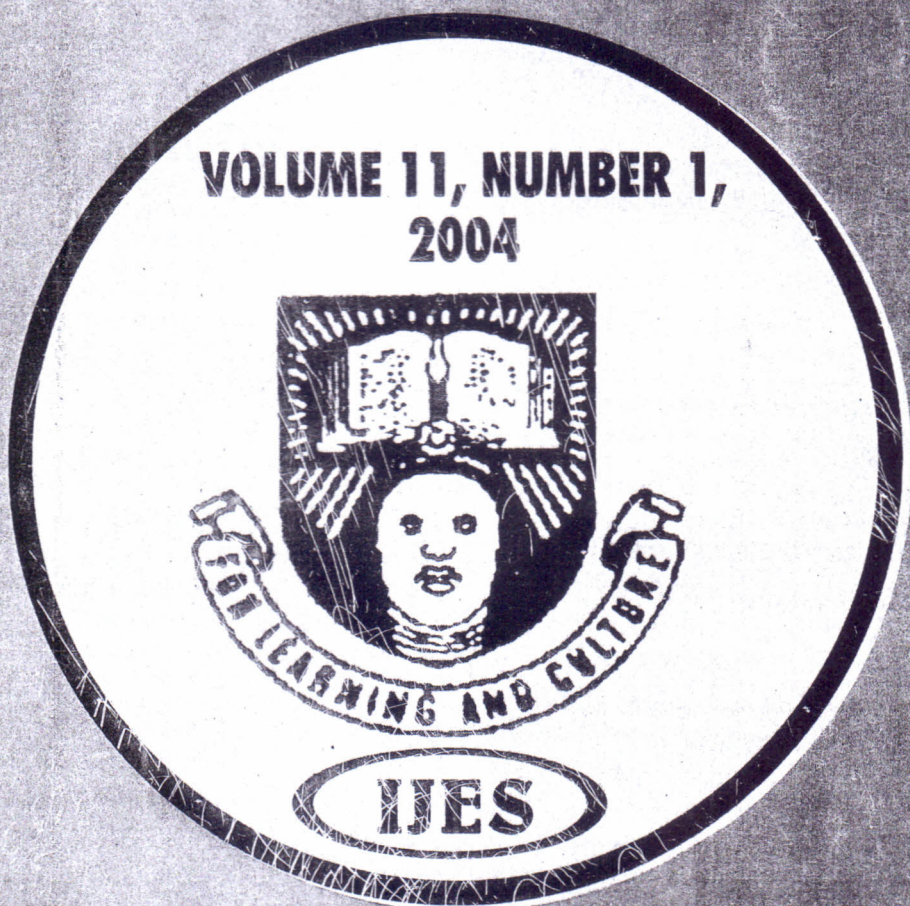


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NEWSPAPER MANAGEMENT AND USE IN HEZEKIAH OLUWASANMI LIBRARY OBAFEMI AWOLOWO UNIVERSITY, ILE- IFE, NIGERIA

BY

ADEGBOYE, OLUKEMI A.

AND

IGBENEGHU, IFAORUMHE BRUNO

ABSTRACT

This paper examines the acquisition and management practices of newspapers in Hezekiah Oluwasanmi Library in Obafemi Awolowo University, Ile-Ife. It also describes the use pattern of newspapers in the library. The paper makes some recommendations that have direct bearing on newspaper acquisition, management and digitization policies of the Library.

INTRODUCTION

Studies on newspaper are generally very sparse. In this part of the world, particularly within the context of library, archival and information science, literature is hardly available on the subject. The non-availability of literature however has tended to leave the immense contributions made by this information source in oblivion.

The purpose of this paper, is to describe what newspaper is, discuss the importance of newspaper as an information source, examine the newspaper acquisitions and management

find out the most frequently used newspaper in Hezekiah Oluwasanmi Library and make recommendations on how best to manage the newspaper collections in view of space and volumes.

The Encyclopedia Britannica (1993) defined a newspaper as thus;

A publication usually issued daily weekly or at other regular times that provides news, views, features and other information of public interest and that often carries advertising.

Also, the Encyclopedia (1911) further defined the word newspaper as that

which according to the English newspaper libel and Registration Act is:

Any paper containing public news, intelligence or occurrences or any remarks or observation therein printed for sale and published periodically or in parts or numbers at interval not exceeding twenty-six days.

The Encyclopedia (1911) further quoted the British post office which defined the word as "any publication printed and published in numbers at intervals of not more than seven days, consisting wholly or in parts of political or other news or of articles relating thereto or to other current topics, with or without advertisement".

Generally, from day to day experience, newspapers contain news of public and current events and are issued in successive parts. Most newspapers in Nigeria are issued on daily basis.

The importance of Newspapers as an Information Source

This kind of study is expedient because of the important role that newspapers are now playing in the academic. Students, lecturers and researchers alike use newspapers for quite a number of reasons. It has been observed that in the academic and research libraries, textbooks, monographs, journals

and other grey literature are not sufficient to satisfy users' needs any longer. Newspapers now serve as viable information supplements to the other conventional sources and most especially in the area of social studies (De-Roche 1999). One of the factors that informed this development is that there is a concentration of publishing on the educational market in Nigeria (Okwilagwe 2000) and the fact that Nigeria has the largest publishing industry in Africa. The development is bound to affect the teaching and learning resources in the Universities. The newspapers stand out as available resources filling the gaps created.

Also, it is worth noting that the newspaper serve as sources of up-to-date and compelling information that teachers use to teach current events (Street 2002) current issues cannot be easily merged with existing information in textbook format because their turnovers are not as fast as that of newspapers that are published in rapid successions. It is in this regard that newspapers are particularly beneficial to students of social studies and political education (Morduchwicz, 1994; Street, 2002; Yeich 2002).

Furthermore, literature has also affirmed that newspapers have other varieties of uses such as in motivation for reading (Street 2002, DeRoche, 1991); functional literacy in English (Rajaretriam,

2002) and most importantly and germane to this study, is that researchers have found out that the use of newspapers in education programmes has had an impact in newspapers reading behaviour (Chattman, 1982).

The work of Ibelama and Powell (2003) also showed the effect of newspaper reading behaviour and attitudes on race relations. That is race relations had improved over the past ten years. Also Vockell and Cusick (1995) reviewed teachers attitudes towards using newspapers in the classroom.

Of great significance is the issue of the acquisitions and cost implications of newspapers in libraries. Street (2002) as earlier cited in this work had established that newspapers are cheaper and cost effective. With this in place, newspapers will continue to be a viable complement of library resources worth investing in particularly in the development of library resources of developing nations.

It is also worth noting that since newspapers constitute a primary source for local history, they need to be preserved (Library of Congress, 2002) because they are subject to a high level of deterioration. Hence literature as well as practice established that digitization is the most current action to be taken on the preservation of newspaper records (Heilmcrone, 1999; Deegan, 2001/2002).

This does not however discountenance the use of older methods such as microfilming in the preservation of the materials (Maher and Shearer, 1979).

Finally, mention should be made that digitization of newspapers will not only preserve the resources for posterity, it will also facilitate the interchange of ideas and information therein in the world's global village. This final submission is in consonance with Hicks and Erwing's (2003) view that the world through interactive technologies particularly the internet could really be brought into the classroom through on-line global newspapers.

Statement of the Problem

Despite the innumerable use to which newspapers are being put to in academic libraries little or nothing had been done in study of newspapers use behaviour and as a result there is a dearth of literature in this area.

This study therefore seeks to fill the gap created in this area of user studies using Hezekiah Oluwasanmi Library, Obafemi Awolowo University, Ile-Ife as a case study.

Methodology

The study depends on the primary data generated in the Reference Section of the Hezekiah Oluwasanmi Library on

users over a period of eleven years that is between 1993 to 2003 as well as observation of management practices of Newspaper collections in the Library.

Newspaper Acquisitions and Management Practices in Hezekiah Oluwasanmi Library.

The Hezekiah Oluwasanmi Library has about 26 titles of newspapers in stock. The subscription to these newspapers started since its establishment in 1962. The titles of the newspapers are listed in Table I.

Table I: Titles of Newspapers in the Hezekiah Oluwasanmi Library’s Stock.

Alaroye	Nigerian Tribune
Business Times	Nigerian Herald
Comet	New Nigeria
Daily Sketch	Nigerian Star
Daily Times	The Guardian
Daily Express	National Concord
Gbougoun	Morning Post
Isokan	Punch
Iwe Ariya	The Light
Imole Owuro	West African Pilot
Nigerian Tide	Renaissance
Nigerian Chronicle	Times International
	Evening Times
	Vanguard

Of the 26 listed titles, 18 titles are no longer being subscribed to because they

have died a natural death. These are shown in table II.

Table II: Subscription Status of Newspaper Titles in Hezekiah Oluwasanmi Library.

Titles of Newspapers that are no longer on the subscription list.	Titles of Newspaper that are still on the subscription list
Alaroye	Business Times
Daily Express	Comet
Evening Times	Daily Times
Gbougoun	The Guardian
Isokan	Nigerian Tribune
Iwe Ariya	New Nigeria
Imole Owuro	Punch
Morning Post	Vanguard
Nigerian Chronicle	
Nigerian Herald	
Times International	
West African Pilot	
Renaissance	
Nigerian Tide	
The Light	
Nigerian Star	
National Concord	

Table II reveals the subscription status of the newspaper titles in Hezekiah Oluwasanmi Library. Column I shows the list of newspaper titles that are no longer on the subscription list, while column II

shows the list of newspaper titles that are still on the subscription list of the library.

The available newspapers in the library stock are stored in cartoons on monthly basis according to the titles of the

paper. These cartoons are kept in the conservation room at the basement of the library complex. It should be mentioned however, that the library's storage facilities for the newspapers are not adequate. The room is not well ventilated and the humidity and temperature are not controlled. This condition is responsible for progressive deterioration of the newspapers.

However, in order to conform with the worldwide information and communication technology (ICT) as well as to combat deterioration, the Hezekiah Oluwasanmi Library has commenced the digitization of its newspaper collections in the year 2004. The library has started with the digitization of the back-log of the Daily Times from 1986.

This is done without really taking into cognisance the use patterns of the newspapers over the years. This paper has treated this under sub-section titled: Newspaper collection and use in Hezekiah Oluwasanmi Library. It is also worth mentioning that the library also maintains newspaper clipping files covering various areas of knowledge and discipline even though that is outside the scope of this paper.

Newspaper Collections and Use

Out of the library stock of twenty six (26) titles (though with missing gaps)

over the years, it has been observed that users have consistently put ten (10) titles into use in the last eleven (11) years covered by this study. The list of the newspapers and frequency of use are presented in Table III.

Table III: List of Newspapers and Frequency of Use the Hezekiah Oluwasanmi**Library**

	1993	1994	1995	1996	1997	1998	1999	2000	2001	2002	2003	Total
Business Times	9	-	44	51	105	47	2	3	15	40	25	341
Comet	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	22	93	76	191
Daily Sketch	9	41	248	120	208	263	155	151	172	220	107	1694
Daily Times	70	39	483	158	234	280	128	183	174	304	91	2144
The Guardian	57	25	114	346	368	631	471	256	553	615	378	3814
National Concord	38	1	20	51	117	123	79	97	89	34	16	665
Nigerian Tribune	28	51	277	97	198	270	167	193	151	223	121	1776
Punch	7	2	4	48	109	160	137	139	221	200	211	1238
Vanguard	4	25	227	86	165	207	84	192	158	174	77	1399
New Nigerian	-	-	2	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	2

Table III reveals that the Guardian is the most frequently used newspaper with a total of 3814 requests of the number of newspapers requested between 1993 and 2003. This is followed by the Daily Times with 2,144 requests while the New Nigerian however is the least requested newspaper with a total of only 2.

The newspaper use pattern is not without implication both for the

acquisition and digitization policies of the library. In other words, the use pattern could be used as predictors in the acquisition and digitization procedures. For instance, in the face of financial crunch being experienced by the Library, the use pattern could serve as an indicator of the users' priorities. This will enable the library to choose which newspaper titles to acquire or drop

whenever the theory of opportunity cost should be applied.

On the other hand, as far as digitization of newspapers is concerned, not all newspaper could be found worthy. The importance attached to newspaper titles by the library users could also be used in determining priorities and choices in digitization. It should be added that users evaluation of library resources and services are significant denominators in user studies. Hence, they serve as bedrock upon which further policies of the library are based.

Conclusion and Recommendations

This study has attempted an overview of the acquisition, maintenance and use of the newspapers in the holdings of Hezekiah Oluwasanmi Library, Obafemi Awolowo University, Ile-Ife, Nigeria.

The study observed that acquisition of newspaper titles had dwindled over the years. Only eight titles out of twenty-six ever subscribed to were still on the current subscription list of the library. The two main reasons responsible for the development were stoppage of publication by the publishers

and lack of adequate funding of newspaper acquisition.

Observation also revealed that newspapers were not well maintained as the storage facilities still needed to be improved upon. The study further concluded that newspapers served as good complements of books, journals and other resources in the library with the Guardian newspaper taking the lead as revealed by table III while the least used was the New Nigerian newspaper. This findings implies that a further development of the newspaper collection will be more beneficial to the library users.

The submission in literature that newspaper are an invaluable resource material in the library has been affirmed by practice in the Hezekiah Oluwasanmi Library though further improvement in the area of acquisition and newspaper collections development is desirable. Much also is still left to be desired in the area of management of these resources. The storage area needs improvement and modern methods of preservation needs to be employed.

In view of these observations, the following recommendations are desirable.

1. Improved funding of newspaper acquisition and increase in the titles of newspapers subscriptions.
2. There should be improvement in storage and maintenance condition viz control of humidity and temperature in storage areas.
3. The library should evolve an acquisition policy by newspapers using the periodic newspaper use pattern statistics generated in the library as a predictor
4. The library should also evolve a digitization policy by using the newspaper use pattern statistics generated in the library in determining which of the newspapers to be digitized for posterity at any point in time.
5. An analysis of the newspaper clipping use pattern should be carried out as a follow up to this study. This will give an assessment of the subject value placed on the various clippings of the newspapers.
6. Periodic survey of newspaper use should be embarked upon in order to improve on the discharge of services in this area.

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