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AGRICULTURE, MAKURDI

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**PERCIEVED IMPACT OF NEWSPAPER USAGE ON ACADEMIC
PERFORMANCE OF STUDENTS OF FEDERAL UNIVERSITY OF
AGRICULTURE, MAKURDI**

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Abstract

This paper examines the perceived impact of newspaper usage among University of Agriculture, Makurdi students and its impact on their academic performance. The overall objective is to assess the level of newspaper usage and students' perception on the availability and accessibility of newspaper in the library. This study also highlights some of the challenges students face in using newspapers and proffer workable solutions. The population was made up of 150 students of University of Agriculture, Makurdi, comprising of undergraduates and postgraduates. The survey research method was adopted. The respondents were selected through random sampling of registered users the library at that particular time. As shown in the findings, the students use newspaper mostly for academic purpose followed by other purposes. The study revealed adequate but untimely provision of newspaper.

Keywords: Newspaper; Academic performance; Students; University; Nigeria

INTRODUCTION

University libraries generally are established to provide information materials to support teaching and learning activities of the institution they are attached to. They are those libraries mainly found in tertiary institutions established to support teaching, learning and research processes (Krubu & Osawaru, 2010). They function to help realise the vision and mission of the institution, which they serve. One of the main aims of setting up a university library is to encourage and promote scholarship and research in the academic environment. University library is often considered an organ around which all academic activities revolve and thus the library can aptly be described as the heart of the university (Aina, 2004). Furthermore, Chigbu and Idoko, (2013) argue that they perform myriad of function in developing human minds and creating human innovative mind. University libraries like other libraries function to draw human soul from thick darkness of ignorance to light, which is synonymous with knowledge. The function of any university library is to provide services to staff and students and these services could only be of value if people for whom they are provided appreciate them.

Other roles of university library to the parent institutions could be seen as:

- Acquisition of resources to support learning and teaching process in the university.
- Provision of resources for research and to meet the requirement of faculty.
- Cooperation with other university libraries with a view of developing a network of academic library resources which will be at the disposal of all students and teachers.
- Open the door to a wide range of resources that lie beyond the borders of one's own field of specialization.
- To bring information resources to door step of student and scholars together under conditions which encourage reading for pleasure, self-discovering, personal growth and sharpening of intellectual curiosity.

To perform these myriad of functions, university libraries collect, process, store and disseminate various type of information resources such as serials publications among which are newspapers. A newspaper is a collection of articles about current events usually published daily. Newspaper contains current information because they are published daily; they contain recent and current information compared to textbooks. For hundreds of years, people depended on newspapers to inform them about what's going on in the world. It is the most democratic form of information, affordable and accessible.

Newspapers are among the most widely read periodicals that are available and accessible to the vast majority of people of all ages and walks of life in any community. Quadri and Quadri (2015) buttressed that newspapers are the most accessible written document to the largest proportion of people of all categories, young and old, students and workers, elites and peasants, literates and illiterates. Because of their nature, they are kept in the serial section of a university library; this makes them easily and conveniently accessible. Newspapers help improve reading habits, knowledge, and awareness. Kumar, Singh and Siddiqui (2011) opined that they can be part of good study habits for students in any area of specialization. On the importance of newspapers, Igbeka and Ola (2010) posit that newspapers provide up- to- date information on local, state, national and world issues.

They stressed that every category of newspaper reader usually find important, current and interesting information.

Previous study on the use of Olabisi Onabanjo University library revealed that reading newspapers in the library is the third most important motivation after reading for examination and book consultation for doing assignments. Newspapers are important because they carry current information and they keep the readers informed of events and happenings within and outside their immediate environments (Bankole & Babalola, 2011).

Nagasampige and Nagasampige (2016) note that newspapers have been the most important tool in shaping the growth and development of any society in the modern world. More than anything, they have been very instrumental in bridging the communication gap between people that contributes to the air of awareness in a society. Newspapers are the best sources for the information and evolution in every field. Kumar (2009) notes that newspapers help college students to make connections among different fields, subjects, topics, issues, and events, and hence help them ask the right questions.

Newspapers are among information resources purchased by the library on daily basis as part of library's collection. Ogbuiyi and Okpe (2013) argue that university library resources must be available to the students on request for university to achieve its set objectives. Furthermore, Renspie (2015) asserts that the use of the reading materials should determine its importance rather than the staggering number of its volumes. This could be done only by assessing the services rendered in the library. Thus, this study is specifically carried out to investigate the perceived impact of newspaper usage among University of Agriculture, students' perception on newspaper availability and its impact on their academic performance with a view to identifying challenges facing newspaper usage and suggesting workable solutions.

OBJECTIVES OF THE STUDY

- i. To identify the various types of newspaper available in Francis Sulemanu Idachaba Library.
- ii. To determine reason(s) for using newspaper by the students in Francis Sulemanu Idachaba Library.
- iii. To ascertain the perceived impact of newspaper usage on students' academic performance.
- iv. To find the level of students' satisfaction with newspaper service in Francis Sulemanu Idachaba library.
- v. To identify challenges affecting newspaper usage in Francis Sulemanu Idachaba library.
- vi. To identify strategies for addressing the challenges that newspaper users face in the library.

RESEARCH QUESTIONS

- a. Which newspapers are available in Francis Sulemanu Idachaba library?
- b. What is the reason(s) for using newspaper in Francis Sulemanu Idachaba library?
- c. What is the impact of newspaper usage on academic performance of University of Agriculture Makurdi students?
- d. What is the level of students' satisfaction with newspaper service in Francis Idachaba library?
- e. What are the challenges of using newspaper in Francis Sulemanu Idachaba library?
- f. What are the solutions to problems facing newspaper usage in Francis Sulemanu Idachaba library?

LITERATURE REVIEW

The function of university libraries is to provide services to staff and students and their community. Oyewusi and Oyeboade (2009) posits that the primary purpose of university libraries is to support teaching, learning and research in ways consistent with, and supportive of the institution's mission and goals. Thus, university libraries acquire information materials in a variety of formats which they make available to their community of users. Among these varieties of formats are newspapers. Newspapers help to improve reading habits, knowledge, and awareness. They can be part of good study habits for students in any area of specialization (Kumar, Singh & Siddiqui, 2011).

Newspapers contain recent and up-to-date information on any field, be it political, economy, health and so on. They are vital source of information in enlightened societies providing the most recent information to readers. Newspapers help improve reading habits, knowledge, and awareness. Kumar (2009) opined that they can be part of good study habits for students in any area of specialization. Newspapers are among information resources published in Nigeria and so are part of Nigerian library's collection; they are purchased by the library on daily basis as part of library's collection. Newspapers are important because they carry current information and they keep the readers informed of events and happenings within and outside their immediate environments. They are useful for education, recreation, entertainment and relaxation.

Primary materials such as newspapers constitute important sources of information in Nigeria. Their usefulness is found in the current information they carry. The information these vital sources carry, educate and not just that, it also entertains the readers and keep them abreast or informed about what happens in the society around them. The creamy or vital information which is on regular basis, makes them one of the most important and crucial sources of information (Abalaka, Yahaya & Okiki, 2014).

Bankole and Babalola (2011) assert that newspapers were found to play a significant role in the acquisition of knowledge. Newspapers are among the most widely-read periodicals

that are available and accessible to the vast majority of people of all ages and walks of life in any community. Babalola (2002) as cited in Familusi and Owoeye (2014) buttressed that newspapers are the most accessible written documents to the largest proportion of people of all categories, young and old, students and workers, elites and peasants, literates and illiterates. In their study on evaluation of library materials usage and services in private universities, Ogbuiyi and Okpe (2013) established that newspapers are among library material kept in the serial section of an academic library which makes them easily and conveniently accessible; and that they are among most adequate library materials.

On the importance of newspapers, Igbeka and Ola (2010) posit that newspapers provide up- to- date information on local, state, national and world issues. They stressed that every category of newspaper reader usually find some important, current and interesting information in the newspapers. They reiterated that, “newspapers are important because they carry current information and they keep the readers informed of events and happenings within and outside their immediate environments. They are useful for education, recreation, entertainment and relaxation.” They further explained that newspapers use design that makes information easily accessible to the reader, important stories have large bold headlines, and graphics are also used to relate stories.

Onuoha, Unegbu, and Umahi (2013) in a study on reading habits and library use among students of information resources management affirmed that newspaper can be used to improve reading habit among undergraduates. Cheney, Knapp, Alan and Czaplá (2006) as cited in Oyewumi and Alegbeleye (2014) posit that despite the growing presence of news on the internet, radio, television, etc., a library’s current newspaper collection can continue to play a vital role in the academic community. In fact, they advocated that in order to improve newspaper readership among college-age students, libraries should provide free and unhindered access to newspapers to all library users. Newspapers are said to be among the most widely-read periodicals that are available and accessible to the vast majority of people of all ages and walks of life in any community. In their findings, Onuoha et al. (2013) assert that majority of his respondents mostly read newspapers in

the library. Availability of information resources must be distinguished from accessibility.

Availability of information sources means ensuring their presence in libraries for immediate use. A study by Iyoro (2004) on how serial accessibility has contributed to students' learning at the University of Ibadan process revealed that serials play a significant role in the acquisition of knowledge, because the serial collection was easily and conveniently accessible. Learning materials might be available, i.e., the library has acquired them, but inaccessible to those who need them for whatever reason (uncataloged, miscataloged, misshelved, etc.). Accessible means that users can identify and use the resources. Both variables have a relationship with the use of library resources (Ugah, 2008). Popoola (2001) argued that information availability does not mean accessibility and utilization. He suggested among others, that academic libraries should stimulate primary demands for their products (materials) and services. According to Okiki(2013), availability, accessibility and use of information resources are indispensable to the teaching, research in any university system.

Emphasizing on the need to provide information resources in various formats, Agba, Kigongo-Bukenya and Nyumba, (2004) state that the shift from print to electronic information means that both academic staff and students in a university system use these resources for better quality, efficient and effective research more than ever. Akinlade (2000) observes that the expectations of people are high when sourcing and retrieving information, hence frustration too is high when expectations are not met. He suggested that for a library to satisfy the needs of the users, both human and material resources must be available. Bankole and Babalola (2011) in their finding listed delayed in availability of newspaper as part of challenges facing newspaper usage in OOU.

METHODOLOGY

The descriptive survey design was used for the study. The study was made up of 150 students of University of Agriculture, Makurdi (UAM) registered in the library

comprising of undergraduates and postgraduates. This research is a survey research that gathered data from 150 respondents from serials section of the library with the aid of the questionnaire titled “Use of Newspaper among UAM Students Questionnaire (UNUAMSQ).” The respondents were selected randomly based on their visit to the library. Data collected was analysed using frequency and percentage counts.

Based on the total respondents whose questionnaires were returned, the demographic data shows that age 20-24 records 95(63%), ages 25-29, 30-35 recording 49(32%) and 6 (4%) respectively. This implies that age bracket 20-24 constitutes the major users of newspaper. 103 (68.7%) were males, while 42(28.0%) were females, and five (3.3%) did not indicate their sex. Since the questionnaire administration was randomly given to students that visited the library, the sex distribution of the respondents showed that male students predominantly read newspapers in the university library compared to the females. This is to be expected since a huge number of men are often seen congregating around newspaper stands and vendors every morning in Nigeria reading and discussing issues raised in newspapers. Stanley and Niemi (1998) as cited in Bankole and Babalola (2011) had observed that women are less intensive consumers of news from varied sources particularly newspapers and magazines, but are more likely to watch television news special and documentary. The findings also indicate that 133 (88.7%) were singles while 7(4.7%) were married. 10(6.7%) respondents did not indicate whether or not they are married. The gap between undergraduate and postgraduate in newspaper consultation is alarming. This can be seen in number of response recorded by undergraduates, which is 130(86.7%) against 6(4.0%) recorded by postgraduates; 14 (9.3%) did not indicate their level of study. As explained by Aina (2004), it could be reasoned that to the undergraduates, the library is the learning centre because it provides materials that are needed for learning for all the courses that may be offered by the institution while postgraduates are mainly concerned with their research work and thus have lesser time to read newspaper.

Table 1: Newspapers Available in F. S. Library

Newspaper	Frequency	Percent
Vanguard	88	58.7
Daily Trust	84	56.0
Punch	74	49.3
Guardian	69	46.0
Sun	68	45.3
Tell	16	10.7
The Nation	2	1.33

From Table 1, findings indicate that the newspapers regularly purchased by Francis Sulemanu Idachaba Library are: The Punch, Vanguard, Guardian, Daily Trust, Sun, Nation and Tell. Vanguard newspaper is recognized as the mostly available to the respondents. This is in line with the findings of Igbeka and Ola (2010) where they affirmed that half of the respondents preferred the Vanguard newspaper third in position to the Guardian.

Table 2: Reason (s) for using newspaper in the library

Subjects	Frequency	Percent
Academics	99	66.0
Politics/Government	75	50.0
Sports	63	42.0
Business/Economy/Finance	56	37.3
Religion/Spiritual	47	31.3
Scholarship/Employment	47	31.3
Health/Fitness/Medicine	41	27.3

Entertainment	39	26.0
World News	35	23.3
Food Nutrition	28	18.7
Fashion/Beauty	26	17.3

Table 2 shows that 99 (66%) of the respondents read newspapers in the libraries for academic purpose while 75(50%) cited the use of newspapers to obtain political information, 63(42%) use it for sports update,56(37%) use newspaper for business purpose, religion and scholarship opportunity recorded 47(31.3%) equally, 39(26.0%) respondents use the newspaper to ease boredom, nutrition and fashion recorded 28(18.7%) and 26(17.3%) responses respectively.

Table 3: Degree of satisfaction with newspaper service

Degree of Satisfaction	Frequency	Percent
Satisfied	114	76.0
Dissatisfied	16	10.7
Very satisfied	13	8.7
Void	7	4.7
Very Dissatisfied	0	0.0

**Mean = 2.84±0.77 (readers are satisfied with the newspaper service in the library)*

Table 3 indicates that 13 (8.7%) students are very satisfied with the newspaper services rendered in the library, 114(76.0 %) are satisfied, 16(10%) are dissatisfied. However, no response was recorded for very dissatisfied. Thus, it could be reasoned that students are satisfied with services provided by the library in terms of newspaper provision. cursory

Table 4: Effects of newspaper reading on the respondents

Positive	Frequency	Percent
Yes	111	74.0
No	39	26.0

As shown in Table 4, 111(74.0%) students responded positive to newspaper impact on them while 39(26.0%) students responded negative to impact of newspaper on them. Thorough examination of this table shows that it correlates with what was reported in the previous table (3) as more students were very satisfied while none was dissatisfied and more students were satisfied against those unsatisfied.

Table 5: Challenges with use of newspaper

Factor	Frequency	Percent
Insufficient copies	98	65.3
Lack of chance for discussion	62	41.3
Delayed availability	52	34.7
Preference for online newspaper	35	23.3
Attitude of library staff	20	13.3
Rigorous registration procedure before use	13	8.7
Poor environment	3	2.0

Table 5 presents the challenges of using newspaper among UAM students. Among challenges facing newspaper usage in the library, problem of insufficient copies recorded

the highest -98 (65.3%) followed by inadequate room for discussion- which recorded 62(41.3%). 52(34.7%) respondents mentioned delay in availability of the newspaper. This concur with the findings of Bankole and Babalola (2011) where forty-nine percent of the students were of the view that the newspapers are not available on time, and that sometimes, the newspapers for a day might not be available for readers up to 12.00noon. Another area of challenge is the students' preference for online newspaper, which recorded 35(23%) responses. The challenge here for librarians is to make available newspaper in another format, especially online newspaper in addition to the copies of newspaper available in the library since respondents initially complained of inadequate copies as noted by Okiki (2013) that information resources should also appear in electronic formats to complement hard copies. 20(13.3%) respondents indicated that attitude of library staff also constitute a barrier to effective newspaper usage, 13(8.7%) respondents cited rigorous registration process before usage, while 3(2.0%) respondents complained of poor environment.

Table 6: Solutions to challenges of newspaper usage in the library

Solution	Strongly Agree	Agree	Disagree	Strongly Disagree	Void	Mean Value
Provision of more copies	92 (61.3%)	44 (29.3%)	0 (0.0%)	5 (3.3%)	9 (6.0%)	3.37±1.08
Review of registration process	21 (14.0%)	52 (34.7%)	22 (14.7%)	18 (12.0%)	37 (24.7%)	2.01±1.42
Improvement on reading environment	57 (38.0%)	38 (25.3%)	10 (6.7%)	3 (2.0%)	42 (28.0%)	2.43±1.66
Re-training	25	54	8 (5.3%)	8 (5.3%)	55	1.90±1.60

of library staff	(16.7%)	(36.0%)			(36.7%)	
Provision of room for discussion after reading	40 (26.7%)	32 (21.3%)	20 (13.3%)	11 (7.3%)	47 (31.3%)	2.05±1.62

**Solution with a mean ≥ 2.5 is valid while the solution with a mean ≤ 2.5 is invalid*

Table 6 presents solutions students suggested to the aforementioned barriers. 92(61.3) strongly agreed that more copies should be provided, 57(38.0%) strongly agreed that the reading area should be improved, 40(26.7%) are of the opinion that room for discussion be provided, only few of the respondents, 25(16.7%) strongly agreed that library staff should be retrained. 21 (14.0%) respondents suggested review of the registration process.

DISCUSSION OF FINDINGS

From the data obtained in this work, it was found out that the library acquires different types of newspapers. Across the respondents, 66% indicated that they use newspaper mostly for academic purpose. This agrees with the findings of Aina (2004) and Iyoro (2004) that newspapers are one of the tools for acquiring knowledge. This emphasizes the important role of librarians in collecting, organizing and preservation of newspaper information in a way that will ensure unhindered access by students and readership sustenance.

From the mean deviation, this study depicts users' satisfaction with services provided in terms of newspapers. Furthermore, impact of newspapers provided in the library reflects positive impact establishing a link with students' satisfaction with newspaper services in the library as shown in this study.

Among challenges facing newspaper usage in the library, problem of insufficient copies recorded the highest -98 (65.3%) followed by inadequate room for discussion- which

recorded 62(41.3%). 52(34.7%) respondents mentioned delay in availability of the newspaper. This concurs with the findings of Bankole and Babalola(2011) where forty-nine percent of the students were of the view that the newspapers are not available on time, and that sometimes, the newspapers for a day might not be available for readers up to 12.00noon. Another area of challenge is the students' preference for online newspaper, which recorded 35(23%) responses. The challenge here for librarians is to make available newspaper in another format, especially online newspaper in addition to the copies of newspaper available in the library since respondents initially complained of inadequate copies. 20(13.3%) respondents indicated that attitude of library staff also constitute a barrier to effective newspaper usage, 13(8.7%) respondents cited rigorous registration process before usage, while 3(2.0%) respondents complained of poor environment.

CONCLUSION

This present study shows that FSIL truly acquires different types of newspapers. This signifies that newspapers are essential information carrier and that majority of students consult newspaper for academic purposes. This connotes that newspaper can be used to promote reading habit among students since the students also consult the newspaper for other reasons such as political news, sporting, entertainment, scholarship and economic news. Provision of newspaper in good time is of paramount importance to sustain students' readership especially in the wake of this information explosion age.

RECOMMENDATION

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

1. Management of FSIL should improve on retraining of staff to better meet the information seeking behaviour of newspaper readers. students' rating of newspaper services rendered in the library shows satisfactory

2. The library management should also consider automating the library that will encompass provision of computer and internet facility in the serial section to ease the problem of insufficient copies of newspaper.
3. Disjointing of the newspaper reading area from the other reading area to allow for room discussion should also be considered.
4. Publishers of newspaper should ensure constant production to sustain readership.

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