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Information Needs and Use of Serial Publications by Academic Staff in Federal Colleges of Education in Kano State, Nigeria.

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Abstract

The study was conducted to investigate the information needs and use of serial publications by academic staff in federal colleges of education in Kano State. The study used a quantitative methodology using cross-sectional survey designed to collect data from the respondents. The population of the study comprised of all academic staff in the two colleges of education which are 1305 in number out of which 120 staff were selected randomly to represent the entire population. Google forms questionnaires were sent to individual what Sapp numbers of the selected staff and 93 academic staff responded. The outcome of the study was analyzed and interpreted using descriptive statistics i.e. simple percentage, and charts. The study revealed that, pure sciences, social sciences, management and engineering are the most prepare disciplines, they need information for teaching and research activities. There are adequate serial publications in the college libraries that are current ranging from journals, newspapers, magazines and almanac, furthermore, majority of the respondents uses serial publications on weekly basis and they reported that they are satisfied with the available serial resources in the college libraries, it was recommended that, online journals and internet accessibility should be made available in the libraries.

Key words: Academic staff, colleges of education, Information needs, serial publications

Introduction

Information is no doubt, an integral part of human's daily activities and existence. The advent of Information and Communication Technology (ICT) has helped to usher the application of computer to every field of human endeavor. According to Aina (2004) information is a group of processed data and when well utilized can help an individual deduce an inference on value judgment in making decision. Quadri & Onaolapo (2015) cited Osinulu (2011) explained that the role played by information in human societies remain highly inestimable. Information is a vital rational decisions in their daily activities. People need information in order to perform their expected roles in society effectively. The society requires information in its day-to-day activities, education, management, mass communication, governance, research and development. The appropriateness of decisions made by people is influenced by the quality of information at their disposal. Hence, information is a powerful tool that educates the mind and develop the three domains of learning: cognitive, effective and psychomotor. So also, Omah and Urhiewh (2019) posited that, the era of digital information can best be described as an era of information revolution, with the presence of information bearing materials in diverse formats. Libraries and information centres are not only equipped with materials in traditional formats but also in electronic formats offering users a vast selection. With the array of information sources available in college library, little wonder then that the library is known as the academic heart of the academic institutions (Odiase, Unegbu, & Haliso, 2001). Information, because of its utility value gives certain advantages to the one who holds it. By virtue of the role they play in the outcomes of researches, academic staffs keep abreast of current breakthrough in all areas of teaching and research which facilitates better outcomes in research. Academic staff are people that impact acquired knowledge/information to others who need it.

Information needs lead to information seeking which could be successful or unsuccessful. If it is successful, it will be used for decision making and problem solving. Satisfaction occurs when the located information has been analyzed and satisfies the original need. A failure to find the information to satisfy the required need leads to dissatisfaction (Kamarudin, 2010). Hence, information needs denote a situation where an individual want, demand, require and seek for information for educational, personal, organizational and societal use. Information need is a term closely related to the concept of information seeking behaviour. A user recognizing an information need, articulates it into a question, or, request which is conveyed through formal or/and informal channels of communication and information systems, in order to receive a response (verbal, written, visual) which will satisfy that need.

Academic staff contribute to the attainment of the broad objectives of higher education institutions through teaching and learning activities; research and community service. They provide academic guidance to students and expansion of the frontiers of knowledge through research (Sarkhel &

Khan, 2014). Academic staffs also are the priority for librarians and information scientists to study because they are considered as leaders in using information resources and systems because of their role in teaching and research in higher education. Furthermore, academics are staff in academic institutions whose primary duties concern teaching, research, acquisition, processing and dissemination of information and are required to show evidence of publication output for their career development (Romanus, 2013).

The philosophy of librarianship, according to Adeboye and Popoola (2011) is based on the concept of effective library services and provision of relevant resources to users. Libraries need to add value to their services because of competing online information now readily available. To provide effective services, libraries must continue to embark on user studies so as to identify various differences of users information needs and their approach toward information resources in general, so that they will serve them better, In the cause of this study the researchers paid more attention to serials publications due to the fact that they are considered as the most current information resources in academic libraries.

A Serial is a distinctive title which is issued in part, and each issue is published independently. It is expected to be published indefinitely (Ola, 2012) and this constitutes the major research stock of the academic libraries. Serial publications are regarded as the most reliable sources for up-to-date Academic publications. Academics rely on Serial publications because the order of their appearance is in successive interval i.e. Daily, Weekly, monthly, quarterly, bi-annually and annually. They entailed current information on recent development in a field of knowledge. Most popular among these types of information resources are journals, newspapers, magazines, periodicals, news bulletins, and newsletters.

Conducting research on the information needs and use of serials resources by academic staff in colleges of education for the overall success of discharging their duties, i.e. imparting knowledge and skills to the future classroom teachers and man power needed in the educational sectors, will help a great deal in the provision of adequate and relevant educational services to the populace and will also assist the libraries, stakeholders and school management in designing a well-stocked information system that will quench the thirst for information among the teeming population of users in the educational sectors.

Statement of the Problem

The use of information on all aspects of life is a necessity as long as progress is to be achieved. Therefore it is an indisputable fact that the use of information in an academic environment is a necessity. Libraries and agencies of information should do everything possible to acquire relevant information for their clientele. However, the libraries cannot do this without having prior knowledge on the information needs of the users.

The present information age is characterized by an upsurge in the world's output of information resulting to the phenomenon of information explosion. The increased output in the world's overall publications is directly related to the advent of Information and Communication Technologies (ICTs) and research. This trend has posed a challenge to librarians and information scientists (academic librarians especially) in ensuring that the needs of their information users are readily met as most of them quickly opt for other sources of information outside the library and information centers. One of the major information support systems is the library. Therefore, the role of libraries and Librarians in meeting the needs of these important groups of users should be properly investigated.

Rafiq and Ameen (2009) maintained that libraries and other information providers strive to understand users' information needs and how they try to fulfill these needs. Colleges of education worldwide are like other institutions that deal with different categories of users, Academic staff inclusive; therefore, their information needs have to be known for proper provision of relevant information. Understanding academic staff information behaviour is crucial to the effective and efficient provision of timely and relevant information and to the design of information systems. Information is an essential resource needed by academic staff to perform well in their academic work. Hence, there is need for provision of current and relevant information resources to both the trainers of future teachers and the trainees, which cannot be possible and feasible until and unless studies are conducted on the information behaviours of this important segment of society. In the light of these recognized gaps, the study examines the information needs and use of serial resources by academic staff in federal colleges of education in the state.

Research Objectives

The major objective of this study was to identify the information needs and use of serial resources by academic staff in federal colleges of education in Kano state. The specific objectives of the study are to:

1. Investigate the information needs of academic staff in federal colleges of education in kano state
2. Identify the type of serial publications that are available in the institutions in meeting the information needs of academic staff;
3. Assess the level of use of the available serial publications by the academic staff of the institutions;
4. Find out the level of satisfaction derived from the use of available serial publications; and
5. Identify the challenges associated with the use of serial publications by academic staff of the institutions.

Research Question

This study seeks to find answers to the following research questions;

1. What are the information needs of academic staff in federal colleges of education in kano state

2. What types of serial publications are available in the institutions to meet the information needs of the academic staff
3. What is the level of use of the available serial publications by the academic staff of the institutions?
4. What is the extent to which the serial publications satisfy the needs of the academic staff?
5. What are the challenges associated with the use of the serial publications by academic staff of the institutions?

Methodology

The research methodology employed for this study is Quantitative Research Methodology. The study adopted a survey research design using cross-sectional survey design. The research environment within which the study was conducted was the two federal colleges of education in the state. There was a total number of one thousand, two hundred and two (1,305) academic staff in all the institutions as at July, 2023. Google form questionnaire was designed and sent to individual what Sapp numbers of the respondents. Due to the large number, one hundred and twenty (120) academic Staff were selected randomly to represent the entire population.

Table 1: Population of the Study

Institutions	Year of establishment	Number of Academic Staff
Federal College of Education Kano	1961	655
Federal College of Education (Tech) Bichi	1987	650
Total:		1305

Source: Preliminary Study

Findings, Analysis and Discussion

The analyses were done using descriptive statistics, simple percentage and Tables were used to demonstrate the major findings.

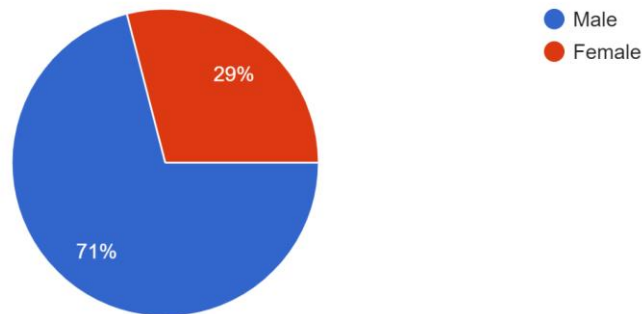
Table 2: Response Rate

QUESTIONNAIRE	FREQUENCY	PRCCENTAGE
Number of questionnaire administered	120	100%
Number of questionnaire returned	93	77.5%
Number of questionnaire not returned	27	22.5%

The Table above represents the response rate, a total number of one hundred and twenty (120) questionnaires were distributed out of which 93 were returned and found useful representing 77.5%.

Chart 1. Gender of the respondent

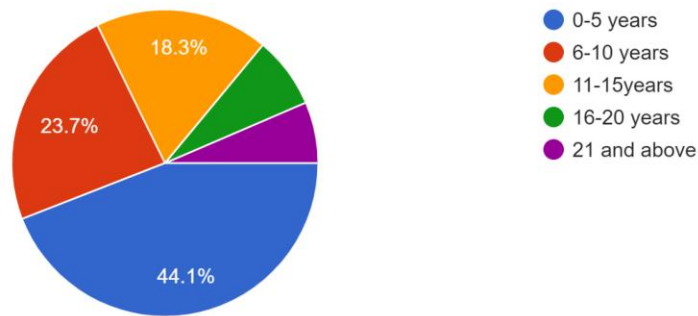
kindly indicate your gender by ticking only one option
93 responses



From the above chart it is indicated that, 71% of the respondents are male while the remaining 29% are female gender.

Chart 2: working experience

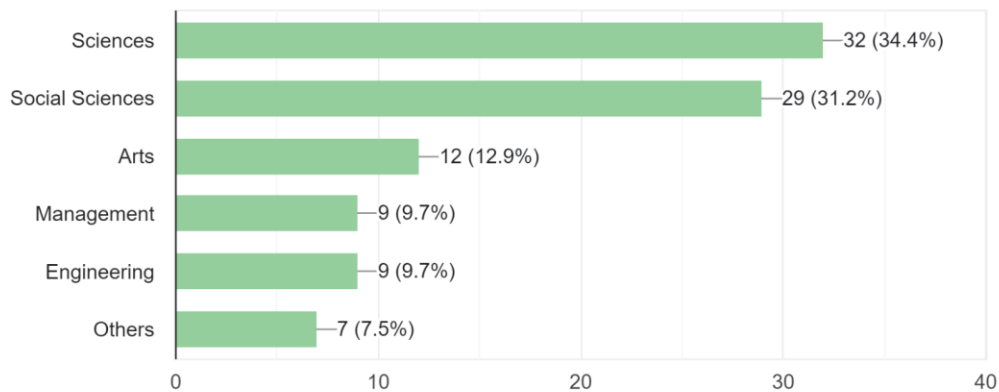
Years of working experience of the respondents in the institution?
93 responses



Those that are within 0-5 years are the majority with 44.1%, followed by 6-10 years with 23.7% and 11-15 years with 18.3% respectively, while the remaining have 6.95 each.

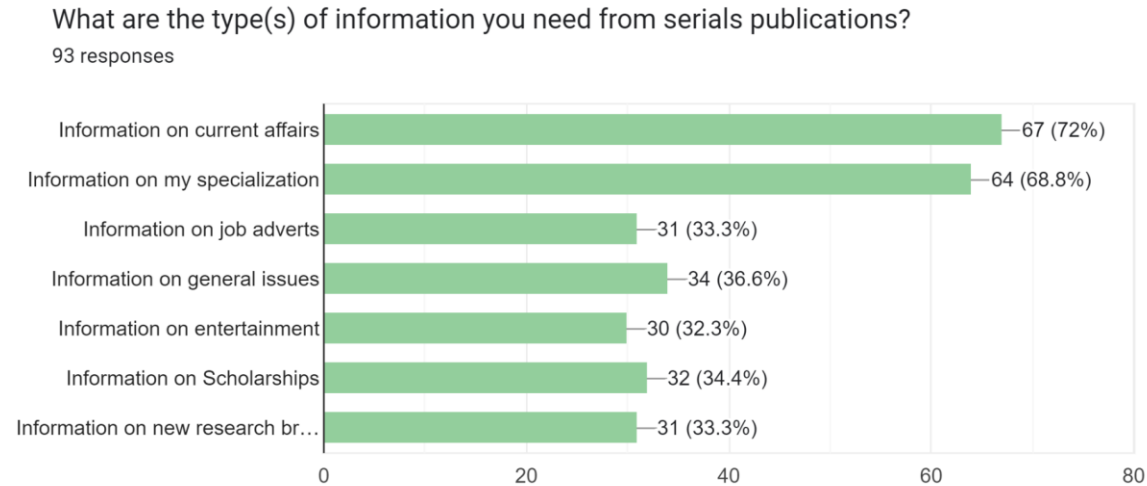
Chart 3: disciplines of the respondent.

Disciplines
93 responses



The chart above revealed that, science and social sciences are the majority with 34.4% and 31.2%. Followed by Arts with 12.9%, while management and engineering has 9.7% each.

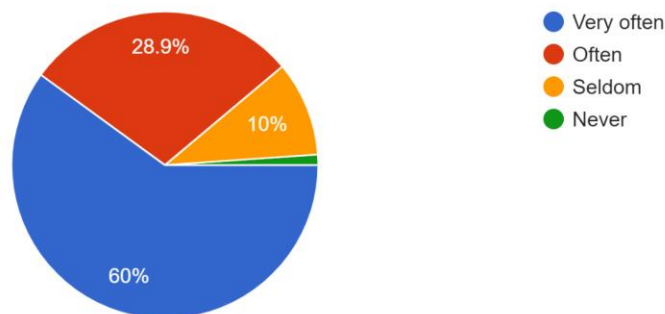
Chart 4: information need of academic staff



With regards to the information needed in the serial publications, information on current affairs and individual specialization are highly needed with 72% and 68.8%, closely followed by general issues, scholarship, new research break through, job adverts and information on entertainment is the least with 32% respectively.

Chart 5: level of information need

How often do you need information?
90 responses

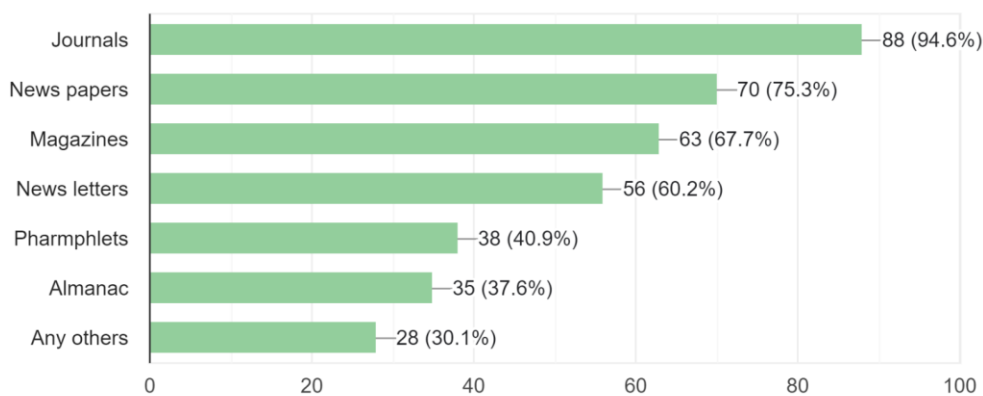


The respondents revealed that, they demand for information regularly going by the above charts 60% need information very often, 28% often while 10 % need information seldom.

Chart 6: availability of serial publications

Which of the serials publications are available in your college library?

93 responses

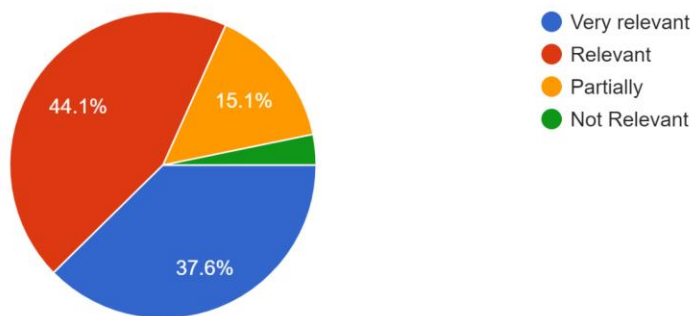


Journals and newspapers are the most popular serial publications in the colleges library with 88(94.6%) and 70(75.3%) followed by magazines and newsletters with 63(67.7%) and 56(60.2%) respectively, while pamphlets, almanac and others are closely related.

Chart 7: relevancies of the serial publications

How relevant are the serials publications to you?

93 responses

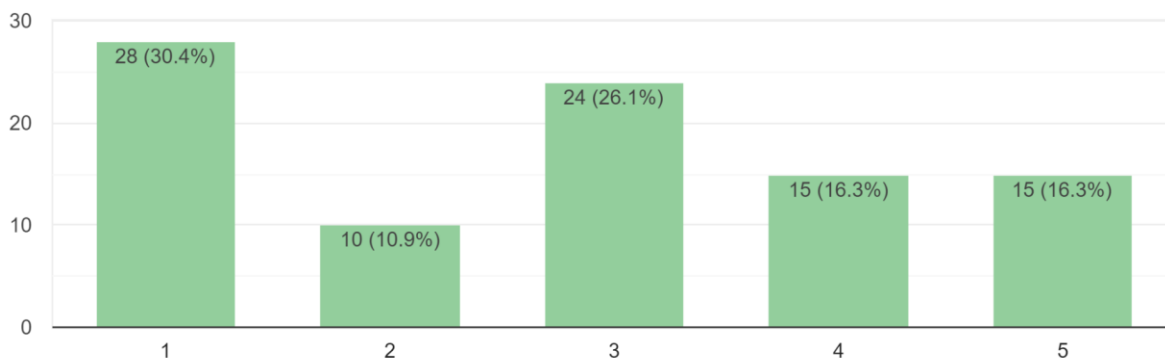


The serial publications in the college libraries are relevant to the field of studies in the colleges going by the percentages scored of 44.1% and 37.6%, we can easily conclude that they are relevant

Chart 8: adequacy of serial publications

How adequate are the serial publications to you?

92 responses

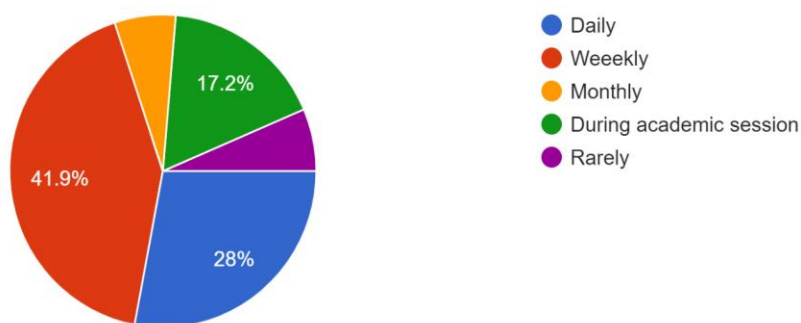


The chart above indicates the level of adequacy of serial publications 28(30.4%) reveals that they are very adequate, followed by 24(26.1%) and 10(10.9%) that are on the same opinion with the former, only 15(16.3%) belong to not adequate and very in adequate respectively.

Chart 9: use of serial publication

How often do you use serial publications?

93 responses

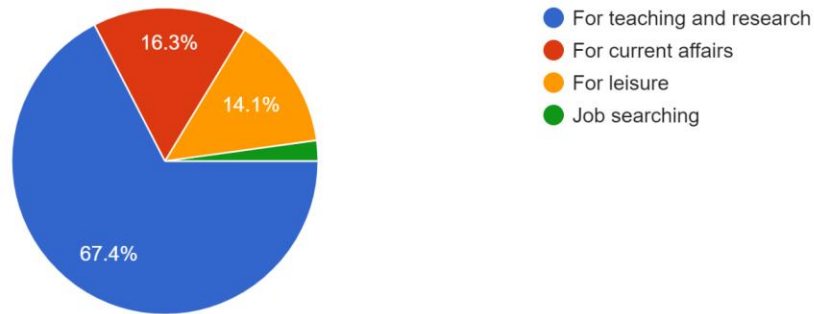


Those that use serial publications weekly are the majority with 41.9%, followed by daily with 28% and during academic session with 17.2% while monthly and rarely are the least on the chart.

Chart 10: reasons for the use of serial publications

For what reason do you use serial publications?

92 responses

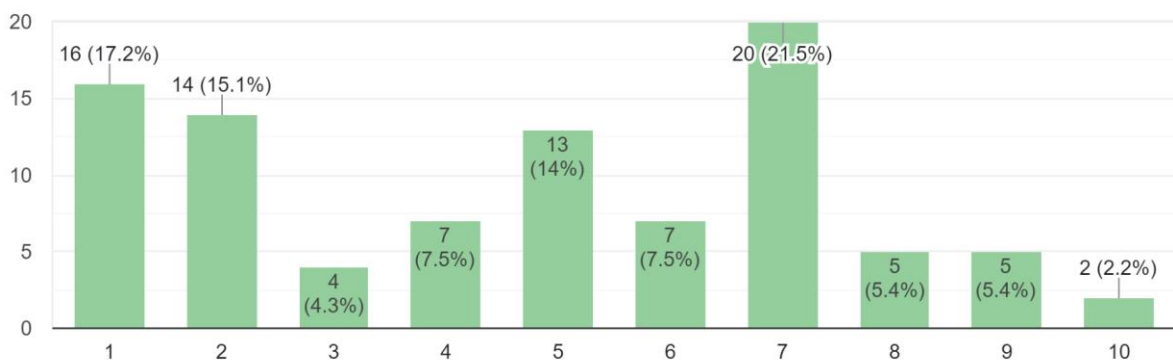


Majority of the respondents uses serial publications for the purpose of teaching and research with more than half of the percentage i.e. 67.4% while for current affairs and leisure has 16.3% and 14.1% individually.

Chart 11: level of satisfaction with the serial publication

How do you rate your satisfaction from the serials publication used?

93 responses



The respondents were asked to rate the level of satisfaction derived from the serials used and it was rated on the scale of 1-10, the table indicated that 7 is the lead with 20(21.5%) while the least is 10 with 2(2.2%)

Conclusion

Information is very important in the life of individuals, academic staff inclusive, in federal colleges of education academic staff often seeks for the needed information through utilization of the libraries, internet and meeting colleagues. Going by the significance of serial publications the libraries in the institutions investigated housed different types of serial publications ranging from journals, newspapers, and government publications that are utilized by academic staff even though majority of the academics visit the unit once in a week. This is attributed to non-availability of internet connectivity, shortage of time, financial constraints to mention but a few. Regardless of the challenges, serials are ranked good by academic staff because they enhance teaching, research and individual development of the academics of the institutions and others.

Recommendations

Based on the findings of the study and conclusions drawn, the following recommendations were made:

1. Adequate information and communication technologies facilities should be provided in the institutions.
2. Internet service should be provided so that academic staff will have access to the net whenever they are in the campus.
3. The libraries should be in the mailing list of professional journals or subscribed to data banks such as Medline, science direct-gate etc. so that academics will have access to adequate information.
4. The librarians should always lend a helping hand to the library users.

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