

## Serial Materials Use by Accounting Students of Rufus Giwa Polytechnic Owo, Nigeria

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### Abstract

*The training of accounting students is adjudged to be critical for national development as they become accountants who analyze and interpret financial data for national and organizational plans. Serials contain current best practices that students need to achieve academic excellence in their chosen fields of study. This paper therefore assesses the extent of serial materials usage by accounting students of Rufus Giwa Polytechnic Owo, Nigeria. The study used descriptive survey design. Data was collected through the use of structured questionnaire. The population of the study is made up of 100 accounting students who are registered users of the library. Data obtained were analyzed using simple percentages and presented in tables and charts. The results show that accounting students occasionally visit the Serials section for the purposes of doing assignments and research activities. The most consulted serial materials were the academic journals and the newspapers. Lack of currency of the available serials was a major problem encountered by the accounting students in their usage of serials. Based on the findings, it was recommended that the library management carry out a weeding exercise in the Serials Section and source for new serials through gifts and donations as well as renew the subscriptions of different titles.*

**Keywords:** Serial materials, Library usage, Rufus Giwa Polytechnic.

### Introduction

Serial materials have over the year served as very significant sources of information for people around the world most especially those in the academic environment. Baduru (2012) noted that undergraduates, postgraduates, lecturers, researchers and individuals use serials to gain access to up-to-date information on various issues. Serials are described as publications that are printed in any medium issued under the same title in a succession of separate parts usually numbered (or dated) and appearing either at regular or irregular intervals with no predetermined conclusion (Reitz, 2004). According to Nwalo (2003), serials are publications issued in successive parts, at a regular or irregular interval and intended to be continued indefinitely. The stipulated interval may be annually, bi-annually, quarterly, monthly, forth-nightly, or weekly depending on the decision of the editorial board. Serial publications are journals, magazines, newspapers, newsletters, indexes, abstracts, annual reports, proceedings, and transactions of societies, monographic series, almanacs and yearbooks, directories, among others.

The library, which is regarded as an essential part of the educational environment and process supports the teaching, learning and research programmes of its parent institution. To effectively achieve this responsibility, it is expected according to Ogunniyi, Akerele and Afolabi (2011), to provide relevant and current journal titles in all the courses covered by its parent Body. These materials contain global scholarly communications which portray the research and current thinking in particular subject areas. Thus the relevance and uses of serial materials in academic environment can never be over-emphasized. This is one of the reasons why special and academic libraries devote much money to the acquisition and management of serial publications (Hameed and Osunriade, 2010). The Rufus Giwa Polytechnic Owo (RUGIPOLY)

library provides a conducive environment where its users could consult research journals in all fields of study as taught in the institution as well as newspapers such as The Punch, The Guardian, The Nation, Nigerian Tribune and Vanguard. The Polytechnic Bulletin, Tell magazine and Newswatch are also accessible to users of the library.

The Ondo State House of Assembly in 1979 passed a law establishing the State Polytechnic in Owo with the general goal of “training and producing high quality professionals and technical manpower required for the rapid economic and technological transformation of the State of Nigeria”. The name of the Polytechnic was changed from Ondo State Polytechnic Owo to Rufus Giwa Polytechnic by formal Governor of the State late Olusegun Agagu in 2006. Presently, the Polytechnic has six (6) faculties namely; Faculty of Agricultural Technology, Faculty of Business Studies, Faculty of Engineering Technology, Faculty of Environmental Studies, Faculty of Applied Sciences, Faculty of Social Sciences and Communication Studies and Faculty of Business Studies where the Accounting department is situated.

Amongst the programmes which the institution is running are: extra-mural classes, Foundation Class pre -ND, National Diploma (Part-Time), Higher National Diploma (Fulltime and Part-Time), Post-Graduate Diploma (Urban & Regional Planning), and professional programmes. The Polytechnic Library commenced its operation on 23 October, 1990 with opening stock of 2800 volumes of information materials. It was established to provide the necessary academic support to the institution. To achieve its objective, the Library had made provision of relevant

materials including serials and equipment towards the achievement of its major goals so that the advancement of qualitative education in the Polytechnic is easily and practically attained.

### **Objectives of the study**

The main objective is to assess the extent of serial materials usage by accounting students of Rufus Giwa Polytechnic Owo. Specifically, the objectives are;

1. To Know The Purpose Of Using Serial Materials In The Polytechnic Library By The Students;
2. To Identify The Most Consulted Serial Materials By The Accounting Students;
3. To Examine How Often The Students Use The Serial Materials;
4. To Find Out If The Students Are Satisfy With The Available Serial Materials In The Library; And
5. To Ascertain The Problems Faced In The Use Of Serial Materials By The Accounting Students.

### **Literature Review**

The training of accountants is quite crucial as they need to learn how to analyze and interpret financial data that helps executives of government, public, non-profit and private organisations to make decisions and plans as pertain to the proper allocation of resources. This is a key factor in the sustenance and growth of business enterprises and government work places. This makes the accounting officer critical in the management team of any organization. It is therefore understandable why the students of accounting need to have sufficient information during their training so that they could play their assigned roles in the development and growth of nations (College of Business, 2016).

According to Waikato University (2015), serials could be academic journals whereby they are written by experts and researchers in the academic and professional communities and have a target audience of those in the same field of study including students. These types of serials are normally expected to have in-depth articles with current information and statistics. On the other hand, popular and general interest serials may contain articles of lesser intensity and penetration on a wide range of topics, discussions of ideas and events meant for any one such as non-professional magazines and newspapers. Libraries collect both types of serials.

Ogunrombi (1997) stated that serial publications form the backbone of any academic library because of the nature and value of information they contain. It was noted by Fayose (1995) that periodicals are useful because they are the most up-to-date resources in the library with reliable and precise articles are written by experts in the field, reliable. A study conducted by Hameed and Osunrinade (2010) using 488 students of five Faculties of Ibadan Polytechnic show that 64.8% of the students prefer to use textbooks against 22.1 % who used journals, while 50.4% of those who use serial materials did so to carry out research and 24.8% used it for assignment/examination. In the case of Bamidele, Omeluzor and Amadi (2013), who worked on the perception of undergraduate students of Babcock University towards the utilization of journal articles for final year research (projects),

findings indicate that students make more use of past students' projects and textbooks compared to that of journals which is a serial material. A total of 78.7% of the respondents said they did not know how to use journals for their research. On preference to kind of information material that students use, Lee, Paik and Joo (2012) stressed that various factors such as search purposes, user preferences, characteristics of the sources, user knowledge, and information literacy among others greatly come to play in influencing the selection of information sources.

Hampton-Reeves, et al (2009) opinion was that perception and use of certain information resources relied on the user's awareness, packaging, presentation, ease of use, result oriented and of course the role of the tutors. Important journal articles are said to have passed through rigorous screening process described as blind peer review where independent experts provide the author(s) with critical commentary and suggestions to improve the article before it is published. More so, most of them are widely and easily accessible over the Internet. As one of the resources often utilized among library information resources, journals have continued to be the best resource for publishing of current research findings and the identification of best practices in various disciplines. Each journal article contains the best findings that can be replicated anywhere under normal circumstances (Bamidele, Omeluzor and Amadi, 2013). On the challenges faced in the developments and effective uses of the serial materials, a research carried out by Ogunniyi, Akerele, Afolabi (2011) revealed that majority of the academic staff were not using the serial materials because of lack of recent materials in their field of study. It was discovered that funding is one of the problems facing the availability of serial materials in Nigerian universities (Nasiru, 2012). As a way forward, Akinbode and Nwalo (2016) thereby suggested that the university authorities should provide adequate funds for the libraries to provide relevant, current and adequate serials, facilities and services in the libraries so as to be able to meet their users' needs.

### **Methods**

The study used descriptive survey design. The questionnaire was used as the instrument for data collection. A purposive sampling technique was adopted in the distribution of 100 copies of the questionnaire to the accounting students who are registered users of the Polytechnic library for the 2014/2015 academic session. The copies of the questionnaire were given to those who are using the Serials Section of the Polytechnic library. Two (2) research assistants were used in the administration of the questionnaire which was carried out over a period of 4 weeks. Ninety two (92) copies were returned and correctly filled by the respondents yielding 92% return rate. The data collected were analyzed using simple percentages and

presented in tables and charts.

## Results

The reasons why accounting students use the serials in the library are presented below in Table 1 and Figure 1 below.

Table 1: Purpose of using the Serial Materials

Purpose	Strongly Agree Frequency %	Agree Frequency %	Disagree Frequency %	Strongly Disagree No %
For research	36	39.136	39.104	4.3
Assignment	12	13.456	61.04	4.3
Teaching	12	13.444	47.808	8.7
Leisure	16	17.432	34.720	21.7
Current Affairs	24	27	21.716	17.08
Examination	24	27	42.808	2.1

Findings as represented on Table 1 above indicate that the accounting students used the serials materials for various purposes. Use of serials for research purposes ranked high as 39.1% mainly for research activities while the major reasons are to read about current affairs and for examination purposes. The students rarely used serials to augment the lectures given them or to write assignment.

Figure 2 below shows that the most consulted serial materials by the accounting students as revealed by 56.5% of the respondents is journals, followed by newspaper (21.7%). The least serials used as indicated by the accounting students are brochures and reports (4.3%).

Figure 2: Most Consulted Serial Materials

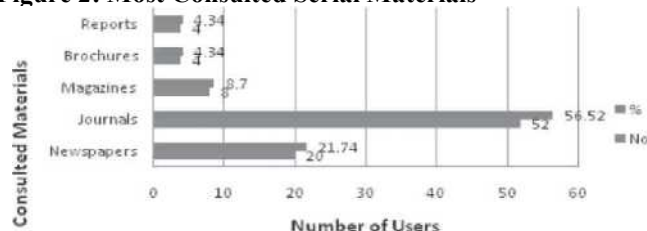
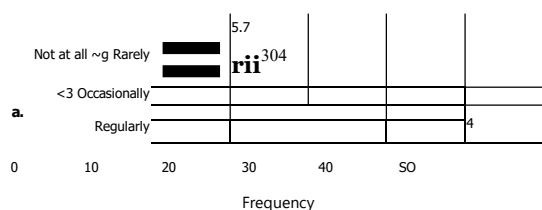


Figure 3 below reveals how often the accounting students use the serial materials. The respondents indicated that 43.4% of them use the serial materials occasionally, 34.7% respondents consult it regularly, while 13.4% rarely use the materials. The results revealed that majority of the accounting students of RUGIPOLY occasionally visit the Serials section of the polytechnic library to make use of the serial materials.

Figure 3: How often the Students use the Serial Materials

The level of user's satisfaction of the accounting students is presented in Figure 4 below. The results show that 30.4% of



the respondents expressed satisfaction, while 16.30% agreed that they were not satisfied with the serials available.

Figure 4: Level of Users Satisfaction

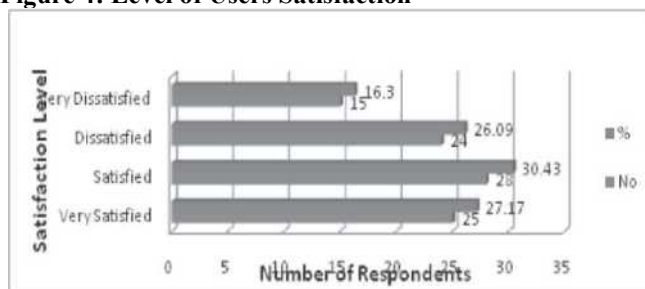


Table 5 below reveal the problems encountered by accounting students of RUGIPOLY while using serial materials in the library. While 52.1% of the respondents agreed that the general interest serials which draws many accounting students to the Serials Section arrive late at the reading desks, 65.2% disagreed that with the notion that difficulty in identifying the titles of the serials was a problem or that they faced difficulties in locating required serial materials (66.3%). However, the absence of recent serial materials was also considered an obstacle (26.8%).

Table 5: Problems faced in the Use of Serial Materials

Problems	Strongly Agree Frequency	Agree Frequency	Disagree Frequency	Strongly Disagree Frequency
Titles are too difficult to identify	8 (8.7%)	8 (8.7%)	60 (65.2%)	
Unfriendly attitudes of library staff	8 (8.7%)	24 (27%)	36 (39.3%)	4 (4.3%)
Delay in the arrival of Newspaper at the reading desk	12 (13.4%)	36 (39.1%)	24 (26.9%)	8 (8.7%)
Absence of recent serial materials	12 (13.4%)	12 (13.4%)	40 (43.5%)	12 (13.4%)
Difficulties in locating required materials	4 (4.3%)	16 (17.4%)	57 (63%)	4 (4.35%)

## Discussion

The findings show that the accounting students used the serials materials for various reasons, but mostly for research activities, during exams and to read about current affairs. This was not different from the findings of Hameed and Osunrinde (2010). Also this is the generally observable trend on use of libraries by students whereby it is only during the examinations and when they are writing their thesis that academic libraries are heavily used. Also most students would use the library outside of the examination period to read general interest serials such as newspapers and magazines.

The results indicated that from all the serials materials available in the Rufus Giwa Polytechnic Library, the accounting students made use of the journals more probably because they contain recent and up-to-date information needed for examinations and writing of theses. Moreover, journal articles do pass through rigorous screening known as blind peer review where critical comments and suggestions on reviewed article are provided by experts before they are

published thus making such articles authentic, correct and usable for examinations and writing of projects. This was different from the findings of Bamidele, Omeluzor and Amadi (2013) who discovered that students use more of past projects and textbooks compared to journals in the library of Ibadan Polytechnic, Nigeria.

The findings discovered that half of the accountings students of RUGIPOLY using the serial materials in the polytechnic library are satisfied with the serial materials available and access in the serial sessions. This could be due to the proper organization of the serials collections placed on the shelves for easy access and retrieval by the users. Results also show that identifying titles of the serial materials and locating the materials for use were not considered hindrances. However, it was identified that the major impediment that limits the accounting students users from using the serials section especially the general issue resources was the delay of arrival of newspapers at the reading desk of the Serials section. It was generally observed that sometimes, the delay could be as a result of the newspapers being supplied very late, or after the supply, the Serial Librarian may need to go through the newspapers for first hand information before they would be released and placed at the reading desk for the library users to consult. Absence of recent serial materials was another factor raised by the accounting students as pointed out by Ogunniyi, Akerele, Afolabi (2011) in their research as the reason why users were not using the serial materials in their chosen field of study.

### **Conclusion and Recommendations**

The Polytechnic library is established in an academic learning environment to support the vision, mission and laid down objectives of its parent body through provision of efficient and reliable library services to her users, specifically the students. This study thereby assessed the extent of serial usage by the accounting students of Rufus Giwa Polytechnic, Owo. It was revealed that serial materials are used mainly during the examination period and for research activities. Journals were the most consulted materials followed by the newspapers while most of the students occasionally visit the Serial Sections. The study discovered that delays in arrival of newspapers at the reading desk of the Serial Section as well as the absence of recent serial materials are regarded as the main problems in using serials in the library. It can thereby be deduced from the findings of the study that the serial materials of Rufus Giwa Polytechnic, Owo was under-utilized. Therefore, there is need for the library management to ensure that newspapers get to reading desk on time and recent journals be acquired. The Polytechnic library should embark on the promotion of their services to draw attention of students to the Section.

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