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AVAILABILITY OF LIBRARY AND INFORMATION SCIENCE JOURNALS AT THE UNIVERSITY OF ILORIN LIBRARY

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ABSTRACT

The necessity to publish or do research is a professional reality not only for faculty but librarians involved in higher education. The author consulted records and employed observation and interview to study Library and Information Science (LIS) journal collection at the University of Ilorin Library that are available to support research and publications of academic librarians. The study revealed that LIS journal collection in the library is adequate. Lack of interest and participation on the part of librarians in selecting LIS journals to support their professional development is a problem. The total number of LIS journals on subscription compared well with other subject disciplines. The study revealed that the library parades more foreign LIS journals than local ones. The implications of the findings to academic librarians are discussed.

Keywords: Academic Libraries, Collection Development, LIS journals, Nigeria.

1. INTRODUCTION

1.1 Background to the Study

The type of journals libraries subscribe to and have in stocks ascribe honour and respect to academics and researchers in the institutions where such libraries are established. This is more so because, the articles in journals are published more rapidly than books and constitute a vital flow of up-to-date information. They also frequently discuss in-depth, highly specialized topics and contain information, which may never appear in book form.

The extent, diversity, growth of the price, static and declining of library budgets was hindrance to the adequate availability of journals than the monograph. Journals are publications particularly issued by a society or institution containing substantial scholastic articles that are published in successive parts intended to continue indefinitely.

Generally speaking, the necessity to publish or do research is a professional reality not only for faculty but also librarians involved in higher education, and the primary vehicle for distributing scholarly work remains the journal article, hence, its

importance in research projects or activities of academics and availability in library collection.

1.2 Statement of Problem

Today, journals remain the primary vehicle for distributing current information in all fields of knowledge. Librarians like researchers in other fields require journals relevant to

their work. A number of authors had decried the attitude of librarians to collection development and management practice of Library and Information Science (LIS) collection in Nigerian libraries. No doubt University of Ilorin is not an exception to this.

1.3 Objectives of the Study

- To examine the availability of LIS journals at the University of Ilorin Library.
- To examine the various characteristics of LIS collection in the library.
- To assess the accessibility of the users to the collection.
- To determine the adequacy of the collections

1.4 Significance of the Study

The findings will serve as impetus to improving collection, development management practice of LIS collection and availability of LIS journals at the University of Ilorin library.

1.5. Scope of the Study

The study concentrated only on the LIS journals collection of the University of Ilorin library. It dealt with the adequacy of the collection, the area covered by the journals, management and organization of the journal collection. This is because journals remain the primary vehicle for distributing current information in all fields of knowledge and occupies a prominent position in research work.

2. LITERATURE REVIEW

The clientele of a typical University Library will include students pursuing diploma, undergraduate and postgraduate courses. It will also include faculty and research staff. The collection development should be geared towards satisfying the needs of these groups of people, University Libraries are meant to support research projects as well as teaching (Evans, 1979).

A number of studies have observed that the dearth of Library and Information Science (LIS) monographs and journals in academic libraries is due to the fact that librarians regard the resources as secondary ones, which are not always essential to their collection development and management practice (Hernon, 1991; Nwafor, 1985). Marama and Ogunrombi (1996) carried out a study of LIS collections of Nigerian Libraries to inquire into conclusions drawn by the two authors that "LIS collection is one of the collections that is haphazardly maintained, with no policy to guide its development, and of a collection which is relatively small because of factors such as tight library book budget, foreign exchange regulations, the attitude of both the Library Director and his professional staff and institutional motivation (Nwafor, 1985). Marama and Ogunrombi's (1996) study confirmed the inadequacy of LIS collection in most of the

Nigerian University Libraries surveyed. The authors opined that since librarians in University libraries are accorded academic status, and are evaluated equally with their faculty counterparts, they should have access to adequate information materials to enable them publish.

Marama and Ogunrombi (1986) explained that most academic libraries integrate their LIS collections with the general stock but of separate shelves.

The study went on to examine the relevance of previous studies to this aspect of the study. The University of Ilorin, a second generation University, does not run fully accredited LIS courses. Maram and Ogunrombi's (1996) study revealed that the University of Jos shares similar characteristics with the University of Ilorin on collection of LIS journals. The University of Jos library held 40 titles while the University of Ilorin library holds 32 titles of LIS journals. These titles were held in duplicates.

3 METHODOLOGY

3.1 Research Question

- In What way are the journals organized in the library.
- What groups of journals are held in the library?
- What is the level of satisfaction of the users in the use of LIS journals
- What is the level of accessibility to the journals

3.2 Study Design

The study is a survey of the library holdings on journals and the opinions of both serials staff and users. Also the study was non-interventional and descriptive in nature.

3.3 Sampling Technique

The entire (32) titles of journals in the holding of the library were selected for the study because the population of the LIS journals in the library collection was not much for study.

3.4 Data Collection Method

The data was collected by examination of journals interviewing of serials staff users, and observation of the activities in serials section. The list of journals compiled by the serials unit for the recent accreditation of courses at the University was used to compare with journal holdings on LIS, also physical verification of journals on the shelves for LIS was carried out.

Academic librarians were also questioned as to their observation regarding the adequacy of LIS journals for their research activities. One-to-one interviews were conducted with eight librarians.

3.5 Data Analysis Method

The information obtained from examination of journals was transformed into percentages. This is to give an overview of the data generated from information at a glance.

The expressions from the users and the staff were qualitatively reported.

4. FINDINGS

4.1 Organization of LIS Journal

The LIS journal collections are not organized separately but integrated with other collections of journals though on separate shelves.

4.2 Responsibility for the Selection of LIS Journals

Selection of LIS journals is done in a similar way with other disciplines. They are arranged according to call number and on separate shelves. This is to facilitate retrieval on request by users. The journals along with others are partly on close access.

The serials librarian brings new LIS journal titles to the attention of the University Librarian and other professionals for the purpose of selection. However, input from librarians in this area has not been encouraging. Only very few care to make selection. However, the serials librarian on his own part selects for the consideration and approval of the University librarian. The negative attitude of librarians towards collections in their own profession must improve. There is the urgent need for them to show more interest in selecting journals for their professional growth and development.

4.3 Availability of LIS Journal and Status

Table 1: FOREIGN LIS JOURNAL ON SUBSCRIPTION

S/N	TITLES	STATUS OF SUBSCRIPTION
1.	International Information and Library Review	CS
2.	Journal of Documentation	CS
3.	Library Resources & Technical Service	CS
4.	Information Technology and Libraries	CS
5.	Library Technology Report	SS
6.	Journal of Librarianship and Information Science	CS
7.	College & Research Libraries	CS
8.	Journal of Library Administration	CS
9.	The Reference Librarian	CS
10.	The Serials Librarian	CS
11.	Library Trends	SS
12.	Library Quarterly	CS
13.	Program	CS
14.	Aslib Proceedings	SS
15.	Library Review	CS
16.	UNESCO Bulletin for Libraries	SS
17.	World libraries	CS

CS- Current Subscription
SS- Subscription stopped

Table II: LOCAL LIS JOURNAL ON SUBSCRIPTION

S/N	TITLES	STATUS OF SUBSCRIPTION
1.	African Journal of Academic Librarianship	CS
2.	African Journal of Library, Archives & Information Science	CS
3.	Bendel Library Journal	CS
4.	Lagos Librarian	CS
5.	Library Waves	CS
6.	Nigerian Journal of Library and Information Studies	CS
7.	Nigerian Libraries	CS
8.	Nigerian Journal of Library & Information Studies	CS
9.	Nigerian School Libraries	CS
10.	Nigerian Journal of Library & Information Review	CS
11.	Leading Libraries & Information Centres	CS
12.	Nigerbiblios	CS
13.	The Library Scientist	CS
14.	Communicate: Journal of Library and Information Science	CS
15.	Library Bulletin: Nigerian University Library System	CS

CS- Current Subscription

A total of 32 LIS journal titles were available at the University of Ilorin library as at the time of research. Two broad categories of LIS journals were identified – foreign and local. Of the total, seventeen (53.1%) are foreign journals, while the remaining fifteen (46.9%) are local journals (Table I and II). A further analysis shows that of the seventeen foreign journals, subscription to three (17.6%) has stopped. It was particularly interesting to note that the local LIS journals are all current subscription and available on shelves for users to use. However, current issues were not available on the shelves. The library gets hold of the journals as soon as they are published. This enriches the collection on local titles despite the seemingly slow pace at which local journals appear. Most of the foreign journals are not current issues. This is due to problem of ordering and receipt of the foreign journals from overseas vendors. The time lag between subscription and receipt contributed to obsolescence of most of the titles on the shelf. This limits the extent the users can rely on the foreign journals for currency of articles.

Of the eight academic librarians that were personally interviewed, six (75%) academic librarian accorded LIS journals as adequate, while two (25%) felt additional titles should be considered in the areas of information technology. The users revealed that their needs of LIS journals were always met when available. However they frowned at the obsolescence of most of the foreign titles. The time taken in retrieving required journals from shelves was between 2 – 3 minutes this was quite satisfactory.

4.4 Areas of Specialization of LIS Journals

Of the seventeen foreign journals, nine (52.9%) publish articles on all areas or aspects of library and Information Science, and eight (47.1%) specialize in one field or the other. such as reference service, serials librarianship, library administration,

automation and technical services. The study revealed that, there was no local LIS journal specializing in any area or aspect of library and information science.

5. SUMMARY, RECOMMENDATION AND CONCLUSION

This paper studied the availability of LIS journals at the University of Ilorin Library; multi-approaches were used to collect the data, which was analyzed by percentages to provide an overview of the data at a glance. The study reveals that the library held in its collection both local and foreign LIS journals which covers a wide area of librarianship. The journals are partly on close access despite this the users were serviced with minimal delay to get the desired LIS journals on their information needs. The library has to redefine its method of acquisition to improve the timeliness of arrival of foreign journals from their vendors to ensure currency of their information need. Much dependence on foreign journals for the academic needs of its users has its implications. This might not augur well for the needs of the deserving academic librarian, as a result there is need to widen the horizon of sourcing LIS journals within one's country.

Budget constrain, no doubt has adverse effect on journal subscription, thus limiting the extent to which users can depend on foreign journals.

The librarians should therefore look inward towards publishing LIS journals of high standard on their own in this country.

A number of conclusions may be drawn from the findings above:

- 1) The total number of LIS journals available at the University library is adequate for research activities of librarians. This adequacy expressed by librarians may stem from the fact that the foreign LIS journals on subscription cover both the general and specific aspects of library and Information Science; however, this was not found in local LIS journals on subscription.
- 2) The study found out that librarians in the University library had negative attitude towards selection of LIS journals in their own discipline. However, this did not account for the level of LIS journal subscription at the library as the serials librarian and the Chief Executive of the library always ensured that the profession was adequately catered for. The conclusion drawn here is that librarians need to take active participation in the selection process of LIS journals.
- 3) In terms of organization and management of LIS journal collection at the University of Ilorin library, it is integrated with other collections.
- 4) Finally, the LIS journals on subscription compared favourably in terms of number with subscription in other subject disciplines. The necessity to publish by academic librarians places an obligation on them to select journal titles in their discipline the same way it is done for faculty counterparts.

Limitation of the Study

During the course of this study, the efforts of the author were constrained by factors such as availability of time, cost of going through the study and accessibility to data and the subjects, however the effect of these constraints were minimized by cooperation from the respondents such as the librarian and the users of the journals.

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