

JOURNAL USAGE IN SELECTED UNIVERSITY AND POLYTECHNIC LIBRARIES IN NIGERIA

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ABSTRACT

This paper examines the use of journals in twelve (12) academic libraries drawn from universities and polytechnics in Nigeria. The study was guided by five (5) objectives from which some hypotheses were formulated. Inferential survey design was used while respondents consisted of 542 library patrons selected through availability sampling method. Data generated through a customized questionnaire were analyzed using frequency tables, percentages and mean while the hypotheses were tested with t-test statistics. The results revealed that the major users of journals in Nigerian academic libraries are lecturers, researchers and graduate students who consult these information materials for various academic and research purposes. Academic peer-review journals were the most widely used amongst the available types of journals while the least used were the electronic journals. Majority of respondents accessed these journals through improvised index cards while the primary determinant of usage was currency and factual accuracy. The study equally shows that shortage of staff, irrelevance of available copies to the needs of users and improper shelving are some of the constraints associated with the use of journals in Nigerian academic libraries. Several recommendations were made, foremost of which is that current issues of journals should be acquired by academic libraries in Nigeria in line with the subject coverage-cum-research interest of their parent institutions.

Key words: Serials Management; Journal Utilization; User Studies; Academic Libraries, Nigeria.

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1. INTRODUCTION

Academic libraries support their parent institutions in the execution of the tripartite functions of teaching, research and community services. Effective and satisfactory discharge of these distinct responsibilities is, to a large extent, a function of availability of diverse information materials in recommended quantities, standards and formats. It is for this reason that academic libraries go to great lengths to identify, acquire and provide different types of published and unpublished print-based information sources, including electronic documents. These printed or traditional information materials, upon receipt in the libraries, are processed and made accessible to enable the clientele meet their different information, educational and research needs.

Foremost amongst the information offerings of academic libraries are the journals. As primary sources of information, journals contain current articles written by experts, scholars and practitioners from different fields and disciplines, as well as vocational preoccupations. To a very large extent, journals investigate and publicize contemporary issues and report professional activities in different areas. By so doing, they provide the platform for extending the frontiers of human knowledge. The articles accepted and paraded in journals are expected to have undergone proper editorial scrutiny and rigorous peer-review prior to their publication and dissemination/circulation.

Over the years journals have been at the forefront of promoting development and providing up-to-date information on the latest scientific-cum-technological inventions; educational innovations, business opportunities; socio-economic researches, amongst other bits of relevant information. Result of current research undertakings can be published in journal within as short a time as two-three weeks of the completion of the investigation. Articles in journals are usually well-researched, direct-to-the-point, brief, and comparatively, more technical to read. Conventionally, journals are smaller than standard textbooks, thus more portable. The journal, therefore, has obvious advantages over the conventional monograph (textbook) which would present the same information about two or more years after the completion of the research which might make the information stale, late and often superseded. Sometime, the information published in journals are neither found in any textbooks nor captured in other publications. Hence, there is need for acquisition and provision of backlog of journals in libraries.

It is this uniqueness of journals that recommends it for repeated evaluation. As a result, the number of research reports on journal usage in Nigeria has been on the increase in recent times. This is no doubt, a commendable development considering the importance of journals as primary information sources. However, a careful scan of most references to journal use in Nigeria shows that they are essentially university-based researches. The implication of this is that journal use in polytechnics and other non-university higher educational institutions (HEIs), is grossly under reported. This state of affair leaves a yawning gap in the literature of Nigerian librarianship considering that journals form a vital component of the collections of non-university

academic libraries, and are meant to be utilized by a plethora of information seekers within and outside these tertiary institutions of learning. This co-relational study of journal use in universities and polytechnic libraries is an attempt to fill this gap. Considering the large number of tertiary institutions in Nigeria, there is no doubt that a study of journal use in one region would definitely provide a basis for similar studies in other geo-political zones of the country. It is on the foregoing premise that the present study draws its justification.

2. PURPOSE OF THE STUDY

The general purpose of this study is to investigate and publicize the salient issues in the use of journals in selected academic libraries in Nigeria. This is achieved through the following specific objectives:

1. To ascertain the major users of journals in the academic libraries under study;
2. To find out the types of journals used;
3. To establish the factors that determine journal use;
4. To identify the medium of access to journals; and
5. To highlight the problems associated with the use of journals in these libraries.

Hypotheses

The following null hypotheses were tested in this study:

- Ho₁: There is no significant difference in the composition of major users of journals in university and polytechnic libraries in Nigeria;
- Ho₂: There is no significant difference between university and polytechnic libraries in terms of reasons for journal use;
- Ho₃: The types of journals used in university libraries do not differ significantly from those used in polytechnic libraries;
- Ho₄: There is no significant difference in the factors that determine journal use in university and polytechnic libraries;
- Ho₅: There is no significant difference between the medium of accessing journals in university and polytechnic libraries;
- Ho₆: The problems associated with journal use do not differ significantly between university and polytechnic libraries.

3. DELIMITATION

This study is restricted to twelve (12) academic libraries in South-East geopolitical zone of Nigeria. The six (6) university libraries are: Imo State University Library, Owerri; Ebonyi State University Library, Abakiliki; Anambra State University Library, Uli; Michael Okpara University of Agriculture Library, Umudike; Federal University Library, Ndufu-Alike and Nnamdi Azikiwe University Library, Awka. The six (6) polytechnic libraries included in this survey are: Federal Polytechnic Library, Nekede; Federal Polytechnic Library, Oko; Federal Polytechnic Library, Unwana; Imo State Polytechnic Library, Umuagwo; Institute of Management and Technology Library, Enugu and Abia State Polytechnic Library, Aba. The emphasis is broadly on use of journals in Nigerian academic libraries. Respondents were drawn from persons found using these library materials while a customized questionnaire was the major instrument used for data collection.

4. LITERATURE REVIEW

Adio (2006) defined the journal, generally, as a publication of academic departments and allied learned societies for the dissemination of new research findings. The *Anglo-American Cataloging Rules, Second Edition*, categorized journals among the serials/periodicals publications, adding that they are issued in successive parts, bearing numerical or chronological designations and intended to be continued indefinitely (AACR2, 1978 cited in Nnadozie, 2007). Another study by Uwem (2003:116) described journals as primary information purveyors whose contents should be brought to the attention of users through indexes, abstracts and table of contents services (TCS).

Reports in available literature indicate that journals are special materials used mostly by serious-minded and mature readers, especially, academics, postgraduate scholars, professionals and policy-makers (Nnadozie & Nnadozie, 2006). In the same vein, some collaborative studies by Alemna, Chifewpa and Rosenberg (2000), Nnadozie and Nnadozie (2006) and Edom (2006) revealed that academic staff and other researchers are the major users of journals because they consider these publications of key importance to their work. Awojobi and Madu (2005) identified postgraduate students as constituting a large population of users of journals while another study by Ujuambi (2005) specifically pointed out scientists as voracious readers (users) of journals. Undergraduate students were also recognized as constituting an appreciable percentage of journal users in an empirical research by Nwogu, Anunobi and Okoroafor (2003) while Edoaka and Ugwuanyi (2006:6) concluded that biologists in Nigerian universities use professional journals as their main channel of scientific communication.

In a work published several years ago but which remains a reference point in most journal studies, Wood and Bower (1969) demonstrated the existence of what they termed “core journals” used extensively by social science scholars. Srinivasan (1970) defined core or primary journals as the most used and most important periodicals in specific subject fields. Another timeless and oft-cited study by Jones and Chaplman (1972) revealed that much of the older materials in the humanities were used as primary source materials and this usage increased with the age of these materials. Most researchers make use of abstracting and indexing journals both of which belong to the secondary category. Abstracting journals provide summaries of articles in specific journals/subject areas (Uwem, 2003) while indexing journals regularly list articles that appear in different journals in a given field (Madu, 2002). An earlier study revealed that professional journals, published by different associations or societies, are read extensively by members to keep abreast of professional activities and current trends (Nnadozie & Nnadozie, 2006). On the contrary, evidences abound that lecturers specially rely on and so read more of peer-review journals published by academic departments and faculties in institutions of higher learning (Ehikhamenor, 1987 and Shoham, 1998). Another type of journal identified by Madu (2002) is the electronic journal (e-journal), which is available in various online platforms. According to Edwards (1997), academic journals in e-formats which are used by most staff and students in United Kingdom higher education answer so many of our traditional problems with speedy delivery and availability unlimited by time, geography and searching facilities. Unfortunately, available literature indicates that provision of e-journals and other e-documents is not as commonplace in Nigerian libraries. (Nnadozie, 2006).

Awojobi and Madu (2005) observed a higher rate of journal use among most people pursuing higher degrees, especially, those writing their postgraduate theses. A three-year study of students' preferences in the use of serials by Igbokwe (2006:98) established that journals are the most preferred with newspapers and magazines ranking second and third, respectively. This clearly disproves the general assumption that journals are more attractive to professionals, researchers and lecturers. The use of journals is determined by several factors. Fayose (1995) identified some of these factors, including up-to-datedness, contribution of articles by experts in the fields and portability. Olanlokun and Salisu (1985) pointed out that the provision of latest information on various disciplines and timely dissemination of latest research findings make journals one of the most widely read materials in libraries.

Several published reports point to the preference and extensive use of journals by serious-minded information seekers like academics, professionals and policy-makers (Odusanya & Amusa, 2003; Gbadamosi, 2005; Edom, 2006 and Nnadozie 2006). A study of the information seeking behavior of professors of Arts by Challenger (1999) found that respondents need information for teaching which makes most of them to subscribe to journals and read newspapers. Folade and Akerele (2009:75) revealed that 57% of the academic staff made use of journals to satisfy their various information needs. Majority of respondents in a study of the influence of workplace on information seeking behavior and information utilization by Igbeka and Atinmo (2001) rely on journals. Shokeen, *et al.* (2002) reported that most scholars prefer current journals to books, visit the library regularly and their preferred method of search for information is via indexes, abstracts and citation in articles. The use of these sources as access to journals is understandable considering that they are surrogates of real documents and bridges to the main information materials.

The use of journals in Nigeria libraries is fraught with several constraints. Foremost of these problems is the vexations issues of unavailability and irregularity. Commenting on these, Akinbode (1998 : 55-56) lamented that some of the academic associations and institutions expected to publish journals in Nigeria are not doing so, some few local publications that managed to come up are "dead" while the few surviving ones are being published irregularly. Added to these constraints is the fact that nowadays, most libraries in underdeveloped societies house outdated issues of foreign journals because of their inability to renew their subscription to foreign suppliers (Mittal, 1979). The existence of these outdated journals makes users' access to current information problematic. Rough handling, poor ventilation and polluted environment constitute another set of challenges in journal usage in Nigerian academic libraries. Oliobi (1982) grouped these problems under two headings, namely: environmental and mechanical. According to him, environmental factors include the effects of temperature, humidity, acidic gases, pests, embrittlement, pollution and rodents while mechanical factors include poor handling (both in transit and usage) and inadequate storage facilities like shelves, pamphlet boxes and display racks (Igbinoba, 1988).

5. METHODOLOGY

The inferential survey research method was adopted for this study. Relevant data was obtained through a customized instrument titled: *Questionnaire for Assessing Journal Usage in Academic Libraries*. Validation of instrument was done by a Senior Lecturer in Library and Information Science (LIS) while a pilot study was conducted at the Rivers State Polytechnic Library, Bori and University of Uyo Library, Akwa Ibom

State. These exercises left the researcher with an eight-item Likert scale in which responses were weighted based on the following options: Agree (A), Strongly Agree (SA), Disagree (D) and Strongly Disagree (SD). The questionnaire items addressed users of journals, types of journals used, publishers of frequently-used journals, factors that determine journal usage, medium of access to journals in libraries, period of use, subject background of journals used and problems encountered in journal usage. Test of reliability with Crombach Alpha produced a reliability co-efficient of .86 (i.e. Crombach's $\alpha = 0.86$).

Administration of the questionnaire lasted between January and May, 2015. The availability sampling technique was used to select 50 respondents in each of the twelve (12) participating academic libraries in the study area. A total of 542 copies (90.3%) of the data-form were collected and used for analysis. On-the-spot completion of the copies of the questionnaire and strict supervision of the process was responsible for the high response rate recorded. Data from copies of the returned research instruments were collated, interpreted and presented using frequency tables, percentages, mean and t-test statistics.

6. FINDINGS AND DISCUSSION

A total of 542 (90.3%) of the 600 copies of the research questionnaire distributed was collected and used for analysis. Two hundred and seventy-two (45.3%) of this number was retrieved from university libraries while the remaining two hundred and seventy (45%) copies were completed in the participating polytechnic libraries. This means that there is no significant difference in the number of completed research instruments obtained for the two groups of respondents. Further analysis revealed that 272 respondents (50.2%) were from the Federal-owned institutions. On the other hand, 270 participants (49.8%) were drawn from state-owned tertiary educational institutions. This analysis is presented in *Table 1* below.

Table 1 Analysis of Questionnaire Response

Institutional Type	Copies of Questionnaire Administered	Copies of Questionnaire Recovered			Mean	Standard Deviation	T-test Statistics
		Federal Institutions	State Institutions	Total			
University Libraries	300	135(22.5)	137(22.8)	272(45.3)	1.36	1.414	
Polytechnic Libraries	300	137(22.8)	133(22.2)	270(45.0)	1.35	2.828	0.333 ^{NSD}
Grand Total	600	272(45.3)	270(45)	542(90.3)			

Note: Values in parenthesis are percentage representation of the responses of the respondents. NSD = Not Significantly Different.

A careful examination of the information obtained from visitors' log book/users' register in the Serials Department (Section/Unit) of the respondent academic libraries shows that the major users of journals in the university libraries studied are lecturers, postgraduate research scholars and final year students writing their bachelors degree projects. This is not significant different from the situation in the participating polytechnic libraries where the major users of their journal collection were lecturers, instructors and final year Higher National Diploma (HND) Students.

The pedigree of the major users of journals indentified in the libraries surveyed is quite instructive as it has direct bearing on the first hypothesis of this study. As a vehicle for scholarly and professional information, journals are patronized by

scientists and other experts who desire to keep abreast of recent developments in their respective professional activities. There is no doubt that these factors account for the use of journals by researchers (Nwogu, Anunobi & Okoroafor (2003).

It is, therefore, clear from the result of this study that journals are information sources used by persons that have attained an appreciable level of literacy. Considering the similarity in the distribution of users of the two sets of academic libraries covered in the study, it is evident that H_{01} which states that “there is no significant different between the composition of major users of journals in university and polytechnic libraries” is accepted. This study strongly buttresses the position of earlier reports that the major user of journals in Nigerian academic libraries are faculty members, postgraduate scholars and graduating students (Alemna, Chifwepa & Roseberg, 2000; Edom, 2006 and Edoaka & Ugwuanyi, 2006).

Table 2 Reasons for Using Journals in University and Polytechnic Libraries (N=542)

Reasons	University Libraries (N=272)			Polytechnic Libraries (N = 270)		
	A/SA	D/SD	Mean	A/SA	D/SD	Mean
To acquire general knowledge	40(14.7)	232(85.3)	1.15	221(81.9)	49(18.1)	1.82*
To do various academic assignments	221(81.3)	51(18.8)	1.81*	182(67.4)	88(32.6)	1.67*
To know new development	235(86.4)	37(13.6)	1.86*	80(29.6)	190(70.4)	1.30
To do research/write papers	210(77.2)	62(22.8)	1.77*	70(25.9)	200(74.1)	1.26
To verify facts/information	185(68.0)	87(32.0)	1.68*	77(28.5)	193(71.5)	1.29
To cross-check references & citations	168(61.8)	104(38.2)	1.62*	81(30.0)	189(70.0)	1.30
To read for leisure/relaxation	81(29.8)	191(70.2)	1.30	78(28.9)	192(71.1)	1.29
Overall mean of responses			1.52			1.42
Bench-mark mean of response			1.50			1.50
t-test statistic			0.637 ^{NSD}			

Note: Values in parenthesis are percentage representation of the responses of the participants. Asterisk (*) implies acceptance of the reasons for using journals in university or polytechnic libraries. The benchmark mean of responses of 1.5 was derived as the average of the weight of responses of the participants where A/SA = 2 and D/SD = 1. (i.e. the average of 2+1=1.5). NSD = Not Significantly Different.

As shown on *Table 2* above, the mean score from university libraries in respect of ‘to do various academic assignments’ = 1.81; ‘to know new developments’ = 1.86; ‘to do research/write papers’ = 1.77; ‘to verify facts/information’ = 1.68; ‘to cross-check reference/citations’ = 1.62 are above the benchmark so accepted as the reason for journal use in university libraries. On the other hand, there were high mean scores from polytechnic libraries regarding ‘to acquire general knowledge’ = 1.82 and ‘do various academic assignments’ = 1.67. These scores are accepted because they are above the average mean score from our benchmark. The findings of this study suggest that journals are used for more serious academic and research purposes in university libraries than is the case in polytechnic libraries in Nigeria. This inference is based on the statistical difference in the overall mean rating between universities (1.52) and polytechnic libraries (1.42). It is therefore on this basis that H_{02} which states that ‘there is no significant difference between university and polytechnic libraries in terms of reason for journal use’ is rejected. This conclusion is based on the fact that more respondents from university libraries showed various levels of agreement with the reasons adduced for journal use in the questionnaire as analyzed in *Table 2*.

Moreover, conduct of scholarly researches and publishing of academic papers are more pronounced in universities which are traditionally expected to produce higher

level manpower and ground-breaking research results. This is unlike the polytechnics in Nigeria, whose original mandate to produce intermediate or middle-level manpower may not predispose their academic staff and researchers to engage in rigorous researches that could demand extensive use of journals. It is not therefore surprising that most of the respondents from the university libraries studied cited the need to verify facts/information, conduct researches for publication and cross-check references as the driving force behind their dependence on journals. This clarification is in line with the submission of Folade and Akerele (2009) that most scholars use journals to satisfy various information needs.

Whereas the overall mean responses in *Table 2* shows that there is a difference between university and polytechnic libraries in terms of reasons for journal use, it is equally instructive to note that most respondents do not read journals for the purpose of relaxation. This supports the earlier submission that journals are read by serious-minded researchers to keep abreast of current trends in their various professional, vocational and career assignments.

Table 3 Types of Journals Used in University and Polytechnic Libraries (N=542)

Types of Journals	University libraries (N=272)			Polytechnic Libraries (N=270)		
	A/SA	D/SD	Mean	A/SA	D/SD	Mean
Core/primary journals	179(65.8)	93(34.2)	1.66*	90(33.3)	180(66.7)	1.33
Secondary journals	108(39.7)	164(60.3)	1.40	120(44.4)	150(55.6)	1.44
Professional journals	161(59.2)	111(40.8)	1.59*	113(41.9)	157(58.1)	1.42
Academic/peer-review journals	185(68)	87(32)	1.68*	72(26.7)	198(73.3)	1.27
Multi-disciplinary journals	101(37.1)	171(62.9)	1.37	160(59.3)	110(40.7)	1.59*
Electronic journals	56(20.6)	216(79.4)	1.21	51(18.9)	219(81.1)	1.19
Trade journals	54(19.9)	218(80.1)	1.20	56(57.8)	114(42.2)	1.58*
Overall mean of responses			1.34			1.40
Bench-mark mean of responses			1.50			1.50
t-test statistic			-0.419 ^{NSD}			

Note: Values in parenthesis are percentage representation of the responses of the participants. Asterisk (*) implies acceptance of types of journals used in university and polytechnic libraries. The benchmark mean of responses of 1.5 was derived as the average of the weight of responses of the participants where A/SA = 2 and D/SD = 1. (i.e. the average of 2+1 = 1.5). NSD = Not Significantly Different.

Table 3 presents analysis of the type of journals used. As shown in the table, the mean score for 'core/primary journals' used in university libraries is 1.66, 'professional journal' (1.59); 'academic/peer-review journals' (1.68) are higher than the benchmark mean set for this study. For polytechnic libraries, the following mean scores are applicable based on the benchmark: 'multi-disciplinary journals' (1.59) and 'trade journals' (1.58). The distribution of major journal used in the two (2) sets of academic libraries covered in the study is instructive. It is evident that the mean scores for the use of core/primary journals, professional journals and academic/peer-review journal were quite high amongst respondents from university libraries compared to that of polytechnic libraries. This underlines the level of importance attached to these types of journals in these institutions.

Besides, the types of journals used by the university-based respondents tend to be more academic than the ones use by their counterparts in polytechnic libraries. This can be seen in the fact that whereas majority of the respondents from polytechnic libraries read trade journals, (which are mostly promotional publications), an

overwhelming majority of respondents from Nigerian universities did not find trade journals attractive. One of the significant outcomes of this study is that it has exposed the difference in the types of journals used in university and polytechnic libraries in the country. This is evident in the divergence in mean scores of the journals used in these academic libraries. It is in the light of the foregoing that H_3 is rejected. The plausible explanation for the low use of electronic journals in Nigerian academic libraries is their unavailability or scarcity arising from near absence of information technologies and other components of automation (Nnadozie, 2006).

Table 4 Factors that Determine Journal Use in University and Polytechnic Libraries (N=542)

Factors	University Libraries (N=272)			Polytechnic Libraries (N = 270)		
	A/SA	D/SD	Mean	A/SA	D/SD	Mean
Currency	205(75.4)	67(24.6)	1.75*	171(63.3)	99(36.7)	1.63*
Regularity	201(73.9)	71(26.1)	1.74*	162(60.)	108(40)	1.60*
Content/subject coverage	203(74.6)	69(25.4)	1.75*	57(21.1)	213(78.9)	1.21
Factual accuracy	198(72.8)	74(27.2)	1.73*	168(62.2)	102(37.8)	1.62*
Editors' qualification/reputation	201(73.9)	71(26.1)	1.74*	50(18.5)	220(81.5)	1.19
Publisher's (promoter's) credibility/tract record	199(73.2)	73(26.8)	1.73*	55(20.4)	215(79.6)	1.20
Overall mean of responses			1.74*			1.41
Bench-mark mean of response			1.50			1.50
t-test statistic			3.555**			

Note: Values in parenthesis are percentage representation of the responses of the participants. Asterisk (*) implies acceptance of factors that determine journal use in university or polytechnic libraries. The benchmark mean of responses of 1.5 was derived as the average of the weight of responses of the participants where A/SA = 2 and D/SD = 1 (i.e. the average of $2+1=1.5$). **=significantly different at 5% probability level.

Table 4 highlights the factors that determine journal usage in Nigerian academic libraries. A closer examination of these factors reveals the points at which users of the country's university and polytechnic libraries differ in terms of their motivations for using these information sources. Based on the criterion mean set for this study as shown in the table under reference, it can be deduced that users of journals in university libraries are more discerning in their choice of these information materials. This submission arose because, on closer scrutiny, it is clear that most users of journals in Nigeria university libraries are influenced by such factors as currency of the journal, frequency of its publication, content or subject coverage, accuracy of its information content, qualification and reputation of the editors, as well as the credibility of the promoters or publishers. This is slightly different from situation in polytechnic libraries where majority of the patrons place much emphasis on just three of these factors namely: currency, regularity and factual accuracy. These disparities, as can be inferred from the choice of factors by respondents, are responsible for the significant difference in the mean rating of the two sets of academic libraries as presented in *Table 4*. This difference recommends a rejection of H_4 .

This study confirms earlier reports that journal use is largely determined by factors such as up-to-datedness, reputation of contributors/authors, frequency of publication, timeliness and quality of research findings (Fayose, 1985; Olanlokun & Salisu, 1985 and Igbokwe, 2006). Equally noteworthy is the fact that the journal user in the polytechnic library is more likely to disregard the subject coverage of a journal, editors' qualification and the credibility of promoters. This provides the explanation

for the situation in which most users of journals in Nigeria polytechnics patronize multi-disciplinary journals as shown earlier in *Table 3*.

Table 5 Medium of Accessing Journals in University and Polytechnic Libraries (N0=542)

Medium of Access	University Libraries (N=272)			Polytechnic Libraries (N= 270)		
	A/SA	D/SD	Mean	A/SA	D/SD	Mean
Library staff	69(25.4)	203(74.6)	1.25	198(73.3)	72(26.7)	1.73*
Index cards	210(77.2)	62(22.8)	1.77*	181(67)	89(33)	1.67*
Publishers' catalogue	42(15.4)	230(84.6)	1.15	36(13.3)	234(86.7)	1.13
Accessions list	38(14)	234(86)	1.14	48(17.8)	222(82.2)	1.18
Abstracts/indexing journals	198(72.8)	74(27.8)	1.73*	51(18.9)	219(81.1)	1.19
Electronic databases	51(18.8)	221(81.2)	1.19	43(15.9)	227(84.1)	1.16
Bibliography	161(59.2)	111(40.8)	1.59*	47(17.4)	223(82.6)	1.17
Serendipity	54(19.9)	218(80.1)	1.20	197(73)	73(27)	1.73*
Overall mean of responses			1.38			1.37
Bench-mark mean of response			1.50			1.50
t-test statistic			0.056 ^{NSD}			

Note: Values in parenthesis are percentage representation of the responses of the participants. Asterisk (*) implies acceptance of the medium of accessing journals in university or polytechnic libraries. The benchmark mean of responses of 1.5 was derived as the average of the weight of responses of the participants where A/SA = 2 and D/SD =1. (i.e. the average of 2+1=1.5). NSD = Not Significantly Different.

The channels through which journals are accessed in Nigerian university and polytechnic libraries are analyzed in *Table 5*. It is apparent that users in these two sets of libraries deploy different avenues and search strategies to access journals although there is a point of convergence in respect of use of index cards as an access point. For instance, while respondents from university libraries rely on abstracting/indexing journals and bibliographies to retrieve needed journals, their counterparts from the polytechnic libraries access these materials mostly through library staff. This conclusion is based on the fact that the mean score for these items are higher than the criterion set for the study. The use of serendipity (i.e. discovery by chance) as a search strategy by majority of respondents from polytechnic libraries calls to question, the quality of library instruction provided to users of these academic libraries.

It can further be inferred from the analysis in *Table 5* that most users of university and polytechnic libraries do not access or retrieve needed journal titles through any of library catalogue, accessions lists or electronic databases. This reinforces the concluding statement of the preceding paragraph that academic libraries in Nigeria may not have provided the quality and variety of user education to their patrons. The low use of electronic databases as an access point reinforce the earlier submission that electronic journals are not yet popular in the country's academic libraries. A comparison of the overall mean responses in *Table 5* upholds H_0 of this study which states that 'there is no significant difference between the medium for accessing journals in university and polytechnic libraries'. This implies that users of journals in Nigerian academic libraries share a certain relationship in terms of the channels employed to access these information materials in their respective institutional libraries.

Table 6 Problems Encountered in Use of Journals in University and Polytechnic Libraries (N=542)

Problems	University Libraries (N=272)			Polytechnic Libraries (N = 270)		
	A/SA	D/SD	Mean	A/SA	D/SD	Mean
Unavailability of current issues	101(37.1)	171(62.9)	1.37	183(67.8)	87(32.2)	1.68*
Mutilation of available copies	83(30.5)	189(69.5)	1.31	172(63.7)	98(36.3)	1.64*
Irrelevance of available copies to the need of users	56(20.6)	216(79.4)	1.21	186(68.9)	84(31.1)	1.69*
Lack of access tools	121(44.5)	151(55.5)	1.41	197(73)	73(27)	1.73*
Shortage of staff	157(57.7)	115(42.3)	1.84*	210(77.8)	60(22.2)	1.78*
Improper shelving/mis-shelving	86(31.6)	186(68.4)	1.32	201(74.4)	69(25.6)	1.74*
Overall mean of responses			1.13			1.50
Bench-mark mean of response			1.50			1.50
t-test statistic			- 4.545***			

Note: Values in parenthesis are percentage representation of the responses of the participants. Asterisk (*) implies acceptance of the problems encountered in use of journals in university and polytechnic libraries. The benchmark mean of responses of 1.5 was derived as the average of the weight of responses of the participants where A/SA =2 and D/DS=1. (i.e. The average of 2+1=1.5). *** = Significantly different at 5% level.

Table 6 highlights the problems encountered by users of journals in university and polytechnic libraries in Nigeria. Although respondents from university libraries agreed that “shortage of staff” constitutes a challenge in the use of journals, they disagreed with the other problem items as shown in the table. As a result, all the mean scores for the university libraries are below the benchmark of 1.5 except that for “shortage of staff”. This finding is curious and contradictory of earlier reports which point out that the collections of libraries in Nigeria re populated by out-dated and mutilated materials, lacks functional retrieval devices and do not benefit from regular shelving (Igbeka & Atinmo, 2001; Gbadmosi, 2005 and Nnadozie, 2006). On the other hand, respondents from the polytechnic libraries exhibited overwhelming concurrence with all the problems identifies in this survey. As such, the mean average was above the stipulated benchmark. This study, to a large extent, reinforces the challenges associated with use of journals in Nigeria academic libraries as shown in earlier published researches (Oliobi, 1982; Igbinoba, 1988; Akinbode, 1998; Edom, 2006). Based on the mean scores from the two sets of libraries studied as shown in *Table 6*, it can be concluded that H_{06} of this study is rejected. This is because the overall mean of responses to problems associated with journal use differs significantly between university and polytechnic libraries.

7. CONCLUSION AND RECOMMENDATION

It is evident from this investigation that journals are used in varying degrees in university and polytechnic libraries in Nigeria. This extensive usage is driven, in the main, by the need to do various academic assignments and write research papers - either for certification or publication. This largely, underscores the level of importance attached to these primary sources of information in the academic libraries covered in this survey. The types of journals used differ between university libraries and their polytechnic counterparts in Nigeria. This is equally true of the determinants of such use. Although the medium of access to journals differ significant in these academic libraries, there is no ignoring the series of challenges encountered in the use of these carriers of recent research findings. Prominent amongst the inhibiting factors identified are shortage of staff, improper shelving and irrelevance of available copies

of journals to the needs of users. The under-listed recommendations are borne out of the findings and conclusions of this study.

1. Academic libraries in Nigeria should acquire current journals relevant to the subject coverage and research interest of their parent institutions. These materials should be processed promptly and their availability brought to the attention of users through various Current Awareness Services (CASs).
2. Efforts should be made to ensure that libraries in Nigerian universities and polytechnics subscribe to journals that are issued (published) regularly, have factual accuracy and edited by seasoned scholars. In addition, such journals should be promoted by credible academic departments in institutions of higher learning.
3. Libraries in Nigeria's tertiary educational institutions, especially universities and polytechnics, should automate their operations. This will not only increase readers' access to journals within these academic libraries, but, more importantly, improve the quality of services, as well as the webometric ranking of these educational institutions.
4. Managers of academic libraries in Nigeria should provide their clientele with basic tools for retrieval of the journals in their collection. This suggestion is made against the backdrop that majority of the respondents from the polytechnic libraries relied on library staff and the use of serendipitous methods (trial-by-error, coincidence, luck, etc) as methods of accessing these materials.
5. Adequate number of various cadres of staff should be employed in Nigeria's university and polytechnic libraries. The positive multiplier effect of this includes proper management of the entire collection (including journals) and reduction in the incidences of loss and improper shelving of these special materials.

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