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Serials use at Babcock University Library, Ilisan-Remo, Ogun State, Nigeria (2008 – 2012)

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Abstract: This study highlights the intensity of print serials utilized at Babcock University library from 2008 to 2012. The study only takes account of print serials subscribed to and made available at the serials department of the library. The result of the study revealed that serials recorded the highest level of use in 2008, the lowest utilization occurred in 2012. Serials in social sciences, medical science and religion as well as magazines/newsletters, were the most utilized. There were also indications from the findings that print serials have continued to support learning, teaching and research. Therefore, the researchers concluded that subscription to print serials should be on-going. Librarians should also endeavor to create more awareness and encourage patrons' use of print serials.

Keyword: *Print serials, Libraries, Babcock University*

1. Introduction

The university library in supporting the parent institution provides information resources in both print and non-print formats. The library is an integral part of education, most especially at tertiary level. Libraries all over the world subscribe and acquire information materials such as books, journals, CD-ROMs, e-books, e-journals, slides, magazines and newspapers among others, in order to promote and meet the information needs (learning, teaching and researching) of her users. These materials are carriers of information that solve varied needs of library users. Among these are serial publications, which appear in both print and non-print formats. Keenan and Johnson (2000), Feather and Sturges (2004), and Reitz (2004) describe serials as any publication that is published in any medium issued under the same title in a succession of discrete parts usually numbered (or dated) and appearing either at regular or irregular intervals with no predetermined conclusion. Serial publications are provided in successive parts to users and is intended to be available and continued indefinitely in the library. Serial publications include periodicals, newspapers, magazines, journals and annuals (reports, yearbooks), continuing directories, proceedings and transactions, and numbered monographic series.

Serials constitute to a large extent research findings that are published daily, bi-monthly, monthly, quarterly, bi-annually and annually. Most serials undergo stringent and rigorous peer review before publication. Serials form an important and useful collection of any university's library stock, as articles in serials are peer reviewed and published much more rapidly than book thus having vital up-to-date information. In addition, articles in serials frequently discuss in-depth, highly specialized topics and include information that may never appear in book form. These characteristics mentioned above make serial publications unique and important to a library's collection hence, Akamgbe (2010) notes that serials whether in print or electronic format merits attention. This research, therefore, highlights serials utilized at Babcock University Library, identifying peak and off peak periods with areas that needs improvement to ensure the fulfillment of the library's mandate and objectives.

Babcock University Library: Babcock University has seven schools/faculties among which are Benjamin S. Carson Sr. School of Medicine, School of Computing and Engineering, School of Basic and Applied Sciences, Babcock Business School, Education and Humanities, School of Law and Security Studies, and Babcock University Postgraduate School. Policy on collection development for serial acquisition at Babcock University Library is given serious attention, as serials constitute one of the most utilized information resources in the library. As at June 2013, the library had in stock local and international print journals with a total collection of

4,416 and 15,072 respectively, including electronic journals relevant to the academic programs of the University.

2. Literature Review

Aina (2004) describes serials in the following order: ***Periodical -*** any publication that comes out at regular intervals. It could be weekly, monthly, quarterly, twice a year or annually. It could be a medium for reporting scholarly research as in journals, or as a new medium such as magazines and newspapers. ***Journal -*** a medium for communicating research findings by scholars. It reports the latest development in the field. It is usually produced by a specialist, society or an association. ***Magazines*** – generally contain written articles, photographs and advertisement. They can be popular magazines that deal with sports, travel, fashion, etc. They are usually popular publications. They are good for reading and entertainment. They also provide information on topical issues. Serial publications according to Ogunrombi (1997) form the backbone of any academic library because of their nature of informational value. Alokun (2003) strongly affirmed that serials carry the latest information on research findings, it also carry first information of new ideas or discoveries and sometimes information in a serial may not appear in books for many years or perhaps not at all. Madu and Adeniran (2005) outlined some characteristics of serials noting that the editor might change; the content of each issue is different; and the publication interval varies. Serials do not have planned end to the sequence; they are current and up-to-date, they are more expensive than books, and are usually subscribed to. However, a specific serial title is identified by a unique international standard serials number (ISSN) and key title assigned and maintained by the international serials data system (ISDS).

According to Ogunniyi, Akerele and Afolabi (2011), 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. Akamgbe (2010) contends that serials collection is supposed to support active research and academic purposes. He further affirmed that in academic libraries, serial publications constitute a major part of all academic libraries' collection whether print or electronic, and typically account for more than half of their expenditure on library materials. Ogunniyi, Akerele, and Afolabi (2011) opined that 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. It is in view of this, that Anunobi et al. (2010), notes that access to serials within a university community is primarily through the university library. Rubin (2010), however, notes that the management of serials requires a complex and coordinated process, called serials control, to ensure its availability to users. Serials control according to Kao (2001) involves the management of serials to ensure accessibility to library users. Ogunniyi, Akerele and Afolabi (2011) investigated the use of serial publications by the Academic Staff of School of Arts and Social Sciences at Adeyemi College of Education Ondo State, Nigeria and found out that 66.7% of the study's' respondents used serials while 33.3% did not. The result also showed that majority of the respondents, 21(70%) used serials section for research purpose while 1(3.3%) used it for relaxation and getting acquainted with current information. Supporting this finding, Olanlokun and Momoh (1994) stated that researchers and other professionals find serials indispensable to the effectiveness and efficiency of their work. They also confirmed that faculty members, postgraduate students and others invariably spend more of their time reading publications in serials form from the learned journals and technical reports of specialized organizations and societies than from books and monographs.

3. Methodology

This study focuses on use of serials at Babcock University library by analyzing the statistical report of serials used for a period of 5 years (2008 to 2012). The study only takes account of print serials subscribed to by the Library and did not include newspapers and e-journals. The tables and charts below show monthly, quarterly and yearly usage of print serials by library patrons and areas of study that were mostly accessed on a daily basis. The reports were analyzed using tables and charts.

4. Quarterly Report of Serials Consulted in the Library

Table 1: Serials Consulted from 1ST TO 4TH quarters, 2008

Quarter	Magazine/ Newsletter	Philosophy &Psychology	Religion	History	Social science	Pol. Science	Education	Music	Arts	Language & Literature	Natural Science	Medical Science	Agriculture	Technology	Library& Info. science	Total
1st Qtr.	892	78	542	161	817	149	207			170	91	583	112	156	143	4101
2nd Qtr.	776	216	494	413	771	310	273			333	172	430	228	182	230	4828
3rd Qtr.	849	567	972	480	1082	326	337			496	403	563	274	503	346	7198
4th Qtr.	985	323	782	220	3549	195	193			491	183	1119	133	101	121	8395
Total	3502	1184	2790	2774	6219	980	1010			1490	849	2695	747	942	840	24522

Table 1 shows the serials consulted from 1stto 4thquarter of 2008. The table shows that a total of 4,101serials were utilized in the first quarter. Second quarter has a total utilization of 4,828 serials, while 3rd quarter has a total of 7,198serialsutilized. The 4th quarter shows an unprecedented increase in the serials utilized with a total of 8395. The table also indicates that social sciences, Magazine/newsletter and medical sciences were the areas mostly consulted. These gives a grand total of 24522 serials consulted from 1st to 4th quarters of 2008.

Table 2: Serials Consulted from 1ST TO 4TH quarters, 2009

Quarter	Magazine/ Newsletter	Philosophy &Psychology	Religion	History	Social science	Pol. Science	Education	Music	Arts	Language & Literature	Natural Science	Medical Science	Agriculture	Technology	Library& Info. science	Total
1st Qtr.	1013	218	1057	254	1252	502	422			488	192	1063	272	134	159	7026
2nd Qtr.	843	108	531	383	1082	178	83	34	156	241	83	583	130	89	97	4621
3rd Qtr.	235	11	72	35	129	19	31	1		26	16	138	38	12	33	796
4th Qtr.	1077	276	432	337	1082	178	83	34	156	241	83	583	130	89	97	4878
Total	3168	613	2092	1009	3545	877	619	69	312	996	374	2367	570	324	386	17321

Table 2 indicates the serials consulted from 1stto 4th quarter of 2009. It signifies 7026serials were utilized in first quarter, 4621serials were consulted in the second quarter, 796 serials were utilized in the 3rd quarter, while 4878 serials were consulted in the last quarter of the year under review. It also shows that more serials were utilized in the 1st, 2nd and 4th quarter of the year under review.

Table 3: Serials Consulted from 1ST TO 4TH quarters, 2010

Quarter	Magazine/ Newsletter	Philosophy &Psychology	Religion	History	Social science	Pol. Science	Education	Music	Arts	Language & Literature	Natural Science	Medical Science	Agriculture	Technology	Library& Info. science	Total
1st Qtr.	1041	213	395	143	1087	122	111	9		257	78	1175	155	134	288	5208
2nd Qtr.	685	154	473	95	765	121	123	10		90	28	358	80	66	244	3292
3rd Qtr.	709	123	228	137	871	133	158	5		147	43	488	141	109	891	4183
4th Qtr.	683	63	80	42	666	73	60			117	15	337	35	37	141	2349
Total	3118	553	1176	417	3389	449	452	24		611	164	2358	411	346	1564	15032

Table 3 shows the serials utilized from 1stto 4thquarter of 2010. It indicates that 5,208serials were utilized in the first quarter.3,292 serials were consulted in the second quarter, 4,183serials utilized in the third quarter, while 2,349 serials were consulted in the fourth quarter of the year. The table also shows that first quarter had the highest number of serials utilized with magazine/newsletters and social sciences having the highest patronage.

Table 4: Serials Consulted from 1ST TO 4TH quarters, 2011

Quarter	Magazine/ Newsletter	Philosophy &Psychology	Religion	History	Social science	Pol. Science	Education	Music	Arts	Language & Literature	Natural Science	Medical Science	Agriculture	Technology	Library& Info. science	Total
1st Qtr.	741	109	85	84	641	87	31	18	21	99	61	236	105	65	148	2531
2nd Qtr.	673	95	192	132	542	101	55	39	47	112	65	300	113	103	137	2706
3rd Qtr.	204	112	205	117	982	186	72	43	27	81	86	342	84	76	101	2718
4th Qtr.	458	203	34	46	822	117	37	9	1	184	56	302	32	66	180	2547
Total	2076	519	516	379	2987	491	195	109	96	476	268	1180	334	310	566	10502

Table 4indicates the serials utilized from 1st to 4thquarter of 2011. It is evident that 2nd and 3rd quarters had the highest number of serials used with 2706 and 2718 respectively. The first and fourth quarters had 2531 and 2547 number of serials consulted. This also shows that social science was the serials highly utilized by the library patrons.

Table 5: Serials Consulted from 1ST TO 4TH quarter, 2012

Quarter	Magazine/ Newsletter	Philosophy &Psychology	Religion	History	Social science	Pol. Science	Education	Music	Arts	Language & Literature	Natural Science	Medical Science	Agriculture	Technology	Library& Info. science	Total
1st Qtr.	527	42	263	13	329	17	25	2	0	94	15	176	10	13	249	1775
2nd Qtr.	313	89	89	17	157	25	21	3	0	129	8	79	18	12	181	1076
3rd Qtr.	246	16	93	8	261	10	8	0	0	26	4	92	19	33	113	929
4th Qtr.	505	14	118	19	502	46	17	1	0	92	8	119	50	15	172	1678
Total	1591	161	563	57	1249	98	71	6	0	341	35	466	97	73	715	5458

Table 5 indicates the serials utilized from 1stto 4thquarter of 2012. It shows that 1,775serials were utilized in the first quarter. 1,076serials were utilized in the second quarter and 929 serials were utilized in the third quarter while1,678 serials were used in the fourth quarter.

Figure 1: Bar chart showing the rate of quarterly utilization of serials (2008-2012)

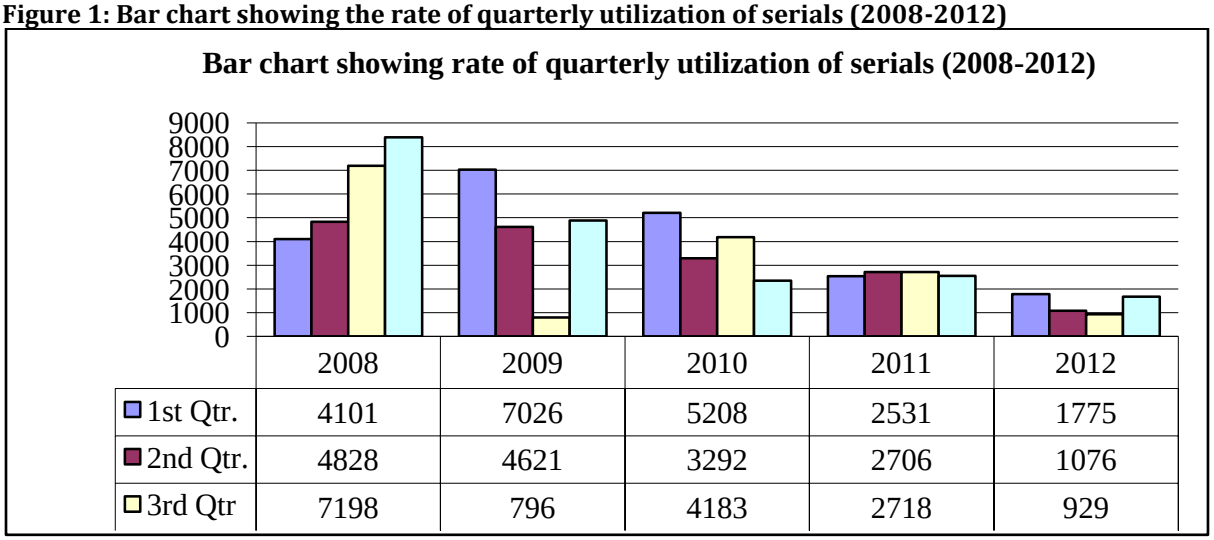


Fig.1 shows summary of the total of every quarter in this study. It indicates that 4th quarter of 2008 recorded the highest serials used with 8395 while 3rd quarter of2008 and 1st quarter of 2009 recorded 7198 and 7026 respectively. These quarters had the highest patronage of serials utilization in the library. The chart also indicates a sharp decline in the use of serials in the subsequent years. This could be attributed to the increase on subscription of online resources, which was heavily used by the library patrons.

Figure 2: Bar chart showing rate of serials used annually (2008-2012)

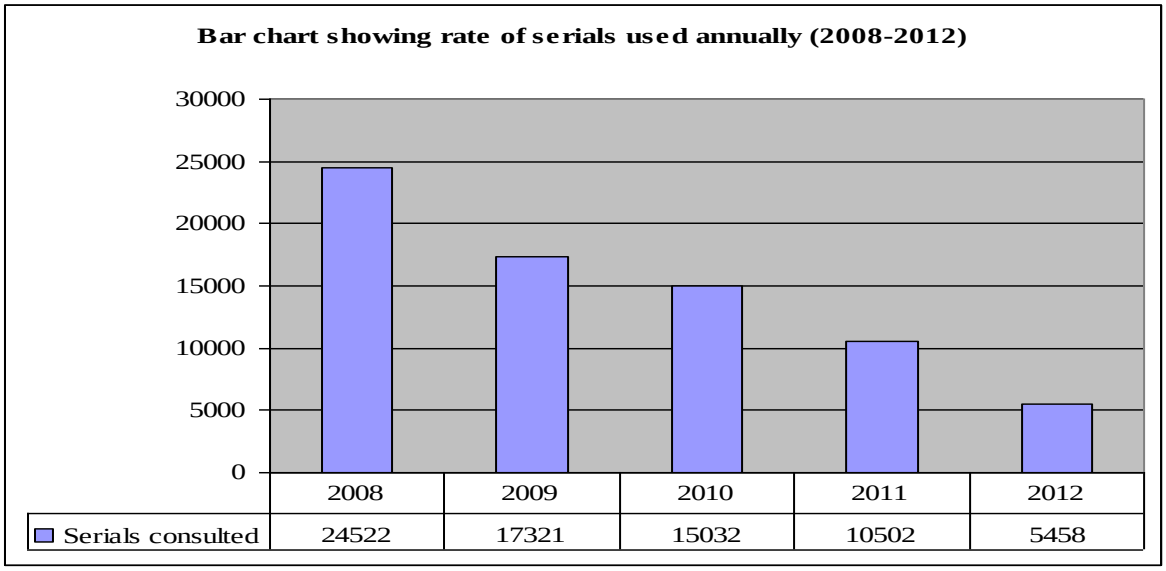


Fig. 2 shows the total number of print serials consulted annually. It indicates that 2008 had the highest number of serials consulted with 24522. The figure also shows a downward slope in the utilization of serials from 2008 to 2012. The year 2012 recorded the lowest patronage with 5458.

Figure 3: showing discipline of serials mostly utilized (2008-2012)

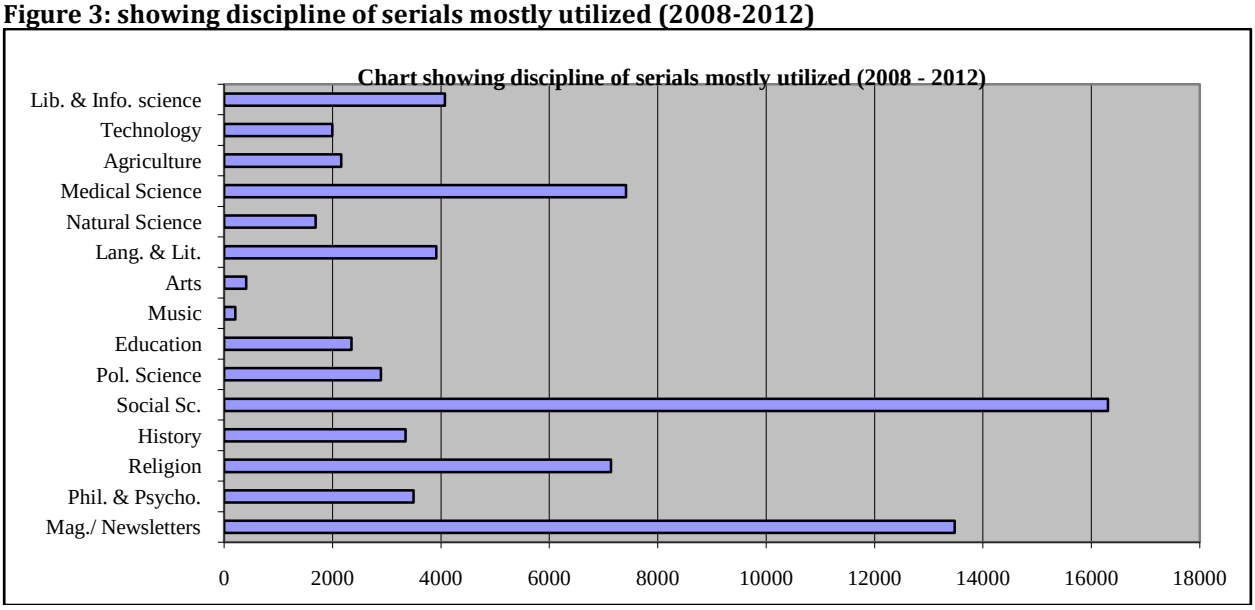


Figure 3 reveals that serials in social science, general magazine/newsletters, Medical science and Religious serials were the most utilized by library patrons. This indicates that users from Social sciences, Medical sciences and Religious department used the resources for their research, while the magazine/newsletter served general purpose used by all library users.

Discussion of Findings: The above statistics signifies the rate of utilization of print serial publications at Babcock University Library from 2008-2012. It highlights the extent of usage in some disciplines including social sciences, medical sciences and religion including the use of general magazine/newsletter. The reasons for high usage of general magazine/newsletter as shown on tables 1- 5 could be attributed to the fact that they serve general purpose and as such could be used for relaxation as well as education. Findings from Tables 1-5 also indicated that serials in Music and Arts disciplines were grossly under-utilized. This may be as a result of the fact that the Music department of the university just take off in the 2013/2014 academic session. Findings from Figure 1 reveal the total number of serials consulted quarterly. It indicates that 4th quarter of 2008 recorded 8395 uses while 3rd quarter of 2008 and 1st quarter of 2009, recorded 7198 and 7026 uses respectively. These quarters had the highest patronage of serials utilization in the library. Findings also indicated continuous decrease on utilization of print serials from tables 2 to 5. The decline in use of print serials may be attributed to many factors such as lack of awareness of these materials and increase in electronic resources subscription. These corroborates with what Agba, Kigongo-Bukenya, and Nyumba (2004) confirm as a 'shift' from print to electronic information.

5. Conclusion and Recommendations

The study has shown beyond reasonable doubt that print serial publications are essential resources in the library as evidenced in their usage. However, it was evident that the use of print serials within the years under study consistently moved downward. This may have been affected by the availability of a 24/7 accessible electronic resources (e-journals) subscribed to by the University library. Despite this, there was indication from the results that users still used print serials. Therefore, subscription of print serials should be on-going and be made available at the serials department of the library for easy access and use.

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