



RESEARCH ARTICLE

USE OF JOURNALS IN LIBRARY AND INFORMATION SCIENCE (LIS) BY LIBRARIANS IN
UNIVERSITY LIBRARIES IN RIVERS AND BAYELSA STATES OF NIGERIA

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ABSTRACT

Journals are meant to publish results of original research and current developments as well as announce new discoveries within a specific discipline or field of study usually in successive parts indefinitely. Librarians, like other academics need to consult them in order to conduct research and publish research results. This paper discusses the use of journals in Library and Information Science (LIS) by librarians in university libraries in Rivers and Bayelsa states of Nigeria. The study was set to identify library and information science (LIS) journals which are subscribed to by the university libraries in Rivers and Bayelsa States, extent of use, challenges and measures to improve the use of the journals. Descriptive survey design was used for this study. All the 53 librarians in the three universities in Rivers and Bayelsa States constituted the population of the study. Questionnaire and observation checklist were appropriate instruments for data collection while frequency tables, simple percentages and arithmetic mean were employed as instruments of data analysis in answer to the research questions. It was found among other things, that many of the LIS journals were not subscribed to by the universities under study and that, librarians' extent of use of LIS journals from the various libraries is very low. It was recommended among others that, more LIS journals be subscribed to by the libraries and that, journal authors and publishers should make them visible/accessible.

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INTRODUCTION

University library is the pivot on which academic activities of any library revolves. It is the nerve centre of any university academic activities. They have long been recognized as the "hearts" of their universities (Ogunsola, 2004). The primary obligation of the university library is to provide the bibliographic resources (print and non-print materials and any other item that carries information in whatever format) that are essential to the fulfillment of the university's mission (Ifidon, 1999). He itemized the objectives of university libraries as follows: provision of materials for undergraduate instruction, term papers and projects as well as materials for supplementary reading; provision of materials in support of post-graduate research; provision of materials in support of faculty, external and collaborative researches; provision of expensive standard works especially in the professional disciplines; provision of materials for personal self-development; external relationships

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and interlibrary cooperation and stimulation of interest in the printed word. Libraries acquire various kinds of information resources including journals to enable them carry out their functions to achieve set goals. Even in Universities that have no department of Library and Information Science, the acquisition of information materials on Library and Information Science is still imperative as they provide of materials for personal self-development as well as materials in support of faculty, external and collaborative researches. Journals which are serial publications report research findings of experts in a given field of study published in successive parts and expected to continue indefinitely. Reitz (2004) defines journal as a periodical devoted to disseminating original research and commentary on current developments within a specific discipline, subdiscipline, or field of study usually published quarterly, bimonthly or monthly issues sold by subscription. They disseminate research results, improve visibility of researchers and institutions and exposure of authors. They also announce new discoveries. According to Meadows in Mason (nd), it was accepted that only one person could make a

new discovery; any later 're-discoveries' were essentially worthless. Hence, it was essential for the discovery to be announced as widely and quickly as possible, so that others did not step in first. Journals have acted as standard mechanisms for making priority claims. A look at the different types of journals available will prove useful at this juncture. According to Mason (2009), there are different types of journals which exist to serve different purposes and to achieve different objectives. They are academic/scholarly journals, trade journals, current affairs/opinion magazines, popular magazines, newspapers. Academic journals are peer-reviewed periodicals issued by an institution, corporation or a professional or scholarly society in which researchers publish current news or reports in the form of articles of their research work. Academic/scholarly journals are written by researchers and experts and intended for the same researchers and experts, with no aim to make profit. They are funded by universities or research institutions. They must always cite sources. Popular magazines are a type of journals authored by staff writers and intended for the general public. They do not always contain bibliographic reference and are published to make profit while trade or professional journals are published by staff writers and experts in a particular field and intended for members of a trade or profession, they sometimes cite sources. For the purpose of this study, we will concern ourselves with academic/scholarly journals only.

Researchers, especially librarians, need LIS journals to extract information for their research activities or to publish the results of their findings. In corroboration, Ashoor, in Okafor and Ukwoma (2011) emphasized that journals in which scientists publish their papers are expected to be consulted more frequently by these authors and their colleagues. Therefore, such journals should be made readily available in libraries in the country. Apart from that, Oppenheim, citing Okafor and Ukwoma (2011) confirmed that many people especially new researchers or junior academics need to locate these journals mostly for background information. Thus, it is not just the acquisition of the journals that improve service efficiency of librarians but their ability to use them and improve their knowledge and skills. Use has been found to be dependent on awareness and availability as was exemplified by Opeke and Odunlade (2011) that, awareness of the existence of information has been found to be one of the underlining factors in its utilisation. It is in line with this believe that, the study intends to investigate the library and information science (LIS) journals which are subscribed to by the university libraries in Rivers and Bayelsa States, extent of use of these journals, challenges in the provision and use of LIS journals and suggest measures to improve provision and use of LIS journals in the universities.

Statement of the Problem

For any university or even a department in a university to be reckoned with in research activities, the staff and researchers of such university or department need to have sustained access to, and use of learned journals. Thus, every university library is expected to stock LIS journals for use by librarians irrespective of whether or not the institution runs a library school. This is because, librarians as academics, need to publish to be at par

with their counterparts in the classroom on one hand and for promotion and personal development on the other hand. They therefore need to have access to research results of others failure of which will make them ill-informed and deprived them of the latest development and information in their professional domain. It will also affect their service delivery to patrons negatively. The question is what is the extent of use of Library and Information Science (LIS) journals by Librarians in University libraries in Rivers and Bayelsa States of Nigeria?

Purpose of the Study

The main purpose of this study is to investigate the availability and use of Library and Information Science (LIS) journals by librarians in university libraries in Rivers and Bayelsa States of Nigeria. The specific objectives are as follows:

- To identify library and information science (LIS) journals which are subscribed to by the university libraries in Rivers and Bayelsa States.
- To determine extent of use of LIS journals by librarians in the universities.
- To identify challenges in the provision and use of LIS journals in the universities.
- To suggest measures to improve provision and use of LIS journals in the universities.

Research Design

The descriptive survey design was used for this study. All librarians in the three universities in Rivers and Bayelsa States {18 from University of Port Harcourt (UNIPORT), 11 from Rivers State University of Science and Technology (RSUST), and 24 from Niger Delta University (NDU)} totalling 53 constituted the population of the study. Questionnaire and observation checklist were appropriate instruments for data collection while frequency tables, simple percentages and arithmetic mean were employed as instruments of data analysis in answer to the research questions.

Presentation of Data

Forty one (41) copies of questionnaire representing (77.27%) of the 53 copies of questionnaires that were distributed were returned. These were used for data analysis in line with research questions that guided the study.

Research Question 1: What are the LIS journal titles subscribed by university libraries in Rivers and Bayelsa States?

Table 1 present data on journal subscription by the three universities under study. It was observed that, 10 out of 27 journals listed were subscribed to by the institutions while 17 out of the 27 journals listed were subscribed to. Out of the ones subscribed to include Niger Biblios, Library Trend, African Journal of Lib. Archives & Inf. Science, Nigerian Libraries and Journal of Librarianship. Others are Audio Visual Librarianship, Communicate: Journal of lib. and Inf. Science, The Journal of Academic Librarianship, Journal of Library Administration, and Portal – Libraries and the Academy. The rest were not subscribed to.

Table 1. LIS journal titles subscribed by university libraries in Rivers and Bayelsa States

S/NO	LIS Journals	Decision
1	Niger Biblios	√
2	The Library Quarterly	×
3	Library Trend	√
4	African Journal of Lib. Archives & Inf. Science	√
5	Nigerian Libraries	√
6	Serials Librarian	×
7	Collection Management Journal	×
8	Libri	×
8	African Journal of Academic Librarianship	×
9	College and Research Libraries	×
10	Journal of Librarianship	√
12	Library Scientist	×
13	Library Review	×
14	Audio Visual Librarianship	√
15	Communicate: Journal of lib. and Inf. Science	√
16	Archives and Museum Informatics	×
17	Cataloging & Classification Quarterly	×
18	College & Research Libraries News	×
19	The Journal of Academic Librarianship	√
20	Journal of Documentation	×
21	Journal of Library Administration	√
22	Journal of Religious & Theological Information	×
23	MLA Forum	×
24	Portal – Libraries and the Academy	√
25	Public Libraries journal	×
26	The Public-Access Computer Systems Review	×
27	Reference and User Services Quarterly	×

Key: √ – Subscribed To (10/27), NST – Not Subscribed To (17/27)

The result of the study as shown in Table 2 revealed that, only 10 out of 27 LIS journal titles were subscribed to by university libraries in Rivers and Bayelsa states. Of the 10 titles, only Communicate: Journal of Library and Information Science seems to be available in all the three libraries studied and Gateway Library Journal in two of the libraries studied. As a matter of fact, the Niger Delta University does not subscribe to any LIS journal at all. The only LIS journal (Communicate: Journal of Library and Information Science) available in the library was got through gift, not through subscription and was not even displayed on the shelf. This agrees with Ogunrombi (1996) who observes that the dearth of library and information science (LIS) monographs in academic libraries is due to the fact that librarians regard such resources as secondary ones which are not always essential to their collection development and management practices. Nwafor in Marama and Ogunrombi (1996), in a study on LIS collections availability in Nigerian university libraries found that, LIS collections are one of a collection that is haphazardly maintained, with no policy to guide its development, and of a collection which is relatively small because of factors such as the tight library book budget, foreign exchange regulations, the attitude of both the library Director and his professional staff and institutional motivation. Although, the findings were reported some years before this study, the situation does not seem to have improved as expected. It is pathetic to know that, the dearth of LIS journals in university libraries will adversely affect the academic performance and general wellbeing of librarians. It could also be that, most of the journals that are used by the librarians in these institutions are open access and are read free on line without subscription.

Research Question 2: To what extent do librarians in the university libraries use LIS journals?

The data presented in Table 2 above show a minimum weighing mean response of 1.07, representing very low extent and a maximum weighting mean response of 1.66 representing low extent of use. With the criterion mean of 2.5, these figures indicate that the librarians' extent of use of LIS journals from the various libraries is very low. Since they must get involved in research, they result to alternative sources. This is in line with the submission of Jam and Ukeli in Pisagih and Akpena (2000) who pointed out that librarians use LIS journals to write or build-up their own articles because their promotion is tied to publishing and research. It can be inferred from the findings of the study that librarians in university libraries in Rivers and Bayelsa States did not allow the gross inadequacy of LIS journals in their libraries to stop them from making use of LIS journals. In any case, it affected the extent of use as it was generally adjudged to be low.

Research Question 3: What are the challenges to the provision and use of LIS journals in the university libraries?

Table 3 above shows that the provision and use of LIS journals in university libraries are affected by numerous challenges. Paramount among them are inadequate funds, library administrators' inability to acquire LIS journals, needed materials not always available, poor Internet connectivity, low research activities by librarians. Others include, lack of library policy on LIS journals acquisition, lack of Internet skills by librarians and inability to own personal laptops by some librarians. In line with this, Ibrahim (1996), Sangowusi and Adio (2000) and Lawal and Okwueze (2007) outlined some of the challenges to the provision and use of LIS journals as financial constraints, lack of current journals and low research output amongst librarians.

Research Question 4: What strategies can be employed to enhance the provision and use of LIS journals in the university libraries?

Table 2 above presents some strategies for enhancing the acquisition and use of LIS journals by librarians in university libraries in Rivers and Bayelsa States. Respondents agree at different levels that, all the strategies can be adopted in enhancing the use of LIS journals by librarians in these institutions. This is corroborated by Anafulu (1996) in Ojebode (2007) who is of the view that if the library is to meet the objectives for which it was established, money should be made available for procurement and processing of materials, hiring of personnel as well as purchase and maintenance of equipment.

Recommendations

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

- The stakeholders of both the libraries and their parent institutions should make concerted efforts to procure LIS collections especially journals.
- Librarians and library managers should place high value on their professional materials and handle them with care.
- Librarians should regularly be engaged in research and publishing in scholarly journals.

Table 2. Extent of use of LIS journals by librarians in university libraries in Rivers and Bayelsa States

S/NO	LIS Journals	Mean	Decision
1	Niger Biblios	1.46	VLE
2	The Library Quarterly	1.49	VLE
3	Library Trend	1.34	VLE
4	African Journal of Lib. Archives & Inf. Science	1.66	LE
5	Nigerian Libraries	1.56	LE
6	Serials Librarian	1.34	VLE
7	Collection Management Journal	1.20	VLE
8	Libri	1.10	VLE
9	African Journal of Academic Librarianship	1.27	VLE
10	College and Research Libraries	1.27	VLE
11	Journal of Librarianship	1.22	VLE
12	Library Scientist	1.20	VLE
13	Library Review	1.21	VLE
14	Audio Visual Librarianship	1.17	VLE
15	Communicate: Journal of lib. and Inf. Science	1.24	VLE
16	Archives and Museum Informatics	1.17	VLE
17	Cataloging & Classification Quarterly	1.12	VLE
18	College & Research Libry News	1.07	VLE
19	The Journal of Academic Librarianship	1.32	VLE
20	Journal of Documentation	1.44	VLE
21	Journal of Library Administration	1.37	VLE
22	Journal of Religious & Theological Information	1.22	VLE
23	MLA Forum	1.20	VLE
24	Portal – Libries & the Academy	1.15	VLE
25	Public Libraries journal	1.12	VLE
26	The Public-Access Computer Systems Review	1.15	VLE
27	Reference and User Services Quarterly	1.39	VLE

Key: (LE- Low Extent, VLE – Very Low Extent)

Table 3. Challenges hindering the provision and use of LIS journals in university libraries in Rivers and Bayelsa States

S/N	Items	Mean	Decision
1	Absence of library policy on journal acquisition	2.78	A
2	Inability to enforcement legal deposit law	2.78	A
3	Inadequate funds	3.71	SA
4	Lack of functional Internet connectivity in libraries	3.32	A
5	Librarians' inability to acquire basic Internet skills to surf the Net	2.34	D
6	Low research activities amongst librarians.	2.59	A
7	Libraries' inability to acquire journals on librarianship	3.15	A
8	Libraries lack databank of published works of librarians	3.15	A
9	Needed materials are not always found	2.90	A
10	Obsolete journals collection	2.90	A
11	Lack of basic skills to surf the Internet.	2.37	D
12	Inability to own a personal laptop	2.44	D
13	Not owning a personal modem for Internet connectivity	2.46	D
14	Low research activities by librarians	2.56	A
15	Most Online journals are not accessible	2.93	A

Key: SA – Strongly Agree, A – Agree, D – Disagree,

Table 4. Strategies to enhance provision and use of LIS journals in university libraries in Rivers and Bayelsa States

S/N	ITEMS	SA	A	D	SD	Mean	DEC.
1	The issue of journals acquisition should be taken seriously	27	12	1	1	3.59	SA
2	Enforcement of legal deposit law	15	22	2	2	3.22	A
3	Making funds available for journal acquisition	36	4	0	1	3.83	SA
4	Internet connectivity is sine qua non for 21 st centuries university libraries	33	7	0	1	3.76	SA
5	Librarians should make personal efforts to own modems that can allow them access the Net	15	22	3	1	3.24	A
6	More librarians should be encouraged to embark on research activities.	20	20	1	0	3.46	A
7	Librarians should begin to have value for their professional materials	22	16	2	1	3.44	A
8	Librarians should have a databank of professionally published materials	20	19	1	1	3.41	A
9	Frantic efforts should be made to procure needed materials.	17	23	0	1	3.37	A
10	Library management should stock up-to-date LIS journals.	27	13	0	1	3.61	SA
11	Librarians should endeavour to possess basic ICT skills to help them access the Internet	21	20	0	0	3.51	SA
12	Every 21 st Century librarian should make owning and using a laptop a priority	21	19	0	1	3.46	A
13	Librarians should own a personal modem to enable them access the Web regularly irrespective of location time and space.	16	23	2	0	3.34	A
14	Librarians should always engage in research activities that would make them want to use journals	16	24	1	0	3.37	A
15	Authors and publishers of journals should make them visible/accessible.	14	26	1	0	3.32	A

Key: SA – Strongly Agree, A – Agree, D – Disagree, SD – Strongly Disagree

- Librarians should have a databank of professionally published materials where they can always draw from when the need arises.
- Authors and publishers of LIS journals should make them visible/accessible.

Conclusion

Journals are fundamental to the academic development and overall wellbeing of academics and researchers because they are carriers of current information and novel discoveries in a given field of study. Library and Information Science (LIS) journals are therefore very useful to librarians, library educators and other key players in the information industry. Librarians in universities as academic staff are expected to conduct research and publish their findings in LIS journals as well as obtain background information from them. Appreciating the important roles of LIS journals in the research process of librarians, this study sought to find out the extent of availability and use of LIS journals in university libraries in Rivers and Bayelsa States of Nigeria. It was revealed that LIS journals were scantily available in the libraries surveyed. The availability of LIS journals has been hindered by such problems as inadequate funds; policy makers' poor attitude to LIS journal collections, lack of Internet connectivity while their use was found to be mired by authors and publishers' inability to make published works visible and accessible; lack of Internet skills to surf the Net; and low research activities among librarians. The findings have far-reaching implications for universities and library administrators, librarians, library educators and the government which were highlighted. Based on the findings of the study, recommendations to improve the availability and use of LIS journals by librarians were made.

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