

The Use of Serial Resources by Postgraduate Students of University Of Agriculture Makurdi for Quality Research

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Abstract: This study was designed to examine use of serial resources by Postgraduate Students of University of Agriculture Makurdi. Four research questions were answered. Population for this study population for this study was 92 comprised of 78 Postgraduate students from Educational Foundation and General Studies and 14 from department of Science Education. The entire population of 92 was used for the study as sample because the population size. Data was collected and analysed using mean and t-test statistics. Findings revealed that Finding revealed that many serial resources are required for use by postgraduate students for effective academic performance. Finding also revealed that students make low use of serial resources. It was found that postgraduate students do not access serial resources. The study also found out that students face constraints in the use of serial resources. The study concluded that non-utilization of serial resources affects academic activities and performance of postgraduate students of Universities. It was recommended that proper implementation of national policy on education use of serial resource that facilitates learning activities in universities should be done. The university should make provision for adequate computers and internet connectivity to enhance academic activities. University management should also ensure that qualified librarians are employed and proper training of library staff who are in service.

Key words: Serials, Resources, Post graduate, Students and Quality Research

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I. Introduction

Serial resources are printed work that appears regularly, founded with the expectation of unlimited duration, which is not predominantly concerned with events of the day or else it pays attention only to the latest development in a special field (Anunobi & Benson (2010) and Adio, 2006). In addition to this, Chike, Amaoge and Nnamdi (2015). Nwalo (2009) describes serials as any resources bearing either chronological or numerical designations issued in successive parts, appearing at intervals and as a rule, intended to be continued indefinitely. The definitions above not only describe serials literature but also underlay the major importance of serial resources: providing current information. This importance is very essential to the relevance of the academic library to its immediate community and the general population. Kinds of serials resources include journals, newspapers, newsletters, proceedings, transactions of societies and other periodicals like abstracts and indexes. These types of serials vary in content and interval of appearance. Daily Newspapers constitute the highest rate of issues because of its daily publications, but it doesn't provide information on specific fields of study, it takes a little of everything in one issue. Unlike journals, that will not be published daily but focuses on the specifics in a field of study. Serials resources are usually in print formats but with the advent of information technology, serials are not computerized appearing in e-formats.

Serials resources have historically and presently focused on the provision of current or up to date information in general or specific fields of study, this is one of the reasons why according to Upev, Illo & Orga (2016) it constitutes a major part of the collection of academic libraries and also accounts for a large sum of the library expenditure, the academic library inclusive. The academic library is an integral part of tertiary institutions and accounts for majority of the information material holdings of a tertiary institution, serving all and sundry especially staff and students of a tertiary institution. To further underline the importance of the academic library to a tertiary institution, Sambo, and Akpojotor (2016), Ugunnyi, Aerele & Afolabi (2011) and Hameed, and Osunrinade, (2010) stated that the academic library is the heart and aorta of any academic institution, he went further to state that the health and effectiveness of any academic institution depends on the state of health of the library in that academic institution. The academic library therefore, cannot claim to be the

determining factor for the state of excellence of its parent body i.e. the institution where it is situated, if it cannot provide the immediate needs of individuals in that institution, which it can only do through the provision of information resources. Immediate needs as the name implies refers to current information gaps that individuals have identified during the course of their activities on a specific field of study, therefore, the academic library is obligated to be current in its holdings so as to fill immediate information gaps as they are discovered. If immediate needs are not met, the academic library is considered to be inert and moribund which results in an inert and moribund academic institution and automatically low standard of excellence for patrons the academic library serves especially undergraduates.

Apart from books, serials form a vital part of the academic library's collection for meeting the immediate needs of patrons in its community especially undergraduates for the purpose of this study. Academic libraries acquire process and make serials available to its patrons who are usually undergraduates through continuous subscription. Serial resources are usually treated separately in libraries i.e. they are acquired, processed and disseminated separately due to rate of subscription and peculiarity of its nature. The unit responsible for serials management is the serials unit, which was described by Ogunmodede, Ebijuwa and Adefunke (2013) Salam and Opeke (2009) as the unit responsible for serials operations.

A brief look at the origin of serials resources show that, according to Chinwe, Nwakwo and Ezejiofor (2010) and Adio (2006:1-2), serials can be traced back to the period when annals were written on the tombs of Egyptian kings during the first dynasty. This is no surprise as the growth of papyrus started along the Nile River in Egypt, papyrus being a paper-like material was a major landmark in the history of writing and ultimately the beginning of serials. As time evolved, other notable inventions such as the moveable types by Johannes Gutenberg, typewriters, and of course computers have facilitated the development and use of serials up to the 1990s when serials and the internet were compliments of one another. Undergraduate students are an integral part of the university community. They form the "receiving" members of the university community, while the lecturers and other staff form the "giving" members of the university community.

Postgraduate student is a person who already holds a first degree and who is doing advanced study or research. Generally, a postgraduate degree is a degree which you study for once you have finished a bachelor's degree. Some postgraduate degree require the completion of particular bachelor's degree, others don't. There are four main types of postgraduate degrees: taught courses, research degree, conversion courses and professional qualifications. Many postgraduate courses are studied at university, but some courses are taught in a commercial environment.

This makes learning the most important issue for postgraduates. As the "receiving" group, undergraduates are expected to use information usually based on specific courses of study for assignments, reports, presentations, seminars, and final year projects, this is encouraged and expected of the postgraduate for excellent performance. The academic library located in the university should be open to postgraduates for the use of its serials, as serials are vital information materials providing the latest in a field of study and suiting the needs of the learning group which will always have immediate needs, this is supported by Rahmon, Onaolapo & Nwalo. (2016) and Adubika (2009:29-30), when he stated that serials resources are very useful because they are the most up to date materials in the library and that articles in serial resources are written by experts in the field, making them reliable and precise. Although, even with the enormous benefits of serials resources to the academic performance of undergraduates, it seems undergraduates do not recognize this, or they ignore the benefits they can derive from the use of serials resources and some cases the few postgraduates who are interested in the use of serials resources are denied access, a brief look at some findings show this.

Objective of the Study

The general objective of this study is to find out the use of serial resources by Postgraduate Students of University of Agriculture Makurdi. The specific objectives are:

1. To identify the types of serial resources required for use by postgraduate students of University of Agriculture Makurdi.
2. To determine the frequency of use of serial resources by postgraduate students of University of Agriculture Makurdi.
3. To determine the rate of accessibility of serials resources in postgraduate students of University of Agriculture Makurdi.
4. To identify the challenges faced by postgraduate students of University of Agriculture Makurdi, in the use of serial resources'.
5. To find out the type of serials resources used by postgraduate students of University of Agriculture Makurdi.

Research Questions

The study will seek to answer the following questions:

1. What are the types of serial resources required for use by postgraduate students of University of Agriculture Makurdi?
2. What is the frequency of use of serial resources by postgraduate students of University of Agriculture Makurdi?
3. What is the rate of accessibility to serial resources for postgraduate students of University of Agriculture Makurdi?
4. What are the constraints faced by postgraduate students of University of Agriculture Makurdi, in the use of serial resources?

Hypotheses

H_0 : Serial resources are not significantly used by Postgraduate Students of University of Agriculture Makurdi

H_A : Serial resources are significantly used by Postgraduate Students of University of Agriculture Makurdi

II. Methodology

The area of the study is University of Agriculture Makurdi, Benue State. This study employed a survey research design. The population for this study was 78 subjects comprising 14 Postgraduate students from Educational Foundation and General Studies, and 92 form department of Science Education, University of Agriculture. There was no sampling for the study. The entire population was used for the study as sample because the population size could be handled effectively by the researcher.

The instrument for the study was a structured questionnaire titled “Use of Serial Resources by Postgraduate Students Questionnaire (USRPSQ). The instrument which was developed by the researcher was divided six sections based on the research objectives. The questionnaire had restricted response options of highly enhanced (HE), enhanced (E), slightly enhanced (SE) and not enhanced (NE) with corresponding values of 4, 3, 2 and 1 respectively. The data for this study will be collected by the researcher and 3 research assistants.

Data collected was analysed using descriptive statistics. Mean was used to answer the research questions. The bench mark for this was 2.50 ($4+3+2+1=10/4=2.50$). The decision rule was: any item with a mean value of 2.50 or above was regarded as required while any item with a mean value of less than 2.50 was regarded as not required. Inferential statistics (t-test) was used to test the hypotheses at 0.05 level of significance. The decision rule was: any cluster of the related items with a value of 0.05 and above was regarded as significant while any cluster of related items that obtained a value below 0.05 was considered not significant.

III. Results And Discussion

Research Questions 1

What are the serial resources available to postgraduate students of University of Agriculture Makurdi?

Data for answering research question 2 is presented in Table 1:

Table 1:Mean of Respondents on the type of serial resources required for use by postgraduate students

S/N	Item Statement	N ₁	N ₂	\bar{x}_1	\bar{x}_2	\bar{x}_g	Remarks
1	Journal Articles	78	14	3.23	3.15	3.19	Required
2	Magazine Articles	78	14	3.37	2.77	3.07	Required
3	Newspaper Articles	78	14	3.04	3.00	3.02	Required
4	Monographs (Scholarly Books)	78	14	3.26	2.61	2.92	Required
5	Nonfiction Books	78	14	3.47	3.08	3.28	Required
6	Reference Resources	78	14	3.03	2.85	2.94	Required
7	Textbooks	78	14	3.00	2.77	2.89	Required
8	Gray Literature	78	14	3.38	3.00	3.19	Required
9	Journal Articles	78	14	3.41	3.00	3.21	Required

N_1 = Educational Foundation and General Studies students, N_2 = Science Education students, \bar{x}_1 = mean of Educational Foundation and General Studies students, \bar{x}_2 = Science Education students and \bar{x}_g = grand mean

Source: Field survey, 2018

Result in Table 1 shows that 9 items had their grand mean values ranging from 2.37 to 2.48 while 9 had their grand mean values ranged from 2.51 to 2.81 and were above the bench mark of 2.50. This shows that the respondents agreed that the 9items are type of serial resources required for use by postgraduate students of University of Agriculture Makurdi.

Research Questions 2

What is the frequency of use of serial resources by postgraduate students of University of Agriculture Makurdi? Data for answering research question 2 is presented in Table 1:

Table 2: Mean of Respondents on the frequency of use of serial resources by postgraduate students

S/N	Item Statement	N ₁	N ₂	X ₁	X ₂	x _g	Remarks
1	Daily	78	14	2.31	1.78	2.05	Low
2	Weekly	78	14	1.22	2.11	1.67	Low
3	Fortnightly	78	14	2.45	1.23	1.84	Low
4	Monthly	78	14	1.98	2.42	2.20	Low

N₁ = Educational Foundation and General Studies students, N₂ = Science Education students, \bar{X}_1 = mean of Educational Foundation and General Studies students, \bar{X}_2 = Science Education students and \bar{X}_g = grand mean

Source: Field survey, 2018

Result in Table 2 shows that all the 4 items had their grand mean values ranging from 1.67 to 2.84 and were below the bench mark of 2.50. This shows that the respondents disagree that serial resources lowly used by postgraduate students of University of Agriculture Makurdi.

Research Questions 3:

What is the rate of accessibility to serial resources for postgraduate students of University of Agriculture Makurdi?

Data for answering research question 3 is presented in Table 3:

Table 3: Mean of Respondents on the accessibility to serial resources for postgraduate students

S/N	Item Statement	N ₁	N ₂	X ₁	X ₂	X _g	Remarks
1	Journal Articles	78	14	2.22	2.03	2.28	Not Accessible
2	Magazine Articles	78	14	1.12	2.05	1.81	Not Accessible
3	Newspaper Articles	78	14	1.87	2.20	2.02	Not Accessible
4	Monographs (Scholarly Books)	78	14	1.99	2.04	2.21	Not Accessible
5	Nonfiction Books	78	14	2.45	2.05	2.47	Not Accessible
6	Reference Resources	78	14	2.41	2.30	2.37	Not Accessible
7	Textbooks	78	14	1.56	2.40	1.97	Not Accessible
8	Gray Literature	78	14	1.42	1.20	1.33	Not Accessible
9	Journal Articles	78	14	1.77	2.00	1.88	Not Accessible

N₁ = Educational Foundation and General Studies students, N₂ = Science Education students, \bar{X}_1 = mean of Educational Foundation and General Studies students, \bar{X}_2 = Science Education students and \bar{X}_g = grand mean

Source: Field survey, 2018

Result in Table 3 shows that 9 items had a grand mean value of 1.33 to 2.47 and were below the bench mark of 2.50. This shows that the respondents disagree that the 9 serial resources are not accessible by postgraduate students of University of Agriculture Makurdi.

Research Questions 4

What are the constraints faced by postgraduate students of University of Agriculture Makurdi in the use of serial resources?

Data for answering research question 6 is presented in Table 6 below:

Table 4: Mean of Respondents on the constraints faced by postgraduate students of University of Agriculture Makurdi, in the use of serial resources

S/N	Item Statement	N ₁	N ₂	X ₁	X ₂	X _g	Remarks
1	Lack of a national policy Lack of computers and internet connectivity	92	13	3.19	2	2.59	Agree
3		92	13	3.49	1.92	2.71	Agree
4	Inadequate funding Insufficient space, shelving, furniture, equipment	92	13	3.12	1.69	2.41	Agree
6		92	13	3.18	2.23	2.71	Agree
7	Lack of money to undertake regular maintenance	92	13	3.03	2.21	2.62	Agree
8		92	13	3.14	1.92	2.53	Agree
9	Untrained school librarians Poor library management systems	92	13	3.14	1.92	2.53	Agree

N₁ = Educational Foundation and General Studies students, N₂ = Science Education students, \bar{X}_1 = mean of Educational Foundation and General Studies students, \bar{X}_2 = Science Education students and \bar{X}_g = grand mean

Source: Field survey, 2018

Result in Table 5 shows that out of 9 items, 1 had grand mean value of 2.41 while 7 had their mean values ranged from 2.53 to 2.71 and were above the bench mark of 2.50. This shows that the respondents agreed that the 7items are constraints faced by postgraduate students of University of Agriculture Makurdi in the use of serial resources.

Research Question 5:

What are the types of serial resources used by postgraduate's students of University of Agriculture Makurdi?

Test of Hypotheses

Hypothesis 1

H₀: Serial resources are not significantly used by Postgraduate Students of University of Agriculture Makurdi.

H_A: Serial resources are significantly used by Postgraduate Students of University of Agriculture Makurdi

Test of hypothesis 1 is presented in Table 5:

Table 5: T-test Result on the use of Serial resources by Postgraduate Students

Variable	N	Mean	Std. Dev	Df	t-cal	t-tab	Remarks
EFOGENS Students	78	2.20	0.90		90	3.04	2.87
SED students	14	2.78	0.57				Sig
Total	92						

EFOGENS= Educational Foundations and General Studies, SED= Science Education, N=number of respondents and Df= degree of freedom, Sig=significant

Source: Field survey, 2018

Data presented in Table 5 reveal that the t-calculated was 3.04 which was greater than t-tabulated value of 2.87 at 0.05 level of significance with 90 degree of freedom. This result is significant. Therefore, the null hypothesis which states that Serial resources are not significantly used by Postgraduate Students of University of Agriculture Makurdi is accepted and the null hypothesis is rejected.

IV. Discussion of Findings

Research question one was on the types of serial resources required for use by postgraduate students of University of Agriculture Makurdi. Finding revealed that journal articles (3.19), magazine articles (3.07), newspaper articles (3.02), monographs (2.02), nonfiction books (3.28), reference resources (2.94), textbooks (2.89), gray literature (3.19) and journal articles (3.21) are types of serial resources required for use by postgraduate students for effective academic performance.

Research question two was on the frequency of use of serial resources by postgraduate students of University of Agriculture Makurdi. Finding revealed that students make daily usage of serial resources (2.05), weekly (1.67), fortnightly (1.84) and monthly (2.20). Test of hypothesis one also revealed that t-calculated was 3.04 which was greater than t-tabulated value of 2.87 at 0.05 level of significance with 90 degree of freedom (t-cal=3.04>t=2.87).

Research question two was on the accessibility to serial resources for postgraduate students of University of Agriculture Makurdi. Finding revealed that that journal articles (2.28), magazine articles (1.81), newspaper articles (2.02), monographs (2.21), nonfiction books (2.47), reference resources (2.37), textbooks (1.97), gray literature (1.33) and journal articles (1.88).

Research question two was on the constraints faced by postgraduate students of University of Agriculture Makurdi, in the use of serial resources. Finding revealed that lack of a national policy (2.59), lack of computers and internet connectivity (2.71), inadequate funding (2.41),

insufficient space, shelving, furniture, equipment (2.71), lack of money to undertake regular maintenance (2.62), untrained school librarians (2.52) and poor library management systems (2.53) were major constraints faced by postgraduate students of University of Agriculture Makurdi, in the use of serial resources.

V. Conclusions

Library serial resources are very crucial instrument for enhancing academic activities of all higher institutions. These resources cannot be neglected in any learning institutions. They also assist greatly for research works by postgraduate students of Universities. However, this study found out that serial resources are not utilized by postgraduate students of University of Agriculture Makurdi. The study concludes that non-utilization of serial resources affects academic activities and performance of postgraduate students of Universities.

VI. Recommendations

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

1. There should be a proper implementation of national policy on education use of serial resource that facilitate learning activities in universities
2. The university should make provision for adequate computers and internet connectivity to enhance academic activities
3. The government should ensure proper funding of libraries to ensure adequate provision of serial resources
4. University management should ensure that qualified librarians are employed and proper training of library staff who are in service.

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