountered in accessing and using serials and other continuing resources includes but not limited to the following: inaccessibility of serials and other continuing resources, lack of borrowing facilities in serials section, inconvenient open/closing hours of serials, poor attitude of staff to users, inadequate reading facilities in the serials section, Power failure, Poor network connection. The study equally revealed that the problem of Nigerian students is not the question of wanting to use the library, but whether or not the university library can provide for their needs, and whether there is access to what is provided.

Result in table 4 shows the strategies that can be adapted to minimize the problems of serial resources. Findings revealed that proper orientation on use of library to students (3.16), provision of library resources (3.09), increase of library hour for user (2.84) and punishment of library defaulters (3.27) are suggested strategies to problems of serial resources in University of Agriculture Makurdi library. The findings are in conformity with a study by Ogunniyi, Akerele and Afolabi (2003). The study revealed that there are three general strategies for providing access to commercially available electronic resources: local loading by an individual library, loading by a consortium, and relying on vendor sites. Individual

libraries have generally been moving away from the local load strategy because of its cost. Consortia have done likewise, although there are notable exceptions. Whether reliance on publisher and vendor services is truly the most cost-effective strategy is an interesting question, since an argument can be made that it entails a range of hidden costs. Local loading provides some important advantages, including control over the number and functioning of user interfaces and normalization of usage measurement.

CONCLUSION

The study concludes that serials resources are one of the most important academic resources used by the University of Agriculture for teaching and learning process. Researchers are relying more upon serials and continuing resources than books because the information contained in them is more current than those in published books.

RECOMMENDATIONS

Based on the findings of the study, the following recommendations are made:

1. The University should ensure regular maintenance of serials holdings to meet users' needs in the library environment.
2. The University should make efforts to provide assisted serials resources like generator/power plant, electricity supply, ICT manager, funds, Website, good bandwidth qualitative computers system and CD-ROMs, to increase the use of online that influence the use of serial resources.
3. The university management should embark on planning, policy implementation of effective specialized library serial resources
4. Proper orientation on use of library should be given to new students on admission

5.   The university should strictly adhere to punishment of library defaulters to ensure proper use of serial resources

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