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**ORGANIZATION AND USE OF NEWSPAPERS IN TWO NIGERIAN PRIVATE
UNIVERSITY LIBRARIES**

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ABSTRACT

This study seeks to investigate the methods of organizing newspaper as well as its uses in Redeemer's University (RUN) and Babcock University (BU) Libraries. The study also seeks to find-out reasons why the users of the selected libraries are making use of the Newspapers and to what extent are their needs been met. The study adopts the use of Survey method. The sampling technique used in this research was random sampling. 20% of the selected libraries' sitting capacity (Main & Serials Units) was used for this research, giving a total number of 170 i.e. 96 and 74 that cut across Colleges in Redeemer's University and Babcock University respectively.

Newspaper indexing and bounding are the common methods used in the selected libraries. Entertainment and Education information are kinds of common information sought by the students in RUN and Babcock. Furthermore, this study reveals that male students are more interested in Sport information than their female counterparts, whereas female students prefer Entertainment information than male students. The study find-outs that there is no significant difference in methods used in organizing newspapers and their uses by students among the selected private university libraries.

Keywords: Academic Libraries, Information Accessibility, Information Needs, Information Satisfaction, Newspaper Indexing, User's Satisfaction.

Introduction

Information is highly important and useful to all and sundry. Everybody needs information at a point in time or the other. Old and young, male and female, literate and illiterate all have information needs. Newspapers, the serial publications which contain news on current events of special

or general interest, are generally believed to be vital sources of information.

The functions perform by newspapers cannot be over-emphasized in any society in general and in academic institution in particular. Sambe (2006) listed the functions of newspapers to include the following:

(a) to inform readers objectively about what is happening in the community, country and the world. (b) to comment on the news in order to bring development into focus. (c) to campaign for desirable civil projects and to help eliminate undesirable conditions. (d) to give readers a portion of entertainment through such devices as comic strips, cartoons, and special features. (e) to serve readers as a friendly counsellor bureau and champion of their rights.

Daramola (2003) observed that “Newspapers provide a wider variety of news and information than the other media, and they present far more details than radio and television”. Daramola tried to articulate the advantage of newspaper over any other media with regards to its scope of coverage.

A critical examination of functions of newspapers as enumerated by Sambe (2006) and advantage of newspaper by Daramola (2003) both indicate the usefulness of newspapers. Of a truth, newspaper is a valuable information resource worthy of acquiring for the use of patrons in our libraries especially academic libraries. It is important for academic libraries to acquire various newspapers that can best serve their users,

organize them in such a way to enable users gain quick access to them especially the back issues.

The budget that goes for the management of newspapers in an average library is very minimal yet newspaper plays a great role of meeting information needs of different group of users, the back issues notwithstanding. The effectiveness in the usage of newspapers depends on the efficiency of serials management in any library. Libraries encounter several problems in managing newspapers. Librarians are confronted with the problems of handling the papers because of their fragility; preserving them because of their information contents, and housing them because of lack of space and the rapid rate at which they are churned out. Various methods are therefore employed by different libraries for managing newspapers collection. (Ola and Ojo, 2006).

Besides, when a library is even able to overcome some problems of acquisition especially with regard to high cost or budget that goes into the acquisition of serials, problem of how to organize it may still surface. The system of storage and retrieval increases the incidence of destroying and or tearing the

newspapers most especially when tying and untying the papers on several occasions for libraries who adopted method of tying issues procured together with a twain on monthly basis and keeping them in closed access.

Therefore, for newspapers to serve and meet information needs of the users, libraries, most especially academic libraries have some great roles to play in its organization and preservation.

Purpose of the Study

This study seeks to investigate methods of organizing newspapers as well as its uses in two selected private University Libraries. Various methods for cataloguing, classifying and preserving newspapers for easy retrieval in the two selected Private University Libraries will be considered. The study will also seek to find-out what information needs of the users of the selected libraries are, reasons why they make use of the newspapers and to what extent are those needs been met.

The way and manner by which newspapers are being organized will to a large extent be affected by the

users of the selected libraries. When a library organizes her materials in such a way that they can be accessed and the needed information is being retrieved by the user, then such library can be regarded as being successful. This study will at the end of the day reveal short comings in newspapers' organization and the result of the finding will be used to suggest better ways, techniques or methods to employ in organizing newspapers in our libraries.

Objectives of the Study

1. Examine the methods of organizing and managing newspapers in the selected libraries.
2. Assess the uses of newspapers by the patrons in the selected libraries.
3. Find out if the subscribed newspapers are meeting the information needs of the users of Redeemer's University and Babcock University Libraries.
4. Find out to what extent are the information needs of the users in the selected libraries been satisfied.

Research Questions

1. What methods are used to organize newspapers for easy accessibility and retrieval on the part of the users?
2. For what purpose (s) do patrons use newspapers in the selected libraries?
3. Do the subscribed newspapers meet the information needs of the users?
4. To what extent are the information needs of the users been satisfied?

Scope of the Study

This study is limited in scope to randomly select students of the two selected universities' libraries. The two university' libraries are drawn from Nigerian Private Universities. Students are selected across departments and levels in both Redeemer's University and Babcock University Libraries.

Review of Related Literature

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 are a rich source of information due to the sheer enormity of information they contain and the frequency of their production. (Ola and Ojo, 2006, p. 197).

Newspapers cover virtually everything. The most current analysis and criticism of religion, politics, economics, health, sports, psychological and emotional issues and even music are covered by newspapers. News is written as a way of disseminating information to a large group of people. Reporters and editors are usually conscious of the language they use in news reportage to attract wide readership. According to Nakiganda (2007) Newspapers are still the most iconic outlet for news and other types of written communication. Newspapers record, print and publish stories of events that are of importance to the society at any given time. They are authoritative and

credible records of the significant issues and events as and when they occurred.

In other words, it is a statement of truth that newspapers provide up-to-date information on issues be it local, state, national, or world issues. They are available and accessible to the vast majority of people of all ages and walks of life in any society. This implies that every category of reader can find some important, current, and interesting information in newspapers. Nwalo (2003) posited "In academic, research and ministry libraries, the need for a good newspaper index is very pressing. Users of these libraries constantly refer to newspaper back files and often do so hurriedly. If the user is unable to reach an important newspaper article in preparation for a seminar, for example, the desired information may serve no useful purpose if provided after the seminar." Inability of any library to serve her users effectively and efficiently with the needed information makes such users not only to lose confidence in the service rendered by library but also to lose interest in patronizing the library. It is paramount, therefore, that librarians do their best by engaging in

preparation of good newspaper indexes.

Having known how valuable newspaper is as provider of latest information, careful attention needs to be paid in its organization and even preservation in order to create quickest and easiest access for its users. No wonder, Anunobi et al (2002) observed "Many university libraries tend to solve such problems (problem of sourcing information from back issues of newspapers) through the production of an in housed index to the newspapers in their libraries. In most cases, such indexes are not comprehensive but are helpful".

Handling back issues of newspapers calls for caution because of their fragility. Ola and Ojo (2006) noted that "newspapers are shown to be a veritable resource in any library. Although they are ephemeral and easily destroyable, they constitute a vital information resource. The perishable nature of newspapers makes them fragile and delicate. They pose a lot of challenges to libraries. Librarians and archivists have taken keen interest in managing this very important medium of information. The need to preserve and/or conserve them so as to make the contents accessible to users has preoccupied researchers." Newspaper indexing is

essential for all libraries that store newspapers for use. Without a good newspaper index, library users will spend too much time hopelessly in search for the volumes of newspaper back files. While a few may be lucky to stumble on the desired information, many more will leave the newspaper room dissatisfied. (Nwalo, 2003).

Odogwu (2006) pointed out that binding and digitization are methods used to preserve newspapers in the National Library of Nigeria. According to him, the bound newspapers are kept in the newspaper room. The room is normally fumigated twice a year to prevent insects, rodents and pests attack. (P.4). People hold divergent views on what is and what is not important when selecting items for inclusion in a newspaper index. Alegbeleye (1984) made some recommendations as regards type of information to be considered while preparing newspaper index because of their universality of appeal.

The following types of information contained in newspapers are usually indexed in Nigerian libraries:

1. all good features articles;
2. all editorials
3. all news about the community or parent institution of the library;
4. substantive information about national and local sports competitions involving the state where the library is located;
5. all national or state events relating to the area where the library is located;
6. all international sports competitions involving Nigeria;
7. stories of substantive nature dealing with education, technology, business, politics, agriculture, journalism, libraries, librarianship; religion, economics, culture and disasters such as flood and drought;
8. all broadcasts and important speeches by the federal and the parent state and local government chief executives.
9. all jobs advertisements in the fields of technology, business, education, journalism, librarianship, general administration and other fields relating to perceived users interest;
10. all information about admission to higher institutions of learning in Nigeria; and
11. information on tourism.

Methodology

This study adopts the use of Survey method. The population of the study consists of students of Redeemer's University and Babcock University Libraries. The sampling technique used in this research was random sampling. Redeemer's University Library (Circulation & Serials sections of the library) has a total number of 478 sitting capacity, while Babcock University Library (Main & Serials sections of the library) has a total number of 368 sitting capacity. 20% of the selected libraries' sitting capacity was used for this research, giving a total number of 96 and 74 respectively that cut across Colleges of Humanities, Management Sciences and Natural Sciences in Redeemer's University (RUN), and Schools of Education & Humanities, Management/Social Sciences and Science & Technology in Babcock University (BU). Questionnaire was also administered to only one librarian in each of the selected libraries.

Data for this study was collected through the use of questionnaire. The researcher was able to receive 90 and 70 responses back from Redeemer's University and Babcock University respectively making a total number of 160 altogether. It was these 160 responses that were analyzed.

Data Analysis and Discussion

The findings of the study are presented in the same manner the research questions are raised, which include the following:

What methods are used to organize newspapers for easy accessibility and retrieval on the part of the users? For what purpose (s) do patrons use newspapers in the selected libraries? Do the subscribed newspapers meet the information needs of the users? To what extent are the information needs of the users been satisfied?

Research Question 1. What methods are used to organize newspapers for easy accessibility on the part of the users?

Table 1.1 Methods used in organizing Newspaper

Methods used in Organizing Newspapers	Respondent's Institutions	
	RUN	Babcock
Newspaper indexing	✓	✓
Clippings/Newspaper Cutting		
The use of vertical file		
Bounding of back issues	✓	✓
Tying together of newspaper	✓	
Other (If any, state them please)		

Table 1.2 Items Popularly Indexed in Newspaper

Items Popularly Indexed	Respondent's Institutions	
	RUN	Babcock
All relevant articles		✓
All editorials		
Relevant events	✓	
Relevant stories		

Table 1.3 Newspapers Stamping

Newspapers stamping	Respondent's Institutions	
	RUN	Babcock
Every page of the paper	✓	
every odd page of the paper		
every even page of the paper		
Certain pages agreed upon		✓
just the front page only		
the front and back pages		

The methods employed in organizing newspapers in the selected libraries are alike. Table 1.1 above shows that the selected libraries use newspaper indexing and bounding of back issues to catalogue and classify their newspapers. In addition, RUN also tie back issues together. This method is not peculiar to Babcock. At

Redeemer's University, all relevant events are indexed whereas Babcock University indexed all relevant articles as shown in Table 1.2 above. The researcher finds out that Redeemer's University stamps every page of her newspapers while Babcock stamps certain pages of the newspapers

that have been agreed upon as presented in Table 1.3 above.

Research Question 2. For what purpose-(s) do patrons use newspapers in the selected libraries?

Table 2.1 Information sought by Respondent- Cross-tabulation

Information sought by respondent	Respondent's Institutions		Total Percentage	
	RUN	Babcock		
Education information	59	55	114	15.1%
Political information	51	37	88	11.7%
Sports	45	26	71	9.4%
Business information	32	39	71	9.4%
Employment information	22	28	50	6.6%
Health information	40	44	84	11.1%
National/International issues	43	34	77	10.2%
Spiritual/Religious issues	24	25	49	6.5%
Entertainment/Art/Literary/ Cartoon/Editorial Opinion	70	48	118	15.6%
Real Estate/Cultural/Security/obituary	17	7	24	3.2%
Other	6	3	9	1.2%
Total	409	346	755	100.0%

Table 2.1 above, shows specific information sought in newspapers by students in the selected libraries. It also indicates the figure of students who sought after each type of information in both Redeemer's University and Babcock

University. The information with highest population of students in Redeemer's University is Entertainment/Art/Literary/ Cartoons/Editorial Opinion. 70 students indicate interest for it. This suggests that many users in Redeemer's University read

newspaper for relaxation and leisure. Education information has the highest number of users in Babcock University with 55 students, meaning majority of users in Babcock read newspapers for academic purpose. Looking at the two institutions together 118 students which is 15.6% of the total population of this study indicated their interest for entertainment thereby making entertainment the most information sought by students in Academic Libraries. This study also

reveals that the most information sought by male students in the selected libraries are Sports and Education. From Table 2.2 below, it is clearly shown that male students like sports than their female counterparts. 71 students indicated their interest in sports out of which 53 were male and 18 female. Of all information, from this study, Entertainment is the most information sought by female students. 68 female students indicated their interest in it.

Table 2.2 Information sought by Respondent Gender- Cross-tabulation

Information sought by respondent	Gender distribution		Total
	Male	Female	
Education information	53	61	114
Political information	49	39	88
Sports	53	18	71
Business information	33	38	71
Employment information	23	27	50
Health information	34	50	84
National/International issues	44	33	77
Spiritual/Religious issues	23	26	49
Entertainment/Art/Literary/Cartoon/Editorial Opinion	50	68	118
Real Estate/Cultural/Security/obituary	13	11	24
Other	6	3	9

Total	381	374	755
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Research Question 3: Do the subscribed newspapers meet the information needs of the users?

Table 3. Respondent’s satisfaction with information in newspaper.

Respondent’s satisfaction with information in Newspapers	Respondent’s Institutions		Total Percentage	
	RUN	Babcock		
Yes	63	52	115	71.9%
No	21	14	35	21.9%
Total	84	66	150	93.8%
No response	6	4	10	6.3%
Total (Over-run)	90	70	160	100.0%

It was found out that information needs of the students in Redeemer’s University and Babcock University were been met having consulted newspapers as recorded in Table 3 above. Out of 84 students that answered this question in Redeemer’s University, 63 responded that their information’ needs was met, 21 said no. 6 students did not respond either yes or no. Babcock University on the other hand, 52 students indicated the fact that their information

needs was met, 14 said no and 4 students neither said yes nor no. The table also indicates that 71.9% of the total number of respondents’ information needs was met by the newspapers they consulted. 6.3% did not indicate wither their information needs was met or not.

Research Question 4: To what extent are the information needs of the users been satisfied?

Table 4. Respondent’s extent of satisfaction with newspaper information.

Respondent’s satisfaction with information in Newspapers	Respondent’s Institutions		Total	Percentage
	RUN	Babcock		
Little extent	21	14	35	21.9%
Moderate extent	50	40	90	56.3%
Great extent	17	15	32	20.0%
Total	88	69	157	98.1%
No response	2	1	3	1.9%
Total (Over-run)	90	70	160	100.0%

From Table 4 above, it is clearly shown that information needs of both RUN and Babcock students were met to a moderate extent. 50 and 40 students from RUN and Babcock respectively said their information needs were moderately met. The percentage of this group of students was 56.3%. This was not bad, not at all.

Conclusion and Recommendation

It was found-out from this study that there is no significant difference in Methods used in organizing newspapers and their uses by students between Redeemer’s University Library and Babcock University Library.

Having seen the outcome of this finding, I, therefore, make the following recommendations to libraries, library management and administration:

- i. Stamping of every page of newspaper is highly necessary. Librarians should endeavour to stamp every page of their library’s newspapers so as to guard against theft. Stamping only agreed pages of newspaper is not the best as the user who finds a particular page useful might be tempted to tear and go away with it if such page is not stamped.
- ii. Libraries should improve their newspaper indexing and also make use of clipping i.e cutting of useful articles

from newspapers and keeping them in vertical file for the purpose of meeting users' need.

- iii. Libraries should do everything possible to safeguard their dailies. Records should be properly kept on each issue received.
- iv. Library administrators should see to it that budget allocated for the purchase and management of newspapers is raised a little bit up. This will allow the library to acquire as many needed and relevant newspapers as possible. It will also go a long way in getting the best equipments needed to preserve the newspaper at least to serve users longer.

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