

# Problems and Prospects of Newspaper Management in the Libraries of University of Port Harcourt and Rivers State University of Science and Technology

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## Abstract

**Purpose:** This study investigated the problems and prospects of newspaper management in the libraries of University of Port Harcourt (UNIPORT) and Rivers State University of Science and Technology (RSUST).

**Design/Methodology/Approach:** The study adopted the correlational research design as it establishes relationship between two variables. Six objectives and six research questions were formulated to guide the study. The instrument used for data collection was questionnaire. The population of the study consisted of 40 librarians drawn from the two universities under study: RSUST=18 and UNIPORT=22; there was no sampling technique because the whole population was used. A total of 40 copies of questionnaire were administered and 35 copies were retrieved indicating 87.5% return rate, and were used for the study. The study used Pearson Product Moment Correlation Coefficient in answering the six research questions raised.

**Findings:** The findings revealed that there is a positive and moderate relationship between funding of libraries and management of newspapers in the universities. The findings further revealed that there is a low and negative relationship between lack of trained librarians and management of the newspapers. However, the result shows that the more newspapers are managed, the more quality research production is improved in the universities because of the information they carry.

**Implications:** The university libraries should be given financial autonomy so as to carry out more serious issues, and take care of library's information resources.

**Originality/Value:** It was recommended among others that librarians be trained, through workshops and conferences both within and outside the country to acquire knowledge on modern ways of keeping and managing the newspapers for safe keeping.

**Keywords:** Newspapers management, Academic Libraries, University of Port Harcourt, Rivers State University of Science and Technology, Nigeria, Developing Country

**Paper Type:** Correlational research

## Introduction

A newspaper has been defined by the American Library Association (ALA) glossary of library and information science cited by Salaam (2002), in Ahia (2014) as a serial issued at stated frequent intervals (usually daily, weekly or semi weekly). It contains news, opinions, advertisements and other items of current, often local interest, such as politics, the economy, sports, etc. Newspapers are as important to the nation as radio and television (Alegbeleye 1984). They are becoming increasingly recognized as an important and indeed unequalled source of information about recent history and local events.

Prices of newspapers have increased unlike before; their cover prices now range between

one hundred and fifty (150) to three hundred (300) naira per copy. People now look up to libraries to read newspapers. Most radio/television stations in the country have a programme where daily newspapers are reviewed, and headlines of the papers are read out. In any case, not everybody has the time to listen to the papers being reviewed daily. As at the time of review, not many people would boast of power so as to get the information. The review on air cannot even serve the purpose of a researcher. It is therefore the responsibility of the libraries to keep their collection safe, and organized for the present and future generations.

Newspapers aim is to transmit information that will aid users, staff, and national development. Most of these newspapers are government owned; while some are independently owned.

Some library staff cut off important pages or

news bearing columns, abandoning the remaining pages in course of preparing newspaper indexes; but those cuttings do not go far enough to reveal the whole intellectual content of the newspapers themselves. Newspapers are very important in the university libraries.

Tiwari (2013), defined academic library as a house with organized collection of resources located in tertiary institutions like the universities, colleges, polytechnics etc. to provide information to researchers, students, lecturers, etc. According to Nwosu (2000), the university library is not only the basis of all teaching and study, rather it is the essential condition of research without which additions cannot be made to the sum of human knowledge.

The university library has contributed so much to educational development, ranging from better research production, improvement in reading habits, improvement in students cognitive development, and development in sense of arrangement to exposure of the works of intellectuals. It is said that the university library is a building in which collection of books; newspapers etc are kept, preserved for people (users) to read, study or borrow. It maintains a well rounded or balanced collection to support all programmes that are run in the institutions. These collections include newspapers which satisfy the learning and information requirements of the students, as well as the teaching and research needs of the lecturers and other users. University libraries have a responsibility for the management and preservation of their materials.

The care of materials in the library starts from the time of acquisition when materials are inspected to discover physical imperfections. It spans through the period of technical processing of these material till the time of their eventual use by the users. It is very important for the university library to provide adequate space accommodation for the storage of its materials. The area where library materials are stored should be well ventilated, free from dust, dampness, direct sunlight, insects, rodents and fungus (Okolo, 2002). The use of newspapers as information tool and in research works has continued to be on the increase in recent times. This has made for their effective management. Newspaper is not weighty and so could be carried about. You can read it in the train, on the plane, on a beach, on a car journey, or in bed.

You can read it next day as it entertains, educates and informs. To Peterson (2013), newspapers are current and have updates on happenings, and so needs to be kept safe.

Newspaper management to Eneh (2014) is very vital for posterity and also for the promotion of the dignity of man as regards its help in the field of education which promotes the acquisition of knowledge in various fields. When serials (where newspaper is grouped) are well managed, they give the institution a hope, a greater one in the course of research, as those who ask for issues on newspapers enjoy easy retrieval of such information. Newspaper management according to Otto (2012) is the proper handling of newspapers to provide its objective of information dissemination, research development in overall idea of education. When these functions are not carried out, the source of information that newspapers carry will break down and those users, staff or researchers that can't afford the cost, use and accessibility of computer will not find it easy, Ekeje (2013). The aim of newspaper is to deliver prompt information which the clientele need. Libraries should realize that researchers and users of the library require a wide range of knowledge. Realizing the complexities of the situation as well as the ever-increasing trends towards publication in serial form which newspaper is one of them, there should be selection and preservation on information needs of the university. The researcher will investigate the management of newspapers in the university libraries under study which are the University of Port Harcourt (Uniport) and Rivers State University of Science and Technology (RSUST).

University of Port Harcourt (Uniport) was established in 1975 as a University College. An affiliate of the University of Lagos, the former was constrained by dictations from the University of Lagos. Thus the need to break off from it and start its own independent academic programmes was felt. The break came in 1977 when the Federal Military Government granted it a fully fledged university status. Observing that the pivot of the university system is the students, the administration decided to set infrastructure; human and physical, before admitting students. One of these physical facilities is the library. The library started with 3 workshop blocks. The blocks were utilized as library offices, main library and the research library. By the first decade ending in 1985 there were 15 senior professional/ academic librarians,

10 senior support and 62 junior staff. But today the library has twenty-two (22) academic librarians as at when this study was carried out. The administration of the library was centralized and participatory, the decision process being broad based from its very beginning. According to the Master Plan of the University, the main library is a multipurpose complex, with a gross external area of 6, 385 square meters. This giant structure has recently been completed and by implication posed an ample challenge of management bureaucracy. No other time, so to say, should management of newspapers in University of Port Harcourt library be taken seriously or reviewed, and if need be, be up dated, than now. (Alagoa, 1999)

Rivers State University of Science and Technology (RSUST) is in the Rivers State Capital, Port Harcourt, which is the second largest in Nigeria. It is located in an area called Nkpolu-Oroworukwo popularly known as "Mile 3" Diobu, along Ikwerre Road, a wide thorough fare from Ikwerre Road leads directly to the main University gate. The establishment of the RSUST Nkpolu Port Harcourt on 6th August 1980 was a 'dream-come true' for the government and people of Rivers State, a dream that had lasted for about two decades. This is evident from the activities of the various government and bodies, both military and civilians, since the early sixties.

The university inheriting the assets and liabilities of the then College of Science and Technology Port Harcourt, started with five faculties, which were developed out of the various schools of this defunct colleges, and institute; namely: Agriculture, Engineering, Environmental Sciences, Science and Management Sciences. Under the administration of the university is the senate that takes charge of all academic activities of the university. It is empowered to organize and control teaching, study and research including the case of library.

The University of Science and Technology, Port Harcourt library currently holds about 120, 000 volumes, as at May 2001, excluding unbound serials. Serials numbering 2103 were taken up to September 1984 (students Handbook, RSUST). The serials have not been kept up to date because of funding difficulties, particularly provision of foreign exchange and the problem of storm that destroyed quite a number of their newspapers when their library was not completed. Today, RSUST, has put their serials

section in a good shape with greater enthusiasm to manage their newspapers very well.

However, the new central library building for which arrangement for furnishing was almost through as at when this study was carried out; also has seating capacity for 1, 000 readers. The library's book collection comprises texts needed to support, teaching and research. (Source: RSUST Students Handbook).

### **Statement of the Problem**

Newspapers are really very important in university libraries as they provide an excellent means of keeping users well informed on current events. It is unarguable that some information carried in the newspapers never get published in book form. Books, therefore, are acquired, organized, stored and displayed for easy dissemination and retrieval so that users will make effective use of it, so also there is need for proper co-ordination and management of newspapers.

When one talks about management of newspapers, it involves management of fund, collection development and personnel for effective coordination of a library. It is discovered that the proper co-ordination and utilization of newspaper resources in UNIPORT and RSUST libraries are fraught with numerous problems which make it difficult for the libraries to play the expected roles of digging out information from the papers. And thus these problems inhibiting the effective management of newspapers have not been properly addressed or looked out by most of the works read; hence this study is to bridge the gap and to determine the problems that affect the effective management of newspapers in UNIPORT and RSUST libraries. The areas to be investigated are funding, personnel, library autonomy, selection, organizing, preservation, and newspaper management in libraries.

### **Objectives of the Study**

This study investigates the problems and prospects of newspaper management in University of Port Harcourt and River State University of Science and Technology, Port Harcourt. In specific terms, the study intends to determine:

1. The extent to which funding of the libraries in the universities affect management of newspapers.

2. The extent to which lack of trained librarians affect management of newspaper resources in the institutions' libraries.
3. The extent to which library autonomy influence management of newspapers in the universities libraries.
4. The extent to which selection of newspaper resources contribute to the development of knowledge in the universities.
5. The extent to which organizing of newspaper resources facilitate easy retrieval of vital information.
6. The extent to which preservation of newspaper facilities contribute to improving the quality of academic research production in the universities.

### Research Questions

Based on the objectives of the study, the following questions have been articulated:

1. To what extent does funding of the libraries affect management of newspapers in university libraries?
2. To what extent does lack of trained librarians affect management of newspaper resources in the university libraries?
3. To what extent does absence of library autonomy influence management of newspaper section of the libraries in the universities?
4. To what extent does selection of newspaper resources contribute to the overall development of knowledge in the universities?
5. To what extent does organizing of newspaper resources facilitate easy retrieval of vital information in the universities libraries?
6. To what extent does preservation of newspaper facilities contribute to improving the quality of research production in the universities?

### Significance of the Study

This study is significant to library staff especially librarians and other researchers because any threat to information resources especially newspapers, serials, or printed materials can easily constitute a threat to the world of knowledge and scholarship that libraries support. It will provide the library staff with necessary information on the ways of managing her newspapers and also developing preservation awareness among Nigerian libraries.

This study will aid the librarians to imbibe the modern preservation methods that will stand the test of time. It will identify the causes of poor management of newspapers in the two universities under study and suggest counter measure to these causes. It is hoped that the present study will provide other university libraries with some useful guidelines towards effective management of their newspaper collections. It will also serve as a contribution to knowledge in this area.

### Methodology

The research design adopted for this paper is the correlational research design as it establishes relationship between two variables. The Pearson Product Moment Correlation was used. It was found appropriate for conducting this study because data was collected from UNIPORT and RSUST librarians.

The population of the study consisted of 40 librarians drawn from the two universities under study-RSUST= 18 and UNIPORT = 22, thus bringing the total to 40 librarians. The entire population of study was used due to its small size.

A thirty (30) items questionnaire was distributed to the 40 librarians to complete. The items are statement structured to yield responses from a 4–point scale of Very High Extent (VHE), High Extent (HE), Moderate Extent (ME), and Low Extent (LE). The questionnaire containing 30 items was clustered into 10 parts that generate responses concerning problems and prospects of newspaper management.

## Findings and discussion

### Demographic information

University	No. Administered	%	No. Returned	%
RSUST	18	45.00	16	40.00
UNIPORT	22	55.00	19	47.50
Total	40	100	35	87.50

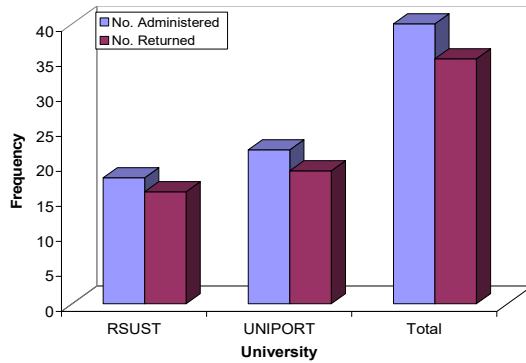


Figure 4.1: A Bar Chart Showing the Number of Questionnaires Administered and Returned

Table 1 and figure 1 show the number of questionnaire administered, returned and used for the study. The table shows that out of 40(100%) copies of the instrument administered; only 35(87.5%) copies were returned and used for the study.

### Analysis of Research Questions

The Pearson Product Moment Correlation is

**Table 2: Pearson Product Moment Correlation on the relationship between funding (F) of the libraries and management of newspapers in universities (M)**

Variables	N	$\Sigma F$	$\Sigma M$	$N \Sigma F^2$	$N \Sigma M^2$	$N \Sigma FM$	$r_p$	Evaluative remark
F. vs. M	35	263	277	72905	80745	74865	0.519	Moderate and positive relationship

Table 2 shows a positive and moderate relationship between funding of the libraries and management of newspapers in the universities ( $r_p = 0.519$ ). A correlation is a statistical measure of the extent to which two variables are associated. A positive correlation exists when two variables increase or decrease together. The

used to answer 6 research questions, which capture the pertinent issues highlighted in the objectives of the study. This was done by investigating the degree (extent) of association between the variable under consideration.

**Research question 1:** To what extent does funding of the libraries affect management of newspapers in the universities?

present result implies that funding is positively related to management of newspapers in the universities.

**Research question 2:** To what extent does the lack of sufficiently trained librarians affect the management of the newspaper resources in the universities libraries?

**Table 3: Pearson Product Moment Correlation on the relationship between lack of trained librarians (L) and the management of the newspaper resources in the universities libraries (M)**

Variables	N	$\Sigma L$	$\Sigma M$	$N \Sigma L^2$	$N \Sigma M^2$	$N \Sigma LM$	$r_p$	Evaluative remark
L. vs. M	35	236	277	57470	80745	64925	-0.167	Negative and low relationship

Table 3 shows a low and negative relationship between lack of trained librarians and the management of the newspaper resources in the universities libraries ( $r_p = -0.167$ ). A negative correlation exists when increases in one variable are accompanied by decreases in the other, and vice versa. Here, lack of trained librarians and management of the newspaper resources in the universities libraries are negatively correlated,

meaning that the more we lack trained librarians, the less effective the management of the newspaper resources. More of one means less of the other.

**Research question 3:** To what extent does the absence of library autonomy influence management of newspaper section of the libraries in the universities?

**Table 4: Pearson Product Moment Correlation on the relationship between the absence of library autonomy (A) and management of newspaper section of the libraries in the universities (M)**

Variables	N	$\Sigma A$	$\Sigma M$	$N\Sigma A^2$	$N\Sigma M^2$	$N\Sigma AM$	$r_p$	Evaluative remark
A. vs. M	35	341	277	118265	80745	95270	0.288	Low relationship

Table 4 shows a positive and low relationship between absence of library autonomy and management of newspaper section of the libraries in the universities ( $r_p = 0.288$ ). This indicated that absence of library autonomy positively influence management of newspaper

section of the libraries in the universities, but to a low extent.

**Research question 4:** To what extent does selection of newspaper resources contributes to the overall development of knowledge in the universities?

**Table 5: Pearson Product Moment Correlation on the Contribution of Selection (S) Of Newspaper Resources to the Overall Development of Knowledge (K) in the Universities.**

Variables	N	$\Sigma S$	$\Sigma K$	$N\Sigma S^2$	$N\Sigma K^2$	$N\Sigma SK$	$r_p$	Evaluative remark
S. vs. K	35	321	283	105735	83125	92120	0.447	Moderate relationship

Table 5 shows a moderate contribution of selection of newspaper resources to the overall development of knowledge in the universities ( $r_p = 0.447$ ). This indicates that selection of newspapers contribute to the overall

development of knowledge in the universities to a moderate extent.

**Research question 5:** To what extent does organizing of newspaper resources facilitate easy retrieval of vital information in the universities libraries?

**Table 6: Pearson Product Moment Correlation on the relationship between the organizing (G) of newspaper resources and easy retrieval (R) of vital information in the universities libraries.**

Variables	N	$\Sigma G$	$\Sigma R$	$N\Sigma G^2$	$N\Sigma R^2$	$N\Sigma GR$	$r_p$	Evaluative remark
G. vs. R	35	306	287	96110	85365	89215	0.512	Moderate relationship

Table 6 shows positive and moderate relationship between organizing of newspaper resources and easy retrieval of vital information in the universities libraries ( $r_p = 0.512$ ). This implies that organizing of newspaper resources

facilitate easy retrieval of vital information in the universities libraries.

**Research question 6:** To what extent does preservation of newspaper facilities contribute to improving the quality of research production in the universities?

**Table 7: Pearson Product Moment Correlation on the relationship between preservation (P) of newspaper facilities and improved quality (Q) of research production in the universities**

Variables	N	$\Sigma P$	$\Sigma Q$	$N\Sigma P^2$	$N\Sigma Q^2$	$N\Sigma PQ$	$r_p$	Evaluative remark
P. vs. Q	35	287	299	85435	91875	87185	0.498	moderate relationship

Table 7 shows a moderate contribution of preservation of newspaper facilities to improving the quality of research production in the universities ( $r_p = 0.498$ ). This implies that the more newspapers are preserved the more quality research production will be improved in the universities.

### Conclusions

The following conclusions were drawn from the major findings of the study:

1. Adequate funding of the university libraries will enable the Libraries tackle the problems and other important needs of the libraries.
2. Librarians are likely to perform better when exposed to workshops, seminars, conferences generally and trainings on newspaper management in particular. And adequate number of trained Librarians will boost attention on library materials especially on newspaper management. Therefore, more librarians should be employed.
3. The library is likely to perform better when they are autonomous. Decisions concerning issues in the library will be tackled without university management consultations.
4. It was also found that selection of newspapers will improve the development of knowledge as information tools don't enter into the libraries carelessly but are selected in order of importance considering the user's needs and the university objectives.
5. There is ease in retrieval of vital information when newspapers are organized properly.
6. There is high tendency of good research production, when the information that newspapers carry are preserved.

### Recommendations

The following recommendations are based on the major findings of the study.

1. The university management should make fund available for the libraries. Adequate funding will improve the library and thus newspaper management will equally improve.
2. There should be employment of more professional librarians in the libraries for smooth running of the libraries.
3. There should be an active support on the autonomy of the libraries at least on important issues of the department, e.g. the internally generated revenue of the library should be controlled by the library management.
4. There should be a continuous selection of newspapers for a greater development of knowledge through the information they carry.
5. Organizing of newspapers should be more modern, not just using the rack, counter, baskets and bags but rather there should be modern facilities so that retrieval of vital information would improve.
6. Librarians should be sent for workshops both within and outside the country to acquire more knowledge on modern ways of preservation of newspapers so that the quality of research production could be improved

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