

Use of Serials for Research by Postgraduate Students in University Libraries in Benue State, Nigeria

NYIYONGO, Teryima Victor¹, Asen Anita Tersur (CLN)², TOFI, Simon Ternenge (CLN)³

^{1,3}*Benue State School of Nursing, Makurdi, Nigeria*

²*HOD, Cataloguing and Classification Division, Library and Information Services, Benue State University, Makurdi, Nigeria*

Abstract: This study investigate use of serials for research by postgraduate students in university libraries in Benue State, Nigeria. The main purpose of the study was to determine the use of serials for research by postgraduate students in university libraries in Benue State, Nigeria. The study employed a survey research design where entire population of 387 library registered postgraduate students of 2015/2016 and 2016/2017 academic sessions in three (3) universities in Benue State was used for the study because the population is manageable and accessible to the researcher. Thus, there was no sample. Two (2) research questions were raised and a null hypothesis formulated in line with the objectives to guide the study. The research instruments was a structured questionnaire which was subjected to face and content validity. Cronbach Alpha method was used to determine the internal consistency of the questionnaire items and the analysis yielded a Cronbach Coefficient Alpha of 0.80. The questionnaire was administered by the researchers and a response rate of 387 (100%) was recorded. Data collected were analyzed using frequency counts, percentages (%), mean (\bar{X}) and standard deviation (SD) to answer research questions while inferential statistics of Chi-square was used to test the null hypothesis at 0.05 level of significance. The result of the findings revealed that Serials were readily available for research activities in university libraries in Benue state. Findings also revealed that majority of the postgraduate students were challenged among others, by difficulty in locating needed serials, inadequate storage facilities; journals articles not indexed for easy access and inadequate power supply; lack of awareness of serial materials and poor attitude of library staff towards users. Results further revealed that the null hypothesis tested was rejected which implies that the opinions of postgraduate students differed significantly on the use of serials for research activities. Finally, conclusion and recommendations were made based on the findings of the study.

Keywords: Use, Serials, Research, Postgraduate students, University Libraries.

I. INTRODUCTION

Academic libraries are those libraries established, owned and funded by institutions of higher learning, that is, university libraries, polytechnic libraries, colleges of education libraries and colleges of agriculture libraries. As integral part of their parent institutions, they design their collections and services to meet the institutional programme of the institution. The primary aims and objectives of academic libraries is to offer its users that is, students, academic staff and other members of the university community the academic, learning and research services in support of the programmes of

the parent institution. To ensure that its services remain relevant in the institution, academic libraries provide maximum access to its collections in order to serve the information needs of the academic community. Consequently, this research is centered on the university libraries in Benue state. In this study, the researcher intends to critically examine the use of serials for research by postgraduate students in university libraries in Benue state. Postgraduate students are those who have finished their Bachelor Degree or Higher National Diploma programmes and are undergoing studies for more advanced programme. Postgraduate students include those who are running programmes in postgraduate diploma, master degree programmes, doctoral degree programmes and post-doctoral degree for higher qualifications. These categories of students' uses library and mostly serials for carrying out their research activities which university library always strive to provide. Postgraduate students are those students who have completed their university degree or national diploma programme and are pursuing studies for a more advanced qualification. They constitute higher number of people carrying out research in university libraries in Benue state using mostly serials for their research activities. Universities are involved in teaching, research and publication. All over the world, according to Akintayo and Oghenekohwo in Akinbode and Nwalo (2017) university education has attracted significant interest as it serves as the only way of ensuring immediate changes and transformation in human and technological advancement. One of the preoccupations of university is research. Research, as pointed out by NtiamoahBaidu in Akinbode and Nwalo (2017) is the engine that generates new knowledge and provides ideas for national development. The outcome of research is usually published. Ogbomo (2010) maintained that publication is essential for problem-solving, leading to dynamism in library services as a response to changing times and environment. To be able to carry out a meaningful research, the researcher must be able to have access to and use current, relevant and adequate information especially from serials in the university library. Using the journal literature, the individual researcher has to make a trip to the library to locate bound volume containing the article or articles desired Farrington in Akinbode and Nwalo (2017).

Considering the objectives of higher education today, the university library system has to shoulder onerous

responsibilities. Library not only complements the class room study but also aids the research.

The University library delivers a wide spectrum of services, by helping students with textbooks, parallel studies, reference books and periodicals; by providing a large number of bibliographic tools and up-to-date literature on every subject for students, teachers and research scholars; as well as by maintaining an efficient reference and information service.

The University libraries has the following objectives

1. To provide facilities for all teaching, learning, educational and research programmes of the University.
2. To create to the information needs of teachers, students, researches, associated with the university.
3. To provides facilities to its users for intellectual development which is a power of acquiring ideas through individual efforts.
4. It conserves knowledge.
5. By putting knowledge to use for research purpose it makes extension of knowledge.
6. By providing latest knowledge to teachers in their field for effective teaching it makes transmission of knowledge possible.

Services offered by university libraries include: Reference Service, Bibliographic Services, User Education, Referral Services, Resource Sharing, Indexing Services and Reprographic Services.

In recent years, universities have started paying greater attention to research. Universities do this by developing appropriate policies, making funds and facilities available for research, and encouraging their staff and students to carry out research. In many postgraduate programmes at universities, students are required to carry out a research project and submit a report as a pre-requisite for completing their degree. Faculty members are also required to conduct research for mobility. This has led to researchers making greater demands for access to information and evaluating the quality of information provided (Aamir and Diljit 2011). University libraries have long been known as gateways to information. In line with the changing role of universities, the vision and mission of University libraries has to alter to meet these new requirements. Foo in Aamir and Diljit (2011), affirm that, university libraries now take on the key role of providing a competitive advantage for the university and they are positioning themselves to be the learning and research centres of universities.

Serial plays important role in the life of every meaningful research. This is because, the information contained in serials are the product of research findings carried out by ardent scholars in different areas of specialization. The information contained in serials is factual, current and up-to-date which are relevant for research.

Serials contain the most current information in any field of study and constitute an invaluable component of a university library stock. Building a respectable collection of serials in a university library is to satisfy the various disciplines and regular updating its collections in order to provide affordable information and services to the users remain the primary duty of the libraries. Since university libraries are to support learning, teaching and research, the role of serials in achieving these cannot be over emphasized. Serials are essential tool of teaching and research in academic endeavour and remain a potent tool for dissemination of knowledge. Effective academic pursuit therefore presupposes effective provision of serials by the library and utilization of serials by postgraduate students. University libraries in Benue State in a bid to provide serials for postgraduate students are faced with many challenges. These includes: funds, inadequate human resources, acquisition problems and lukewarm attitude of users. Amid these challenges, when serials are provided by the library, the use of the resource by postgraduate students is not encouraging as observations in some of the theses proposals and paper presentations. Low or non-usage of serials in university libraries could negatively affects postgraduate students in Benue State for their research activities.

However, ill stock of serials creates disaffection and distrust between the library and the users. The ill stock of serials could be in the area of non-currency of the serials in the library, serials are not much available for postgraduate students to use which could leads to the low patronage and usage of serials by postgraduate students for their research activities which could lead to poor research output of the postgraduate students. These could negatively affect postgraduate students for their quest to avail themselves with the factual, current and up-to-date information contained in serials which are relevant and treasured for research. Serials, specifically journals have been found to be useful to postgraduate students because they contained current research findings which can improve academic research output.

The Anglo-American Cataloguing Rules, (2013) defined serial as a publication in any medium issued in successive parts, bearing numeric or chronological designations and intended to be continued indefinitely. Serials include: periodicals, newspapers, annuals, journals, proceedings, memoirs, transactions among others. They are categorized into periodicals and non-periodicals based on intended frequency of publication. A periodical is intended to appear more regularly and more often than once in a year. This includes journal, newspapers and magazines. Non-periodicals are usually dated or numbered, published either regularly or irregularly and not usually paid for in advance for publications. They includes annuals, conference proceeding, monographic series, newsletters, indexes, abstracts, report and transaction of societies. Serials are very unique; they contain current information and are very useful for study, learning, teaching and research purpose. A professional who accepts responsibility for managing serial collections is referred to as

a serial librarian in libraries. Popoola (2006) asserted that library is an integral part of any educational institution. A well-stocked and organized library is the pride of any educational institution which will help in meeting the teaching and research needs through the availability of serial publications.

Osborn in Nwalo (2003) described serial publications as those publications that are issued in successive parts, appearing at regular interval and intended to be continued indefinitely. These includes, newspapers, Magazines, newsletters, journals, indexes, abstracts, report, proceedings, transactions of Societies. According to Keenam and Johnson (2000), Feather and Struges (2004) and Reitz (2004), serial is any publication that is published in any medium issued under the same title in a succession of discrete parts usually numbered and appearing either at regular intervals with no predetermined conclusion.

Furthermore, Madu and Adeniran in Hunu, Omeluzor, and Amadi, (2013) outlines some characteristics of serial publications especially journals to include: the editor might change, the content of each issue is different, the publication interval varies, they are published annually, bi-annually, Monthly, quarterly, forth nightly and weekly, no planned end to the sequence, currency (up-to-date), more expensive than books and are usually subscribed to. Edoka (2000), Maintained that the worth of any library is measured by the quality of stock it has including serial materials. Chukwu in Attama (2013), asserts that the major indicators of a good library is in the quality and quantity of its collection which must include serial publications such as journals, periodicals, yearbooks, magazines, newspapers, abstracts, maps among others. Journals are the most important to research because much of their articles are products of research and it may never appear in any other publication. This explain why Bhat (2014) concluded that lack of awareness on the use of periodicals, lack of training on the use of online journals, and proper infrastructure in the library are the demotivating factors in the use of periodicals. Serial publications especially journals have been found to be an important asset to students in general and post-graduate students in particular, for their research activities as they contain current research findings which can enhance their research activities and this could not be achieved except its available.

The study discusses the use of serials in libraries in Benue State by postgraduate students for their research activities. The study sought to find out the constraints of serials in university libraries in Benue State for quality services to users. The use of serials by postgraduate students is expected to improve their academic research standard. As a result, serial sections of university libraries in Benue state are expected to provide current and up-to-date information resources including journals, newspapers, newsletters, year books, magazines to postgraduate students in support of their research activities. These serials if they are current, relevant and up-to-date, its usage by postgraduate students for research can be inevitable for quality research output in universities in

Benue State, Nigeria. It is against this background that this present study sought to find out the use of serials for research by postgraduate students in university libraries in Benue state, Nigeria.

1.1 Statement of the Problem

The primary role of the university library is to support teaching, learning, research and community services of the parent institution. University library is also established to serve the objectives of the university which is to support and promote teaching, learning, and research. As a result, the university library is meant to serve the undergraduates, postgraduates, lecturers and other members of the university community. University library is the heart of intellectual life of the university community. University cannot exist without a library since the university is meant to teach and carry out research. For the undergraduates the library is supposed to provide information materials and services specifically designed to meet their needs. For the postgraduate students, teaching staff and research fellows, the university library is supposed to provide information resources and services of sufficient quality and diversity. Thus, the responsibility of the university library is to ensure that the use of its information resources and services are maximized to benefit its users. To effectively carry out this enormous task, university library must be given the required support in terms of human, financial and material resources for optimal services. Hence, for university library to achieve its goals of learning, teaching, researching and scholarly publishing to advance knowledge and development, the need for provision of serial publications for research by university libraries in Benue State cannot be overemphasized.

Despite the colossal amount of the resources usually committed to serials in university libraries in Benue State, the use of the section for research is not encouraging as witness by the researchers. Most often times, the quality of research output by postgraduate students is not good enough as observed by lecturers, design and content readers during proposal and exit seminal defense. This could be as a result of non-currency of serials in the library. It could also be as a result of inadequate availability of serials in the library and the extent of use of serials in the library could be low by postgraduate students which could negatively affect the quality of their research output. To this end, the use of serials for research by postgraduate students has been identified as crucial issues that have captured the attention of the researchers. The researchers observed that postgraduate students find it difficult to carry out their research and all the universities under study on the other hand are faced with the challenges of quality service provision in serial divisions of their libraries. If these identified challenges persist, this could leads to poor quality research output by postgraduate students in university libraries in Benue state to the best of knowledge of the researchers and these create a gap that this study intends to fill. Therefore, the study sought to finds out the use of

serials for research by postgraduate students in university libraries in Benue State.

1.2 Objectives of the Study

The purpose of this study is to determine the use of serials for research by postgraduate students in university libraries in Benue State, Nigeria. Specifically, the study sought to:

1. Ascertain the extent to which serials are used by postgraduate students in university libraries in Benue state, Nigeria.
2. Identify the challenges that affect the use of serials by postgraduate students in university libraries in Benue state, Nigeria.

1.3 Research Questions

The following questions guided the study:

1. To what extent are serials used by postgraduate students for research in university libraries in Benue State, Nigeria?
2. What are the challenges that affect the use of serials by postgraduate students for research in university libraries in Benue State, Nigeria?

1.4 Statement of Hypotheses

One (1) null hypothesis was formulated and tested at 0.05 levels of significance.

1. Use of serials has no significant influence on the research activities of postgraduate students in university libraries in Benue State, Nigeria.

II. REVIEW OF RELATED LITERATURE

This paper presents the literature review for this study under the following subheadings: Conceptual framework, and Review of related empirical studies.

2.1.1 The concept of serial publications

Serial publications are intervening concepts which are very complex. Thus, serials are print and non-print publications issued in parts, usually bearing issue numbers, issue dates, or both. Serials are expected to continue indefinitely. Serials include magazines, newsletters, newspapers, annuals (such as reports, yearbooks, and directories), journals, memoirs, proceedings, transactions of societies and numbered series Nwalo (2003). Akande in Tamomowo-Ayodele and Ayobami (2018) posited that there are many kinds of serials, these include: newspaper, magazines, newsletters, accessions, journals, indexes, abstract, reports, proceedings and transactions of businesses in societies.

Bhat in Owusu-Ansah and Nutsupkui (2017) defined serials as a publication in any medium issued in successive parts bearing numerical or chronological designations and intended to be continued indefinitely. There are many kinds of serials. These include newspapers, magazines, newsletters,

accessions, journals, indexes, abstract, reports, proceedings and transactions of societies and so on.

Serials is defined by Anglo American Cataloguing Rule 2 (1978) as a publication, in printed form or not, issued in successive parts usually having numerical or chronological designations and intended to be continued indefinitely.

According to Keenan and Johnson (2000), Feather and Sturges (2004), and Reitz (2004) serial is 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. Attama and Ezema (2002) defined serials as publications issued in successive parts, appearing at intervals bearing numerical or chronological designations and intended to continue indefinitely. Thus, the term embraces materials such as periodicals, magazines, annuals which include reports, yearbooks, directories, proceedings, and transactions.

Serials formed the backbone of research collections and a crux to the success of any academic libraries. Thus, they are very useful to researchers, scholars and investigators. Lawal (2000) maintained that serial collections are very important to post graduate students because it reports current scientific and technological research findings, as well as social, historical and economic reports. Ogbonyomi (2008) asserted that serial collections are significant to postgraduate students. It is a major media through which research findings are published. Journals help to communicate research findings to immediate and the outside world. According to Edoke (2000), serials are publications appearing in successive parts, usually with no termination planned or expected. Thus, the term embraces materials such as periodicals, newspapers, magazines, among others; such document can be published daily, weekly, monthly, and quarterly. According to Adomi (2008), serials and periodicals that are used interchangeably to refer to a group of library resources with distinctive title which appear at regular or irregular intervals such as weekly, daily; monthly, bi-monthly; quarterly, annually and bi-annually. Goehner cited by Cabonero, Soliven, Lanzuela, Balot, and Bugaling (2017) concluded that periodicals in academic libraries be given serious consideration towards greater utilization of the faculty particularly in the evaluation process. Thus, every university that is worth its name should makes effort to acquire serials for the community.

2.1.2 The use of serials in libraries by postgraduate students

The aim of every university library is to support the academic programmes of the institution by providing relevant information with a view to respond to the ever-increasing information demands of the users which comprised the students and the academic staff of the university. Onuoha, Ikonne, and Madukoma (2013) while studying library use and research productivity of postgraduate students, concluded that

postgraduate students place more importance on books (print) followed closely by internet provision and electronic journals.

In the university community, as put by Anunobi, Nwakwuo and Ezejiolor (2010), access to serials is primarily through the university library. To achieve this primary role, university library ensures that the appropriate serials are selected based on acquisition policy of the institution, acquired, processed and disseminate to users.

Ogboniyomi (2008) stated that serial collections are one of the major media through which research findings are published. Hammed and Osunrinade (2010) examined the extent of used of serial materials in the Polytechnic Library Ibadan Nigeria. Agboola (2011) found that majority of the respondents visited the library daily to make use of serial materials. Aina (2002) also confirmed that journals were primary resources used for research. Anunobi, Nwankwo and Ezejiolor (2010) reported that access to serials is primarily through the university library. Akinbode (2011) stated that the success of every library therefore should be measured in terms of its efforts in acquiring and managing relevant serials. Similarly, the motives and purpose of users for approaching the library determine the information resources that users are likely to consult. Most faculties needs information for the purpose of research and teaching and are desirous of information sources such as journals, theses and dissertations, government publications, conference proceedings and reference materials. If libraries can provide these resources adequately, it would satisfy the information needs of their users and promote research productivity among academic staff Akinbode (2011).

2.1.3 Challenges of Serials in Libraries

A cursory survey of serial services in Nigeria by various scholars such as (Anunobi, 2010; Oyediran, 2004; Mabawonku, 2002) revealed a catalogue of problems and gaps. These included lack of access to internet facilities, towering infrastructural inadequacy; seemingly insurmountable problems of human and financial resources, lack of access to current serial publications as well as poor communication in the libraries. Nwagha (1983) stated that there is a fairly good intellectual access to scientific journals available in Nigeria but efforts into ensuring that researchers and users have physical access to serial publications are not provided. Mullis (1992) noted that there are problems of accessibility, dissemination; circulation and awareness. Amaakaven (1993) observed that serial management has the following problems: glut in serial publications, proliferation of libraries, institutions; universities, research centres producing poor quality journals with elusive bibliographic control. Mabawonku (2002) noted that many libraries in Nigeria lack access to internet facilities. A few university libraries that attempted computerization earlier were more concerned with administrative purposes.

2.2 Review of Related Literature

Empirical studies have been conducted in the use of serials for research by postgraduate students both within and outside Nigeria. Most of these studies concentrated on availability, accessibility and utilization of serial publications.

In a related study, Akinbode (2011), studied the influence of serial management, practices and use in libraries on publications output of lecturers in Nigerian Universities. The result revealed that inadequate funding, high foreign exchange rate, inflation, poor attitude of users, inadequate facilities, lack of staff, non-availability of current serials, poor lighting, inaccessibility of available issues and insufficient number of copies influenced serial management, practices and use in libraries on publications output of lecturers in Nigerian Universities. It was recommended among others that photocopies of current pages of recent serials should be sent to departments, current journals should be compiled and sent to relevant departments, serials articles should be indexed, lecturers should be involved in the selection of relevant serials and management should release funds for the acquisition of current serials.

In a similar study, Ekefere (2012) studied the management and use of serials collections at College of Education Library, Ilorin, Kwara State, Nigeria. The result revealed that funding, acquisition, user's attitude and human resources were mainly institutional problems. It was recommended among others that adequate funding, users' educations, subscriptions, improved human services for effective and efficient services in order to satisfy users' needs would alleviate the problems of serials.

Similarly, Ufuoma, Akpojotor, Okonoko and Aworo (2015) studied user's utilization of newspaper media in Federal University of Petroleum Resources, Efurun, Delta State. The result revealed that library users consulted more than 5 different types of newspapers daily in order to solve information needs.

III. METHODOLOGY

The study adopted survey method of research design. This design is most appropriate for this study which directly sought a target population of registered library postgraduate students' opinion by using self-developed questionnaire to gather information on the use of serial for research activities in university libraries in Benue State. The study was conducted in Benue State which is in North Central, Nigeria; North central is one of the six geo-political zones in Nigeria. The state derives its name from the River Benue which is the second largest river in the country and the most outstanding geographic feature in the state. The population for this study is 387 comprising all library registered postgraduate students of 2015/2016 and 2016/2017 academic sessions in three (3) universities which are: University of Agriculture, Makurdi (UAM, 176), Benue State University (BSU, 181) and University of Mkar, Mkar (UMM 30). (Office of the university librarians, UAM, BSU and UMM). The entire

population of 387 registered postgraduate students' library users from the universities under study was used. According to Cohen, Manion and Morrison (2007), a researcher can choose to study the entire population because the size of the population has the particular set of characteristics that he/she is interested in is small and may be manageable. The data collected was analyzed using descriptive and inferential statistics. Descriptive statistics of percentages, mean scores (\bar{X}) and standard deviation (SD) were used to answer research questions. The inferential statistic of Chi-square was used to test null hypothesis at 0.05 level of significant. The decision rule for rejection or otherwise of hypotheses was based on the p-value and alpha value. A hypothesis of no significant influence was not rejected for any cluster of item whose p-value is equal to or greater than alpha value of 0.05 ($P \geq 0.05$) while it was rejected for any cluster of item whose p-value is less than alpha value of 0.05

IV. RESULT AND DISCUSSION

This section is concerned with data presentation, analysis, interpretation and discussion of findings. The results are presented and analyzed based on the research questions raised and hypothesis formulated for the study.

4.1 Result

4.1.2 *Research Question 1: To what Extent are Serials used by postgraduate students in university libraries in Benue state, Nigeria?*

Table 1: showing Mean and Standard Deviation of Extent of Usage Serials by postgraduate students in university libraries in Benue state, Nigeria.

S/N	Item/Serials	Mean	S. Deviation	Remarks
A	PERIODICALS			
1	Journals	3.54	.78	Great Extent
2	Newspapers	3.79	.46	Great Extent
3	Magazine	3.54	.65	Great Extent
B	NON- PERIODICALS			
4	Transaction and Memoires of Society	2.65	.86	Great Extent
5	News Letter	2.35	.68	Moderate Extent
6	Annuals	2.42	.75	Moderate Extent
7	Proceedings	2.23	.56	Moderate Extent
8	Numbered monographic series	2.44	.75	Moderate Extent
9	Bulletins	2.21	.50	Moderate Extent
10	Series computer Database	2.28	.59	Moderate Extent
11	Report	2.35	.67	Moderate Extent
	Cluster Mean	2.70	0.65	Moderate Extent

Source: Field Survey, 2019.

Table 1 reveals that all the periodicals are greatly used with means values ranging from 3.54-3.79 with SD=0.46-0.78. However, only one one-periodical is greatly used with a mean of 2.65 and SD=0.86. All other non-periodicals are moderately used with mean ranging from 2.21-2.44 and SD=0.50-0.75. The table reveals that serials are moderately used.

4.1.2 *Research Question 2: What are the challenges that affect the use of serials by postgraduate students in university libraries in Benue state, Nigeria?*

Table 2: Mean and Standard Deviation of Challenges of serial Usage by Postgraduate Students in university libraries in Benue state, Nigeria.

S/N	Item/Serials	Mean	S. Deviation	Remarks
1	Lack of current serials	2.12	.87	Disagree
2	Inadequate manpower to provide effective services	2.93	.93	Agreed
3	Journals articles not indexed for easy access	3.16	.64	Agreed
4	Inadequate storage facilities	3.18	.53	Agreed
5	Serials are not properly organized for easy access	2.86	.92	Agreed
6	Lack of awareness of serial materials	3.12	.68	Agreed
7	Difficulty in the use of catalogue	3.00	.56	Agreed
8	Inadequate budgetary allocation and foreign exchange rate for serials acquisition	3.00	.68	Agreed
9	Difficulty in locating the needed serials	3.21	.59	Agreed
10	Lack of internet service	3.07	.58	Agreed
11	Inadequate power supply	3.16	.56	Agreed
12	Poor attitude of staff towards service to users	3.12	.61	Agreed
	Cluster Mean	2.99	0.67	Agreed

Source: Field Survey, 2019

Table 2 above reveals the mean (\bar{X}) and standard deviation (S.D) of Challenges of serial Usage by Postgraduate Students having \bar{X} ranges from 2.12 to 3.18 and S.D = 0.53 to 0.93.

The cluster $\bar{X} = 2.99$ and S.D of 0.67, the result indicates that postgraduate students are faced with Challenges in using serial.

Test of Research Hypothesis

4.1.3 *Hypothesis: Use of serials has no significant influence on the research activities of postgraduate students in university libraries in Benue State, Nigeria.*

Table 3: Chi-square table of use of serials has no significant influence on research activities of postgraduate students

	f		ig level	Decision
Chi-square				Rejected
No valid Cases	5	.00	.05	

$P < .0$

Table 3 showed that the P-(sig), 0.00 is less than alpha-value of 0.05 ($P < 0.05$) at df 15. Therefore, the null hypothesis that states the of use of serials has no significant influence on research activities of postgraduate students is rejected

4.2 Findings of the Study

The following major findings emerged from the study based on the research questions answered and hypothesis tested:

1. The extent of serials used was found to be very great extent for research activities. This indicates that periodicals such as journals, newspapers and magazines are greatly used by postgraduate students for their research activities while one non-periodical is moderately used.
2. There are challenges that affect serials usage by postgraduate students for research activities such as difficulty in locating the needed serials, lack of awareness of serial materials, difficulty in the use of catalogue among other challenges.
3. Serials significantly affect research activities of postgraduate students' in university libraries in Benue state, Nigeria $P < 0.05$. Hence, the null hypothesis is rejected.

4.3 Discussion of Findings

Based on the findings of the study, the following were discussed:

The findings of this study as depicted in table 1 reveal that serial resources such as Journals, Newspapers and magazines were used to a great extent while transaction and memoires of society, newsletter, annuals, proceedings, numbered monographic series, bulletins, series computer database and report are used to moderate extent for research activities by postgraduate students in University libraries in Benue State. The findings agrees with Ufuoma et al. (2015) that periodical are used to a great extent, that users consulted more than five different types of newspapers daily in order to solve information needs. The findings of this study is in line with Oyewusi and Oyeboade (2009) who reveals that library resources and internet were useful for academic pursuit. The findings of this study also corroborate with Hammed and Osunrinade (2010) who in their studies found out that serial are one of the major media through which research findings are published and used to a great extent by researchers which are mostly postgraduate students.

The result on research question 2 on table 2 shows the challenges that affect the use of serials by postgraduate students in university libraries in Benue State, Nigeria. Findings show that respondents disagree with the first item on the table which states "lack of current serials" in the libraries with a rated low mean of (2.12). Findings also show that respondents agree with the following as the most challenging factors that affect the use of serials: Inadequate manpower to provide effective services, journal article not indexed to ease access, Inadequate storage facilities, serials are not properly organized for easy access, Lack of awareness of serial materials, difficulty in the use of catalogue, inadequate budgetary allocation and foreign exchange rate for serials acquisition., difficulty in locating the needed serials, lack of internet services, inadequate power supply and poor attitudes of staff towards services to users. The findings of this study agree with Akinbode (2011) who affirms that inadequate funding, high foreign exchange rate, inflation, poor attitude of users inadequate facilities, lack of staff, non-availability of current serials poor lighting, inaccessibility of available issues and insufficient number of copies were some of the challenges that affect serials usage. Relatedly, the study is in line with Ekerefe (2012) who found out that funding, acquisition, user's attitude and human resources were mainly institutional problems that affect serials usage. The result of this study agree with Agada (2010) who found out that inadequacy of existing resources, slow speed of internet, low bandwidth, lack of publicity of available facilities, limited subscription to databases, irrelevant databases and poor user's skill were some of the challenges that affect serial usage. The findings of this study agree with Trivedi and Joshi (2009) who in their study showed inherent problems to the use of electronic journals affecting students as computer illiteracy, lack of computer training, inability of retrieving particular/relevant health based information via various advanced databases like MD-Consult, EBSCO, ProQuest, science Direct among others. Other mechanical deficits like slow downloading, slow connectivity, and subjective strain to eyes were also present while using e-journals. Moreover problems regarding subscription for a particular time phase were highlighted as challenges affecting serials usage.

V. CONCLUSION AND RECOMMENDATIONS

This section deals with conclusion and recommendations based on the findings of the study.

5.1 Conclusion

Based on the result of the findings, it was concluded that serial resources utilization by postgraduate students is imperative for attaining high quality research output. Conversely, poor utilization of serial resources by postgraduate students can affect the quality of research output of the postgraduate students. The implication of this is that the realization of the nation's technological development based on sound and quality academic research output will not be realized.

5.2 Recommendations:

The following recommendations are made based on the findings of the study:

- i. Awareness programs on available serial publications in the library should constantly be organized for students to increase the level of awareness of information provision in the library. This would further enhance the extent of students' use of serial publications.
- ii. Postgraduate students should be encouraged to use serial publications for research work and other academic purposes since the universities under study have the capacity to provide serial publications.
- iii. Provision of current serial publications to meet the information needs of postgraduate students to facilitate research should be given proper attention by library administrators.
- iv. University libraries management in Benue State should ensure that all necessary serial resources that enhance high level utilization that will lead to quality research output by postgraduate students are adequately provided in the university libraries in Benue State. This will make postgraduate students in university libraries in Benue state to rise up to the challenges of quality research output which will ensure the realization of the overall objectives of the postgraduate students that is centered on quality research output.

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