



## Undergraduates Perception and Utilization of Serial Materials in Federal University of Petroleum Resources Library

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### ABSTRACT

This study assessed the undergraduates' perception and utilization of serial materials in Federal University of Petroleum Resources Library. The study sample population comprised 1,365 registered library users' registration statistics 2014/2015 academic session. The instrument used for data collection in this study was questionnaire. The major findings of the study revealed that main library serial section had highest respondents whereas newspapers and thesis were the serial materials regularly used by the respondents while some never or hardly used journals. The major challenges confronting utilize of serial units in Federal University of Petroleum Resources, Effurun were some serial materials are not easily accessible, lack of space in serial section, delay in supplying of daily and lack of journals in my area of study etc. The followings recommendations were made; articles should be organized to improve students' knowledge/skills, lecturers should mandate the students to use journals, librarians should device other strategies of enlighten library users, serial section should be expanded, Training and seminar on the use of journals, among others.

**Keywords:** Serial, Utilization, Undergraduates, Researchers perception, FUPRE.

**DOI:** 10.20448/journal.801/2016.1.1/801.1.1.9

**Citation** | Sambo, Atanda Saliu, Akpojotor Oji Lucky (2016). Undergraduates Perception and Utilization of Serial Materials in Federal University of Petroleum Resources Library. American Journal of Social Sciences and Humanities, 1(1): 1-9.

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Funding : This study received no specific financial support.

Competing Interests: The authors declare that they have no competing interests.

History : **Received:** 18 May 2016/ **Revised:** 1 June 2016/ **Accepted:** 4 June 2016/ **Published:** 7 June 2016

**Publisher:** Online Science Publishing

## 1. INTRODUCTION

The basic rationale of an academic library is to provide adequate information for making conversant decisions by users. The academic library collections must reflect the subject interests of the institutions. It must also be adequate in terms of quality, quantity and variety. The library does this through useful selection and acquisition of materials for teaching learning and research; process and organization of the materials for easy retrieval and dissemination of information about the collections and encourages their active exploitation. Academic libraries must therefore provide the latest serial materials in all the subjects/courses covered by its parent institution and also, staff and students are expected to make use of the library most especially the serial section of the Library to get current information in their chosen field of study. Meanwhile, library is an integral part of any educational institution, most especially at the tertiary level (Popoola, 2006). A well-stocked and

organized library is a pride of any educational institution which will definitely help in meeting its teaching, learning and research needs through availability of contemporary serial publications alongside other library resources. Nwalo (2003) cited Osborn (1980) to describe serials as publications issued in successive parts, at regular or irregular intervals and intended to be continued indefinitely. There are many kinds of serials. These include; newspaper, magazines, newsletters, accessions, journals, indexes, abstract, reports proceedings and transactions of societies etc. Out of them all, journals are the most important to researchers because much of articles therein are products of research and it may never appear in any other publications. According to Ogunrombi (1997) serial publications form the backbone of any academic library because of their nature of informational value. Academic and research libraries acquire, organize, store, retrieve and disseminate information contained in journals for researchers, educators, students and other interested persons in their various disciplines.

Academic libraries must therefore provide the latest journal titles in all the subjects/courses covered by its parent institution and also, staff and students are expected to make use of the library most especially the serial section of the Library to get current information in their chosen field of study. In the words of Olanlokun and Salisu (1988) journals are accorded prominence in the library because they provide the latest information in a discipline and if people want to be current in their field they have to read relevant journals. The utilization of serial by researchers is likely to enhance their academic standard positively. However it is a verity that Federal University of Petroleum Resources Library Serials section provides contemporary and up to date information resources including journal, newspapers, newsletters and library guide etc that are useful for researchers to support their research findings. As a result of the significance of serial publications on research, this article intends to ascertain researcher's perception and utilization of serial materials in Federal University of Petroleum Resources, Library

## **2. OBJECTIVES OF THE STUDY**

The objective of this study is to ascertain the utilization of serial materials by undergraduate students at Federal University of Petroleum Resources Serial Section. It also aimed to determine the number of undergraduates that utilized the serial section, to investigate the serial materials mostly utilize by undergraduates as well as to determine the perception of undergraduates towards challenges confronting utilize of the serial materials and propose ways to improve serial utilization by undergraduates.

## **3. LITERATURE REVIEW**

Aina (2004) also describes serial as a distinctive title which is issued in parts, and each issue is published indefinitely. It includes periodicals, journals, newsletters, newspapers and magazines, etc. A periodical such as newspaper or magazine has a distinctive title and is issued more frequently than once a year containing articles. While non - periodical serials are publications that are issued in successive parts once a year or less frequently, yearbooks annuals or monographic series are examples of non-periodical serials. The term periodicals, Serials, Journals are used interchangeably to refer to the group of library materials which appear in a series at regular intervals. Fayose (1995) stated that as its name suggest, a periodical is a distinctive title which is issued at regular intervals: weekly, monthly, quarterly, yearly by a learned society, an academic or

research institution, a professional body, or a reputable publishing organization. Periodicals are useful because they are the most up to date resources in the library. The articles in periodicals are often written by experts in the field, therefore they are reliable. The articles are precise and to the point thus not as cumbersome to read as textbooks.

Serial connotes the idea of subdivisions that make a whole. It is a concept of installment maturity. The idea of serialization is not limited to printed materials. When printed documents are referred to as serial, an idea of publications that is consecutively numbered and indefinitely continued is in place. In her own view [Agbaje \(2002\)](#) submitted that periodicals are a type of serial organized around the concept of preordination which attempts to impart significance to the passage of time by identifying and ordering information along chronological sequences. Thus when products are referred to as periodicals they are produced at fixed intervals of time, usually not less than twenty-four hours. Serial material is used by all in our lives for different purposes. The importance of serial materials to the library cannot be over-emphasized. Special and academic libraries devote a lot of their funds to the acquisition and management of serials. This is because a lot of research works go on in their parent organization. Titles in serials of academic nature are written and reviewed by experts. [Aiyepoku \(1988\)](#) revealed the importance of newspaper as one of the types of serial material. In his study on information utilization by policy makers, 84% of the policy makers consulted newspaper and magazines and this ranked among the five most consulted information sources utilized by policy-makers in Nigeria. [Olorunsola \(1997\)](#) posited that it helps students, researchers and faculty to be well informed about current events. In order that lectures in the University would keep abreast of the latest progress in their individual fields, they need serial materials. If the FUPRE Serial section library is to meet its obligations of providing effective resources then sourcing and making sure that lectures, researchers and students have access to serial materials is obligatory.

[Ogunniyi, Akerele, and Afolabi \(2011\)](#) stated that of all the serials subscribed by any library, journals are the most important to researchers because much of the articles therein are products of research and it may never appear in any other publications. No wonder [Omekwu and Atimo \(1998\)](#) emphasized that journals are the most current vehicles of new ideas, knowledge and breakthrough in scientific development. The level of utilization of journals in universities differs despite the huge investments in journal subscription. [Cason and Scoyoc \(2006\)](#) studied the undergraduate students' research habits in a strictly electronic library environment at a large public university and found out that the undergraduate students in the electronic library relied primarily on Internet sites and online instruction modules (for example Blackboard or WebCT) for their research needs rather than university-funded research sources.

[Ogunniyi, Akerele and Afolabi \(2011\)](#) investigated the use of serial publications by the academic staff of School of Arts and Social Sciences in Adeyemi College of Education, Ondo State, Nigeria. The researchers found out that 66.7% of the respondents used the serial section while 33.3% did not. Majority of the respondents, 21 (70%) used serials section for research purpose while 1 (3.3%) used it for relaxation and to be acquainted with current information. The research concluded that, there was some academic staff in the College who does not use the serials section of the library because of their notion that the journals were old, scanty, improperly arranged and lack of professionals to assist them. Research has shown that the use of journals is drastically reducing among undergraduate students in some higher institutions of learning. [Hampton-Reeves, Mashiter, Westaway, Lumsden, Day, Hewertson, and Hart \(2009\)](#) identified students' consistency on

the use of Google to save themselves the trouble of going to the library. They also noted that students identify undergraduate or postgraduate dissertations as research content. To buttress the point further, [Hammed and Osunrinade \(2010\)](#) also found out that 64.8% of undergraduate students who responded in their study prefer to use text books against 22.1% who used journal. This implies that students perceive textbook and online search engines as the best options to access information for their research work. [Hampton-Reeves, et al. \(2009\)](#) argued that research content is seen primarily as a source for assignments and students' perception of research is very much led by the context of their assignments. Furthermore, they argued that there is a growing diversity in the kinds of content identified as research but journal articles and books still dominate students' perceptions of what research is. Perhaps this accounts to the reasons why patronage to journal usage was minimal. [Salaam and Opeke \(2009\)](#) asserts that the more available and accessible resources are, the more they would be utilized. This may not be very true since not every available resource is utilized in the library by users. However, the perception and use of a certain resource in the library depends on the users awareness, packaging, presentation, ease of use, result oriented and of course the role of the tutor remains fundamental to setting the environment for the use and discovery of research content ([Hampton-Reeves, et al., 2009](#)). Screeekumar (2005) cited by [Oyedapo and Ojo \(2013\)](#) affirms that e-journal offer a range of potential advantages to libraries and end users. On the issue of collection development policy for serials, the [Australian College of Physical Education \(2007\)](#) stressed that, the collection policy of the Robert Dunnet Library comprises of approximately 400 serial titles in which 80 of these are current subscriptions. Above assertion means that 320 journal titles are old journals. The decision of acquisition of serial depend on the institution policy, According to the [University of Aukland \(2007\)](#) each year each faculty is allocated a proportion of library money available for serials procurement. Also details of proposed new serial are sent to the liaison officer of the Library periodically by the departments.

#### **4. METHODOLOGY**

The survey method has been found to be the most appropriate for the study which focused on the undergraduate's perception and utilization of the serial materials. A total of six hundred and ten (610) respondents were randomly selected form a population of 1,200 registered library users' registration statistics 2013/2014 academic session in Federal University of Petroleum Resources, Effurun. Data were collected from the selected undergraduates using questionnaire as the main instrument for data collection. Questionnaire was used for collecting data for this research. The researcher administered and collected questionnaire across the main library serials section and the two colleges of the FUPRE Serial Section namely: College of Technology and College of Science Serials Sections. The return rate was 597, representing 98% rate of return distributed. The data for the study was presented in bar chart, tables, frequency and percentages for easy interpretation.

##### **4.1. Data Analysis and Discussion**

Out of 610 copies of the questionnaire that were administered to the library serial users, 597(98%) were retrieved. The data collected in the study is presented according to the objectives of the study.

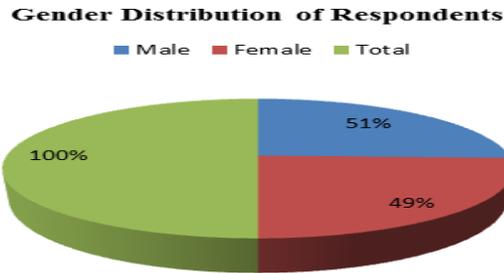


Figure-1. Gender Distribution of Respondents

Fig.1 shows that from the 597 participants, 305 (51%) were male while 292 (49%) were female. This result indicates that there were more male respondents in this study than their female counterpart.

**Distribution of Questionnaire by Serial Units**

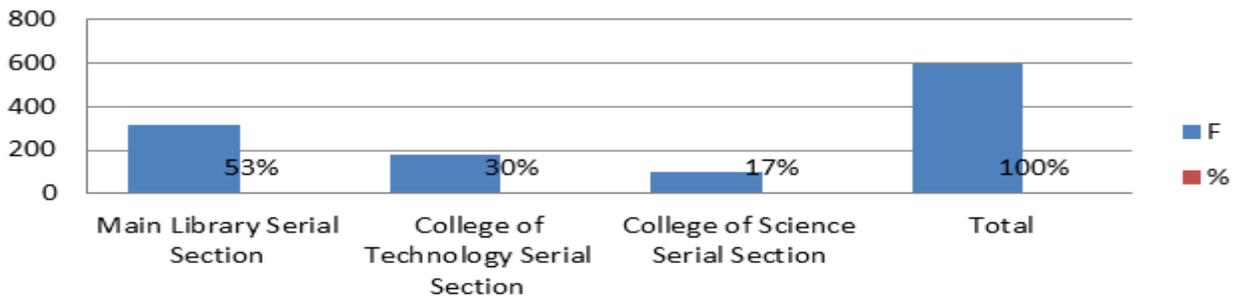


Figure-2. To Determine the Number of Undergraduates that Utilized the Serial Section

Fig.2 shows that main library serial section had highest participants 53% while college of technology serial section had 30% whereas college of science serial section had the least response of 17%.

**Serials Materials Mostly Utilized by Undergraduates**

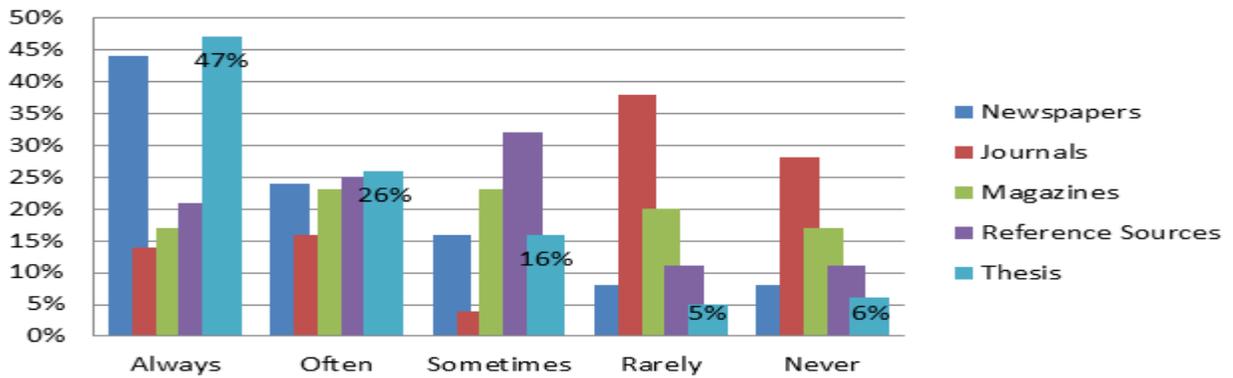


Figure-3. To Investigate the Serials Materials Mostly Utilized by Undergraduates

Fig. 3 reveals the serial material mostly utilized by the undergraduate students. It shows that 261 (44%) and 282(47%) of the respondents used newspapers and thesis always while 65 (11%) of respondents never or rarely used reference sources. It also confirmed that 102(17%) and 139(23%) of respondents used magazine

whereas 228(38%) and 165(28%) of respondents never or rarely used journals. It also shows that 193(32%) of respondent sometimes used reference sources. This indicates that the respondents' used newspapers and thesis mostly than others serial materials. Nevertheless, none use of journals by the participants may be due to insufficient of journal in their area of study or lack of skill to search through the electronic journal.

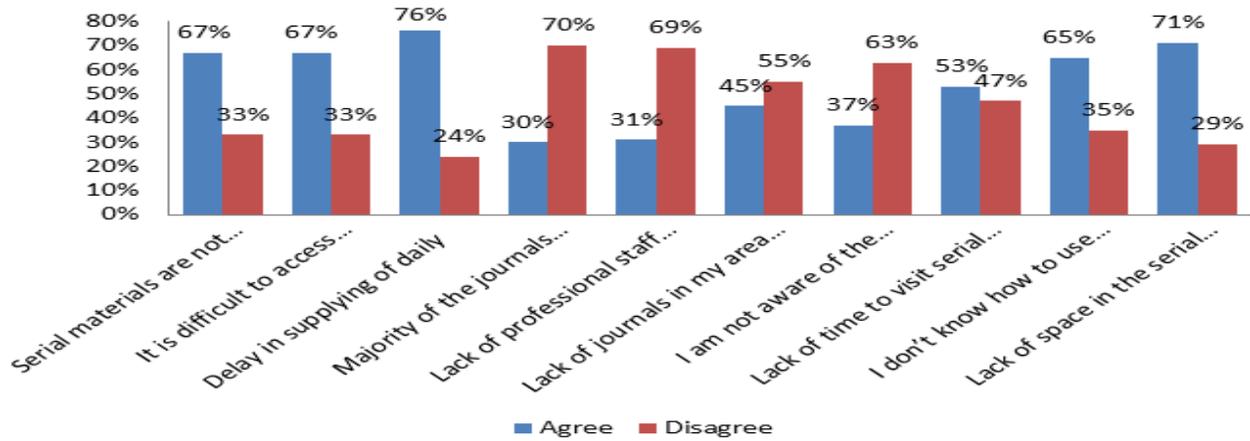


Figure-4. To Ascertain the Perception of Undergraduate towards Challenges Confronting Utilize of the Serial Materials

Fig. 4 requires knowing the perception of undergraduate students towards challenges confronting them while attempt to use serial materials A numbers of challenges were identify. 456(76%) agreed that delay in supplying of daily while 141 (24%) disagree whereas 421(71%) of respondents emphasis lack of space in the serial section while 176 (29%) disagree. It also identify that 399(67%) agree that serial materials are not easily accessible to them while 198 (33%) disagree. Moreover, 402(67%) agree that, it is difficult to access information on journals while 195 (33%) disagree. 418(70%) disagree that majority of journal are old while 179(30%) agree. The result further reveal that 391(65%) of the respondents agreed that they don't know how to use journals for research work. This result shows that the high use of newspaper and thesis by the respondents as shown on table 3 could be attributed to respondents' lack of training and skill to use journal materials.

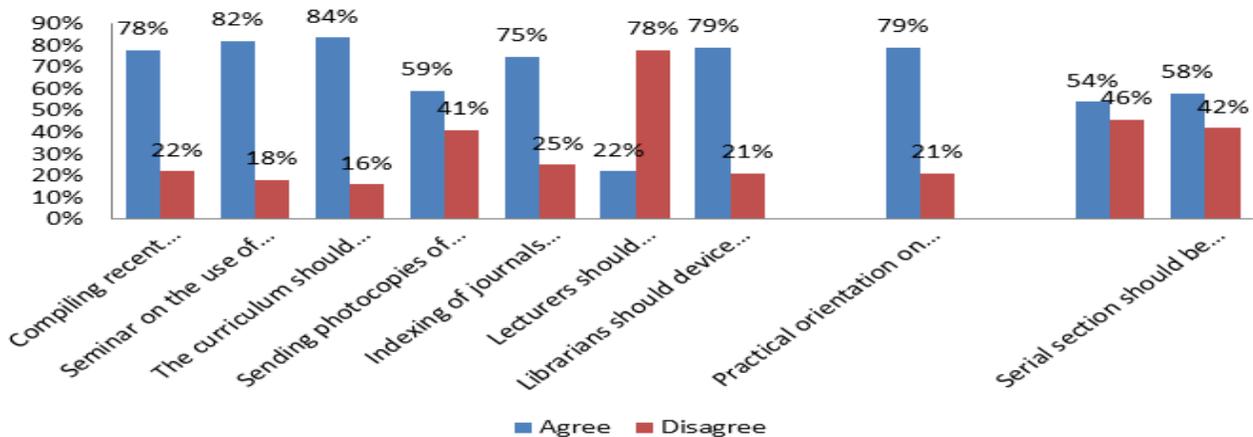


Figure-5. Propose Ways to Improve Serial Utilization

Figure 5: Shows suggestions by the participants on how to improve the use of serial materials in Federal University of Petroleum Resources, Effurun Library, 499(84%) agree that curriculum should include a course on advanced literature review using journal article while 489(82%) agree that seminar on the use of journals article should be organized to improve students' knowledge/skills whereas 472(79%) agree that practical orientation on how to use journal articles by student should be made and librarians should device other strategies of enlightens library users. Also, 465(78%) agree that compiling recent journals and sending them to relevant department. Furthermore, 465(78%) disagree that lecturers should mandate the students to use journal whereas 132(22%) of respondents agree. However, reaction of respondents is indications that the respondents expected the lecturers and librarians to organize practical lectures, seminar and other means to educate undergraduate students to utilize journal publications effectively.

## 5. DISCUSSION OF FINDINGS

The findings reveals that high percentage of male utilize the serial material than the female users, this could be ascribed to the fact that more male students visit the serial unit to read newspapers, journals and other types of serial publication than female students. The result in table 2 shows that main library serial unit had highest response of 53% while college of technology serial unit had 30% whereas college of science serial unit had the least response of 17%. High rate of utilized the main library serial unit could be as a result of closeness to the lecture theaters or used it for realization. [Ogunniyi, Akerele and Afolabi \(2011\)](#) asserted that the use of serial publications by the academic staff of School of Arts and Social Sciences in Adeyemi College of Education, Ondo State, Nigeria. The researchers found out that 66.7% of the respondents used the serial section while 33.3% did not. Majority of the respondents, 21 (70%) used serials section for research purpose while 1(3.3%) used it for relaxation and be acquainted with current information. The result in table 3 reveals that 261 (44%) and 282(47%) of the respondents utilized newspapers and thesis always, a very few of the respondents used reference materials and magazine often. This finding agreed [Aiyepetu \(1988\)](#) revealed the importance of newspaper as one of the types of serial material. In his study on information utilization by policy makers, 84% of the policy makers consulted newspaper and magazines and this ranked among the five most consulted information sources utilized by policy-makers in Nigerian. [Olorunsola \(1997\)](#) posited that it helps students, researcher and faculty to be well informed about current events. However; a small numbers of respondents indicated that they have never and rarely utilized newspapers, magazine, journal and reference materials. The result in table 4 shows divergence confronting utilize of serial materials in FUPRE Serial Unit, such as delay in supplying of daily's, lack of space in the serial section, it is difficult to access information on journal, majority of journals are old and lack of journals in my area of study among other. The findings in table 5 reveal that practical orientation on how to use journal articles by student should be made, seminar on the use of journals articles should be organized to improve student knowledge /skill, the curriculum should include a course on advanced literature review using journal article and more fund should be provided for serial unit among other. According to Robert Dunnet Library comprises of approximately 400 serial titles in which 80 of these are current subscriptions. Above assertion means that 320 journal titles are old journals. The decision of acquisition of serial depend on the institution policy, According to the [University of Aukland \(2007\)](#) each year

each faculty is allocated a proportion of library money available for serials procurement. Also details of proposed new serial are sent to the liaison officer of the Library periodically by the departments.

## **6. CONCLUSION AND RECOMMENDATIONS**

From the analysis, it could be concluded that there are some undergraduate students who do not use the serial section of the library because of the notion that the journals are old scanty, lack of space, serial materials are not easy accessible and delay in supplying of daily among other. The Library management is fully aware of these shortcomings and it is ready to correct them as it recently procures additional journals and employ a professional to manage the affairs of the section. The serial section should endeavor to send photocopies of contents' tables of recent journals and title list of same to the relevant departments. This will definitely improve the use of the section by the undergraduate students. We therefore suggest that University Management should release more funds for the procurement of more recent journals and other serials materials into the library for the utilization of the undergraduate students and other interested users in the community.

- Lecturers in all the departments at Federal University of Petroleum Resources should emphasize the use of serial materials and encourage students through assignments that would require high use of serial publications and other information resources in the library to boost their research work.
- Librarians should endeavor to organize seminars/workshops to train the undergraduate students on the importance of serial publications.
- Librarians should aggressively encourage students during orientation programs to utilize serial materials to support their research work.
- The academic departments should as a matter of urgency enact a policy mandating final year undergraduate students to cite not less than 50% journal publications in their literature review.
- For the library to manage the serial materials well, they need more funding, material resources and commitment on the part of the library. They also need to make the serial materials easily accessible to the students so that they will be well disposed towards its usage in order to enhance their academic performance.
- The library should also be more involved in cooperative activities with other libraries. Finally, space is very essential as part of major challenges facing serial section, conducive space would encourage reading habit in the students, the library environment must be adequately equipped with basic equipment such as air conditioners; adequate power supply; recruiting library staff who are student friendly without losing sight on the ethics of their job.

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