

Patterns of Newspaper Collection Usage: A Case Study of National Museum Library, Jos, Nigeria

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Abstract

Purpose: This study was carried out to investigate the patterns of newspaper collection usage in Jos Museum Library; the status of the newspaper users; their purpose(s) for consulting the newspapers; frequency of the newspaper use; preferred newspaper edition; level of newspaper satisfaction; and challenges they faced in newspaper usage in the library.

Design/Methodology/Approach: The study covered 86 newspaper readers in National Museum Library, Jos. The survey research method was used for the study. The instrument used for data collection was questionnaire. Descriptive statistics such as frequency counts and percentages were used to analyze data.

Findings: The findings revealed that the majority of the newspaper readers in the library were job seekers who came to consult the library newspapers for job vacancies and current events in the country. The findings further revealed that most of the newspaper readers visited the library at least thrice a week and they mostly preferred reading the new editions of the newspapers. However, they complained among others that lack of more newspapers titles was the major challenge they faced in the newspaper usage in the library.

Implications: The library management need to budget more money for the purchase of more newspaper titles.

Originality/Value: It was recommended among others that the library management should purchase more newspaper titles. This will give the users more varieties of newspapers to consult.

Keywords: Newspaper Collection, Use, Jos Museum Library.

Introduction

Anglo American cataloguing rules (1988) described serial materials as a publication in any form issued in successive parts bearing numerical or chronological designations and intended to be continued indefinitely. Serials could be published daily, weekly, monthly, bimonthly, quarterly, biannually or annually with different masthead by publishing organization. Newspapers are therefore serial materials. It usually report latest news or current events for public consumption. These information cover all areas of human development which include: entertainment, sport, education, health, business, politics, fashion, international affairs, advertisements, vacancies etc. All the above mentioned human endeavors are usually grouped into sections in the newspaper. Therefore, newspapers are easy to read. Each of the newspaper editions has an International Standard Serial Number (ISSN). This is very helpful in indexing and retrieval of the newspaper for users.

In Nigeria today, there are about 59 different types of newspapers owned by different private organizations, individuals and even state governments. Prominent among these newspapers are: this day, the guardian, vanguard, tribune, new Nigeria, champion, daily trust, punch, leadership, the sun, daily times, independent etc. Due to the meager resources available to the library, the library can only subscribe to only 2 newspapers, daily.

However, due to the economic hardship in the country today, most people in the country today find it difficult to feed properly not to talk of buying a newspaper (which costs about N150.00). Therefore, most people prefer visiting libraries to satisfy their quest for latest news and events in the country. Jos Museum Library is a Special library. Hence, it provides free newspaper services for its users. This study therefore, focuses on the patterns of the newspaper usage in the Jos Museum Library; the challenges the users faced in the newspaper.

usage and to proffer solutions on how to

Objectives of the Study

The objectives of the study were to determine:

1. The status of the newspaper users in the Jos Museum Library;
2. The purpose for consulting the newspapers;
3. The frequency of the newspaper usage;
4. The preferred newspaper edition;
5. The level of newspaper satisfaction;
6. The challenges faced in newspaper usage in the Jos Museum Library.

Brief History of National Museum Library, Jos

The National Museum Jos, under the auspices of the National Commission for Museums and Monuments, is the largest and second oldest in Nigeria. This Museum was founded in 1952 to house the accidental archaeological findings discovered as a result of tin mining activities around the Jos Plateau in the 1940s (Jemkur 1992). The library is one of the many facilities available in this museum. It is located in the same building housing the Auditorium. It has a spacious reading room which doubles as the display room. There is also the Librarian Office which is used for all technical services.

At its inception, the Library of the National Museum Jos (opened between 1953 – 1955) had a total collection of about six hundred volumes of books and periodicals. Today, however, the collection has grown in size to about five thousand six hundred and fifty one (5,651) volumes of books and periodicals.

This library has one of the oldest collections of Arabic manuscripts in Nigeria as well as the Palmer papers on Northern Nigeria. Ibrahim (1997) noted that the library also has a collection of journals that dates as far back as the 1930s on diverse subjects and written in English and other European languages.

The library collection is divided into seven sections such as:

1. Serials
2. Books
3. Reference resources

improve the situation

4. Arabic Manuscript
5. Government publication
6. Maps and Plans
7. Palmer papers and other collections (grouped together because of their general themes)

The Arabic manuscripts were documented in microfilms. Therefore, the bulk of the collections in the library of National Museum Jos are in books.

The library has five staff made up of professionals and Para-professionals. With the use of the catalogue as a retrieval system and the assistance rendered by the staff, the users of this library have easy access to information.

Literature Review

Newspapers are a vital source of information in enlightened societies; providing the most recent information to readers. Newspapers serve various purposes for different categories of users. Berelson (1949) described five ways of what newspaper reading means to different people: as respite or recreation (using it to unwind from stress or as a tension reliever), public affairs (using it to develop public opinions), for information (using it to know what is going on in the society) as entertainment (using it for pleasure or to find out about pleasurable activities) and for socialization (using it to feel joined to others beyond the family block in the broader society). The importance of newspapers by the illustrations of Cheyney (1992) is that they are the textbooks that provide up to date information on local, state, national and world affairs, the most current analysis and criticism on executive and legislative decision making, the latest in music, theatre, television, fine arts and even column and comics to make readers laugh. Babalola (2002) opined that newspapers are the most accessible written documents to the largest proportion of people of all categories, young and old, students and workers, elites and peasants, literates and illiterates. Babalola (2002) also highlighted various ways in which newspapers have been used as vehicles for facilitating literacy empowerment. Due to the way people gather daily to discuss contents of newspapers, it inevitably promotes critical thinking, retention of information, problem solving and the querying of information source.

Ayepekun (1982) writing on information utilization by policy makers in Nigeria reported that newspapers and magazines are among the five most used sources of information by policy makers. The importance of newspapers was demonstrated by Oyediran-Tidings (2004) where it was demonstrated that newspaper is the second most sought documents preceded only by textbooks among library users of Yaba College of Technology. A previous study on the use of academic library of Olabisi Onabanjo University revealed that reading the library newspapers is the third most important motivation after reading for examination and book consultation for doing assignments on why students visit the library (Oyesiku and Oduwole, 2004)

In recent times, historic newspapers from years past have risen in scholars' estimation for their unique ability to offer a picture of society and culture from a specific time period. With the proliferation of interdisciplinary studies in the humanities and social sciences, newspapers are now seen as invaluable research resources (Okorafor, 1991) in many areas of study. Only newspapers can offer a "snapshot" of a given time period and cover such a wide breath of political, societal, and cultural perspectives that are unclouded by subsequent reflection, prejudices, and hindsight. The understanding that comes with the passage of time is altogether different from the dynamism of the moment that newspapers strive to capture in regular and frequent intervals. According to Mills (1981) the newspaper is indeed often the only source of information of the social, economic, and political development of a nation, region, or community, and as such is an indispensable resource for researchers in the social sciences and humanities. Hamilton (1992) elaborated further that newspapers are the "first draft of history" and that "through their reporting and commentaries, they influence politics, make or break public careers and even decide the fate of governments, and that "there is no other medium in our history that records every aspect of human life over the last 300 years – on a daily basis – like newspapers.

Oyelude (2005), in his submission, claimed that newspapers help to increase an individual's reading skills. Television and radio news don't usually satisfy the public as the physical papers, which are useful for future reference purpose. These and more, made reading newspapers

indispensable as they are veritable sources of information

Lawal (1990) and Peterson (1988), emphasized on the importance of newspaper as an essential research resources highly useful for all fields. Nevertheless, Oyelude (2005) highlighted on the problems associated with the proper preservation of newspaper materials. However, Nwokedi and Nedosa (1999) in their work on microbial deterioration of newsprints and suggested the microfilming of backsets of newspapers as a solution to proper preservation. Alegbeleye (1988), stressed the need for library staff to be well equipped in dealing with backlog issues for reference work by using specific methods of preservation. In his submission, he stated that the processing of newspaper materials start first with serial recording in Kardex, stamping, clipping the loose pages together for easy reading, storage and retrieval. Awareness, services, follows by indexing issues on specific broad subjects/ titles. This is then typed on 3" x 5" cards and shelved into card cabinet for public use. Important topics are then recorded into a 'data bank' for users.

In Jos Museum Library, readers are served with their choice of newspaper. On special occasions, outsiders (non-registered members) may be allowed to read the library newspapers but must first obtain a permission from the librarian. At the close of the day, statistics of the readers are collected and the newspapers used are re-shelved by title in readiness for use the next day. Since, newspaper is one of our library's resources, the purpose of this research therefore was to study the patterns of the newspaper usage in the Jos Museum library and to examine some of the challenges readers faced and also proffer solution on how to improve the situation.

Methodology

A Survey research design was adopted for the study. The instrument used for data collection was questionnaire. A 22 items structured questionnaire was designed and pre-tested before it was administered. The questionnaire was divided into 2 sections. Sections 'A' sought for information on personal (Demographic) data of the respondents. Section 'B' sought for information on the status of the respondents; their purpose for consulting newspapers; their frequency of newspaper usage, their preferred edition for consultation; their level of

satisfaction; and challenges they faced in newspaper usage in the Library.

One hundred copies of the questionnaire were randomly given to the library users who visited the newspaper section in the library within the surveyed period. Questionnaire was also administered to other library users, but the user was first asked if he/she had visited the newspaper desk in the library before, and those that have not been to the section were excluded from the survey because they were not in a position to assess the activities of the library in this area. In the administration of the

questionnaire particularly those that came to the newspaper desks, the users were asked if they have been given the questionnaires before to avoid multiple entries by an individual. The completed questionnaire was collected back from the library users immediately after completion.

Results and Discussion

Out of the 100 copies of the questionnaire distributed, 86 were completed correctly, returned and found usable, giving **86%** response rate.

Table 1: Status of the Newspaper Users

N= 86

S/N	Status	Frequency	Percentage (%)
1	School of Archeology Students	19	22.1
2	Students from University of Jos	25	29.1
3	Applicants	35	40.7
4	Museum Staff	4	4.7
5	Not specified	3	3.4
	Total	86	100.00

Table 1 above shows the status of the newspaper users of the library. This revealed that large number 35 (40.7%) of the newspaper users were Applicants. This was followed by 25 (29.1%) students from university of Jos. Nevertheless, 19 (22.1%) of the newspaper users were students from school of Archeology. While, 4 (4.7%) of the newspaper users claimed that they were

Museum Staff. However, 3 (3.4%) of the newspaper users did not indicate their status.

This finding revealed that the majority of the newspaper readers in the library were applicants. This could possibly be because the library is sited at the heart of the town. Hence, applicants find the location of the library an ideal place to come and relax and at the same time go through the daily newspapers.

Table 2: Purpose for Consulting Newspapers

N= 86

S/N	Purpose for Newspaper	Frequency	Percentages (%)
1	Current Affairs	21	24.4
2	Sport & Entertainment	22	25.6
3	Employment	38	44.2
4	Research	5	5.8
	total	86	100.00

Table 2 above illustrates the respondent's purpose for consulting newspapers in the library. The findings revealed that high proportion 38 (44.1%) of the respondents read newspapers for employment vacancies and other job related opportunities. This was followed by those 22 (25.6%) who consult the newspapers for sports and entertainment. While, 21 (24.4%) of the respondents said that they read the newspapers

for current affairs. Nevertheless, 5 (5.8%) of the newspaper readers claimed that they consult the newspapers for research purpose.

This observation shows that most of the newspaper readers in the library usually consult the newspapers for employment vacancies. This finding could possibly be because of the location of the library in the town. This then attracted job seekers and youths into the library.

Table 3: Frequency of Newspaper Usage

N= 86

S/N	Number of times	frequency	Percentage (%)
1	Daily	23	26.7
2	Thrice a week	31	36.1
3	Weekly	20	23.3
4	Occasionally	12	13.9
	Total	86	100.00

Table 3 above shows the respondents frequency of newspaper usage in the library. The study revealed that a large proportion 31 (36.1%) of the respondents visited the library at least thrice a week to read the newspapers. While, 23 (26.7%) of the respondents claimed that they

come to the library daily to read the newspapers. This was followed by those 20 (23.3%) that said that they visited the library at least once a week to read the newspapers. Nevertheless, 12 (13.9%) of the respondents visited the library occasionally to read the newspapers.

Table4: Preferred Edition of the Newspaper

N= 86

S/N	Editions	Frequency	Percentage (%)
1	New edition	42	48.8
2	Old edition	13	15.1
3	Both Old & New editions	31	36.1
	Total	86	100.00

Table 4 above examined the respondents preferred newspaper editions for consultation. This revealed that majority 42 (48.8%) of the respondents preferred consulting the new edition of the newspapers in the library. This was followed by those 31 (36.1%) that preferred consulting both the new and old editions. While, 13 (15.1%) of the respondents preferred reading the old edition of the newspapers.

This finding shows that majority of the newspaper readers in the library preferred consulting the new editions i.e. the latest edition .This finding could possibly be because most newspaper readers are interested in current job vacancies and latest events in the country. This finding supports the works of Abiola (2006) and Salaam (2002) and further amplifies the fact that newspaper readers in the library always prefer new editions of newspapers.

Table 5: Level of Newspaper Satisfaction

N= 86

S/N	Level of satisfaction	Frequency	Percentage (%)
1	Satisfied	12	14.0
2	Undecided	21	24.4
3	Not satisfied	53	61.6
	Total	86	100

Table 5 above illustrates the respondent’s level of newspaper satisfaction. This revealed that 53 (61.6%) of the respondents were not satisfied with the newspaper services in the Library. However, 21(24.4%) of the respondents were undecided with the newspaper services in the library. While, 12(14.0%) of the newspaper

users claimed that they were satisfied with the newspapers services in the library.

From the reactions of the newspapers users in the library in table 5, it is obvious that most of the respondents were not satisfied with the services.

Table 6: Challenges Faced In Newspaper Usage in National Museum Library, Jos

S/N	Problems	Frequency	Percentage (%)
1	Unavailability of new editions of the newspapers.	12	14.0
2	Old Newspaper editions not properly preserved.	21	24.4
3	Photocopying problem.	3	3.5
4	More Newspapers Tittles are needed.	50	58.1
	Total	86	100

Table 6 above shows the challenges newspaper readers faced in the library. This revealed that high proportion 50 (58.1%) of the newspaper readers complained that they need more newspapers titles. While, 21 (24.4%) of the respondents on the other hand complained on the way the old newspaper editions were preserved. This was followed by 12 (14.0%) of the respondents who lamented on the unavailability of new editions of the newspapers. While, 3 (3.5%) of the newspaper readers claimed that the photocopying services of the library was inefficient and most of the time not functional. This makes it impossible for them to make copies of the newspapers incase they need to.

Conclusion

This study investigated the patterns of newspaper usage in National Museum Library Jos, the challenges the users faced and solution(s) on how to improve the situation. The findings revealed that the majority of the newspaper readers in the library were applicants who came to consult the library newspapers for current employment vacancies and current events in the country. The findings further revealed that majority of the respondents, visited the library at least thrice a week to consult the newspapers and they mostly preferred reading the new editions of the newspapers. However, many of the respondents were not satisfied with the newspaper services of the library and their major reasons were: (a) readers need more titles for consultation; (b) poor preservation of the old editions of newspapers; (c) the new editions of the newspapers were often not available for consultation; (d) inefficiency of the photocopying services.

Recommendations

Based on the findings of this study, the following recommendations were proffered:

1. The library management should purchase more newspaper titles. This will give the users more varieties of newspapers to consult.
2. Since, large number of the newspaper readers preferred new editions of the newspapers, efforts must be made by the library management to make new editions of the newspapers available on time for readers to consult. Therefore, the purchasing of the newspapers in the library should be hastened to avoid unnecessary delays.
3. The old editions of the newspapers should be properly preserved and proper housekeeping method should be observed in the serial section to avoid littering and subsequent deterioration of the newspapers. In fact, the library management may even source for grant to microfilm the backsets of newspapers in the library.
4. The photocopying services in the library should be improved upon in order to encourage library users to make copies of their resources in case a user decides to. If the current photocopier in the library is bad, the management should replace it and even attach a photocopier to serial section of the library. This will also help greatly in reducing the level of mutilation of serial materials in the library.

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