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IMPROVING THE CATALOGUING AND CLASSIFICATION OF SERIAL MATERIALS AT MICHAEL OKPARA UNIVERSITY OF AGRICULTURE, UMUDIKE

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Abstract

Purpose: This study was conducted to determine strategies for improving the cataloguing and classification of serial materials at Michael Okpara University of Agriculture, Umudike, Nigeria. The specific objectives of the study were to ascertain the nature of cataloguing and classification of serials in the library, the extent of cataloguing and classification of serials, the resources employed in the cataloguing and classification of serials, problems encountered and strategies for improving the cataloguing and classification processes of serials in the library.

Methodology/Approach: The design for the study was a descriptive survey. A questionnaire was employed as the instrument for data collection. The questionnaire was distributed to nineteen (19) professionals and Para professionals. Data were analyzed using mean, frequency counts and percentages, while tables were used to present data.

Findings: Results revealed that cataloguing and classification of serial materials had encountered problems, some of which include Lack of funds, inadequate staff in the serials section, Lack of computerized aspects of serials management, and Foreign exchange restrictions leading to the poor acquisition of serials.

Originality/value: Staff sponsorship to workshops and conferences for enhanced competences was the most rated to improve this.

Keywords: Cataloguing, Classification, Serials, University Libraries

Paper Type: Empirical Research

Introduction

Libraries were once thought of as little more than knowledge repositories. A library is, therefore, an organized collection of information and similar resources that are stored, processed, and made accessible to a defined community for reference; according to Abdulsalami et al. (2013), libraries' goals have changed over time, becoming more faceted and multifarious. As a result, libraries have become places entrusted with the organization, preservation, storage, retrieval, and dissemination of information. As a result, several types of libraries have developed over time to serve various communities. They consist of academic libraries, school libraries, public libraries, national libraries, and special libraries. An academic library is a library that is part of an educational institution which engages in formal goals of a university library, which include advancing teaching, learning, research, and

education for students who want to finish a particular course according to a set curriculum.

The University library is a particular academic library that attempts to support the school's curriculum and the research requirements of students, faculty, researchers, and the general public. Ngozi et al. (2019) asserted that the university supports research by disseminating its findings to the government, businesses, and other researchers following the National Policy on Education (NPE), which states that universities must provide researchers with relevant and necessary information resources and services.

A university library will always have a sizable collection, but it is up to the librarians to properly arrange and categorize them. The various collections in a university library enhance and advance the meeting the needs of the parent institution's instructional program as well as the research

requirements of students, faculty, staff, and even members of the general public through the gathering and acquisition of knowledge in all forms. The purpose of university libraries is to conserve and secure materials, research, and information resources while offering specialized information services to relevant communities.

Cataloguing and classification are fundamental components of any library, just like they are for the other categories of libraries mentioned above. Two essential tools for arranging the resources for efficient use are cataloguing and classification. A work may be classified by grouping similar items or organizing them according to shared traits or other traits; this process also involves giving each item in a collection a specific number to identify it and designate where it belongs. Consequently, cataloguing describes a book for the card catalogue by identifying the author, title, and publishing information and determining the main entry, added entries, subject headings, and call numbers. A library catalogue is a systematic and comprehensive record listing books, maps, and other information items in a specific library. Access to books that systematically group similar topics and organize universal knowledge into subjects is made possible by the categorization and classification of texts.

Since the first periodical appeared in 1665 and the first newspaper appeared in 1909 (Katz, 2022), researchers have found it easier to share their findings and incorporate those of others into their research projects. Perhaps for this reason, a university is regarded as having high standing when it can access sufficient information materials, particularly current serials. Any publication released in a series of parts meant to be continued indefinitely is referred to as a serial (Hameed & Osunrinade, 2010). These publications may be released in print, non-print, or electronic format. Researchers prefer serials for disseminating their research results and for retrospective academic evaluation. Hence, Olutoki & Osoba (2017) defined serials as central to scholarly communication. Newspapers, research papers, journals, extracts and indexes, trade publications, newsletters, and newspapers are only standard serials.

It has been claimed that the use of serial materials in academic libraries has significantly decreased due to poor cataloguing and classifying of their information resources logically, making it impossible for users to access these materials in the serials section. As a result, there is a constant need for improvement and modification.

Under the Federal Government of Nigeria decree section 48 of November 1992, Michael Okpara University of Agriculture, Umudike, was founded as a specialized institution of higher learning. It started its official operations in May 1993, conducting research using libraries, research centres, labs, and the internet. Their library collection has monographs, magazines, academic journal titles, etc. Since its start, the library has also used online subscriptions to AGORA, TEEAL, and EBSCOhost.

Statement of Problem

Every significant research library collection must include serials as a vital and fundamental part. The data they have reflects the most recent advancements in every academic discipline. The university library places great importance on serial publications because many of the articles they contain are the results of original research and might never be published elsewhere. Staff members and students are expected to use university libraries to access the latest material in various fields of study. University libraries are designed to offer serial publications spanning every subject/course offered in that particular parent institution.

As stated in one of the laws of librarianship, which says that library books are for use, the cataloguing and classification of serial publications are necessary to prevent loss or underutilization of the serial materials. If these materials are not adequately catalogued, there is a risk that they will be lost, and the librarian will not be able to provide the best and most timely access to them. Publishers will also continue to use emerging technologies, which puts our field of librarianship in a difficult position.

Serial materials are frequently not correctly catalogued in a university library, which has hampered research because readers cannot

access these publications for up-to-date information. Finding ways to access the content of serial publications in colleges has been a recurring issue. This made it necessary to research the topic and suggest remedies to improve serial publication categorization and classification at Michael Okpara University of Agriculture, Umudike.

There hasn't been any known research on this subject; hence, a study is needed to add value to the correct categorization of serial publications and the circumstances surrounding their production and use. Thus the problem of this study put in question form is; what are the strategies for enhancing the cataloguing and classification of serial materials in Michael Okpara, University of Agriculture, Umudike?

Objectives of the Study

The main objective of this study is to determine strategies for improving the cataloguing and classification of serial materials at Michael Okpara University of Agriculture, Umudike.

Specifically, the objectives of the study include to:

1. Ascertain the nature of cataloguing and classification of serials in Michael Okpara University of Agriculture, Umudike
2. Determine the extent of cataloguing and classification of serials materials in Michael Okpara University of Agriculture, Umudike
3. Identify the resources employed in cataloguing and classifying serial materials in Michael Okpara University of Agriculture, Umudike.
4. Ascertain the problems encountered in cataloguing and classification of serials in Michael Okpara University of Agriculture, Umudike
5. Proffer strategies for enhancing the cataloguing and classification of serials in Michael Okpara University of Agriculture, Umudike.

Research Questions

To guide this research properly, the following research question was formulated:

1. What is the nature of cataloguing and classification of serial materials in

Michael Okpara University of Agriculture, Umudike

2. What is the extent of cataloguing and classifying serial materials in this library?
3. What are the resources employed in the cataloguing of serials in Michael Okpara University of Agriculture, Umudike
4. What problems are encountered in cataloguing serials at Michael Okpara University of Agriculture, Umudike?
5. What are the strategies for enhancing the cataloguing and classification processes of serial materials in Michael Okpara University of Agriculture, Umudike,

Review of Literature

The review of literature is organized under the following headings:

Conceptual Framework

The traditional method of organizing library materials so patrons can locate what they're looking for in the collection is cataloguing and classification. These two concepts have several definitions but can be combined to provide a cohesive meaning.

The holdings of a library or set of libraries are listed in the library catalogue, along with other forms of reading material (Ishola & Ojeniyi, 2015). The list includes book entries that have been sorted in a specific order. It is a list of documents that describe and indexes the resources of a collection, a library, or a group of libraries in a community or nation instead of a bibliography. Olise (2021) state that the goal of organizing library resources is:

- ❖ To make the location of library material easy
- ❖ To save time and space
- ❖ To facilitate easy accessibility to the materials
- ❖ To enhance the effective utilization of the materials
- ❖ To make the library attractive to its users.

Catalogue and classification are ways to arrange library resources so that patrons will have no trouble finding what they need.

Similarly, Musharraf (2016) defined cataloguing as the process of characterizing a book for the card catalogue; this includes determining the primary entry, adding entries, subject headings, and call numbers. It also includes identifying the author, title, and publication information. According to Eze (2012), cataloguing means arranging library resources and making them available to patrons. Organizing library information resources to guarantee that users can access them relatively quickly and efficiently is known as cataloguing (Ihekwoaba, 2017). Each book, monograph treatise, and most other materials obtained in the library must have a complete bibliographical description that complies with established best practices. Making entries for the library catalogue is the process of cataloguing. It entails cataloguing, indexing, and recording information about the items in a library collection (Esse, 2013).

Ekere & Mole (2014) defined cataloguing as describing all of a library's books and information resources and describing an item of a collection to determine its bibliographical attributes. Cataloguing also involves organizing library information resources to ensure relative speed and ease of access by library users. In contrast, classification is the process of categorizing items based on their degree of similarity.

Classifying books and other information resources make it easier to group and maintain the library collection in a logical order. At the same time, cataloguing is the art of providing a catalogue, a communication tool rendered in some definite order to enable the library user to determine the library holdings (Omekwu, 2008). This information gives a foundation for categorizing universal knowledge into different disciplines and connecting somewhat overlapping topics. Additionally, he emphasized that the library classification system offers insight into the widely recognized divisions of knowledge, separates the body of knowledge, and gives chances for narrowing a subject and moving from a broad topic to smaller, more specialized subfields of that subject (Satija & Martínez-Ávila, 2015). According to Glushko (2020), categorization is grouping related objects or arranging objects based on shared traits. Classification is used to make it easier to

organize and logically keep the library collection. Furthermore, it offers an understanding of the acknowledged categories of knowledge.

Ihekwoaba & Okwor (2019) provided another definition of cataloguing, stating that it is the art of describing and listing materials in such a way as to make it as easy as possible for them to discover the nature and extent of what is available and, if appropriate, where they may be located or obtained. According to Harvord's librarian Dictionary and Reference book from 2000, categorizing objects in a logical order based on how similar they are, particularly the placement of books or other items in their correct positions in a classification scheme.

Kapoor (2012) stated that cataloguing has a way of organizing serials adding that cataloguing is the art of recording all information necessary to know about each library material in a specified sequence and creating a list of these materials, likewise in a precise order. Hence, cataloguing is a three-step process:

- ❖ Providing information describing the item being considered
- ❖ Determining appropriate headings and establishing these headings so that under each, the descriptive information can be presented to the catalogue users who may be employing these items or titles in initiating an information transaction with the catalogue,
- ❖ Referring to those headings from items not established, as well as those with which there is some relationship,

The description of an object and a suggestion of its logical placement, among other items, are listed under that cataloguing (Kapoor, 2012). The goal of the description is to compile all pertinent information about each piece of content and to make it apparent to users what each part contains, how it looks, where it came from, and how it relates to other pieces.

Serials are publications with an infinite shelf life that come out often or in series. Serials are known for being straightforward and factual when discussing topics intended only for teaching, learning, and study. Most serials use

dates and numbers to denote the subject matter covered by the papers. Serials are publications in any medium released in a series of sections with a numeral or chronological designations and are meant to be continued indefinitely (Rao & Reddy, 2018). Publications of this type are anticipated to be informational, as the hub of academic and research libraries, and greatly assist learning, teaching, and research. In libraries, they invariably receive emphasis. It is envisaged that serial resources would produce helpful knowledge and information for all user types. Academic, religious, cultural, political, social, environmental, entertainment and news are all covered by serials.

Periodicals are publications that are meant to be published indefinitely and are published in portions that are numbered or designated chronologically (Rao & Reddy, 2018). Magazines, journals, transactions, etc., are examples of serials. Volumes, numbers, publication dates, and years often organize serials. Monographs focus on a particular subject, class of issues, or individual. They are typically detailed in their presentation but not in their extent and frequently include bibliographies.

According to Idachaba et al. (2009), serials are publications like periodicals, annuals, journals, memoirs, proceedings, yearbooks, memoirs, newspapers, magazines, etc., published in successive parts as usual or unusual intervals. They are intended to continue until further notice. In contrast, a periodical is a serial with a typical title typically published twice a year or more, and each issue contains articles by several authors. Finally, a journal is regarded as more academic than a magazine.

Periodicals or serials are publications like newspapers, magazines, and journals released regularly (Rao & Reddy, 2018). The provision of current information is likely magazines' most significant contribution because they are routinely removed. Periodicals contain knowledge that may not yet be in book form but is available to students daily, weekly, or monthly through newspapers and magazines. Serials are any publication released in sections that appear regularly and are typically meant to be continued indefinitely (Idachaba et al., 2009).

Journals, newspapers, magazines, numbered monographic series publications, transactions, and memos of academic societies all fall under the category of serials. Molto (2011) gave the characteristics of serials as follows:

- ❖ The publisher might change
- ❖ The content of each issue is different
- ❖ The publication interval varies: some are biannual, monthly, quarterly, fortnightly, weekly, daily and annually.
- ❖ No planned end to the sequence
- ❖ They are current and up to date
- ❖ They are more expensive than books and
- ❖ They are subscribed to

In literate societies, newspapers are a crucial source of knowledge. Newspapers have a lot to offer as tools for fostering healthy reading habits and literacy development, and their significance is mainly based on the up-to-date information they offer. The content informs, educates, and entertains readers while keeping them current on current events. Newspaper is a source that stands out from many libraries because it contains information that can interest all users, particularly students looking for current information on various topics for their research projects (Krtalic & Hasenay, 2012). This includes news articles, editorials, important statutes, naturally issued syndicated columns and advertisements. Serials are irreplaceable records that vividly describe local locations, occasions, and individuals. These records are crucial for study.

Newspapers and magazines are excellent media for reading instruction because they are easily accessible and include a wide range of subject matters because they concentrate on the current. Newspapers and magazines are very stimulating for students. They hold the interest of students whose educational reading materials have been turned off. Newspapers have the additional benefit of offering a brand-new batch of materials every day, which is crucial for researchers who need up-to-date information for their study projects. Newspapers capture, print, and disseminate information about events that are significant to society. They are reliable and trustworthy accounts of critical problems and occasions right after they happened. They

offer beautiful reminders of a nation, its historical moments, and its landmarks. They provide textual evidence that is helpful to academics, journalists, attorneys, politicians, and the general public.

University libraries strive to provide a wide range of services since students in the entire university program, from first-year students to doctorate candidates, are involved in research. As a result, they provide a broader selection of resources of everyday relevance to many more recent professions than those of historical importance. Their collection includes general and specialized reference materials and research materials like first editions of manuscripts, papers, letters, museum artefacts, historical maps, publications of federal, state, local, and foreign governments, as well as those of the United Nations, research reports, theses, dissertations, archives, microforms, disc tape recordings, films, sound tracks, language laboratories, video tapes, listening and viewing equipment, computers, and more (Nwofor & Ilorah, 2022).

Nature of Cataloguing and Classification of Serials

Serial cataloguing is meant to organize the content. Other benefits of serial cataloguing include supplying a certain amount of information for serial checking records, making it easier to shelf materials in stacks, encouraging readers to use the card catalogue before visiting the shelves and facilitating cooperative projects (Eze, 2012).

Without adequate serial title structure, libraries run the risk of experiencing serial proliferation issues and retrieval issues. Serials are processed immediately after delivery (Nwofor & Ilorah, 2022). Nonetheless, if the orders are confirmed to be correct, titles will be compared to the demands. On the other hand, they are entered on the kardex and placed in alphabetical order by title after being stamped with the library's ownership. The goal of documenting the receipt of serials is to ensure the library has received all of the purchased issues (Dziambouskaya, 2022). What has been received and what still has to be claimed are both listed in the record. The numbers and dates that they were received are displayed in the record. The essay discusses

various card formats, including visible index cards, card records, electronic and book descriptions, and their benefits.

Cataloguing and creating holdings lists are essentially clerical tasks that should be automated. Koke & Castillo (2022) concurred that separate records for serials should be kept. Also, Ernest (2022) underlined that serials should be catalogued separately and that staff has always conducted searches in the descriptions; as a result, it is necessary to ensure that qualified staff is constantly available to handle inquiries.

According to Kashaija (2022), grouping serials in the library by subject is the most effective arrangement. Serials are arranged similarly to books, except that readers are kept on shelves with compartments, whereas past issues are kept on sloping display shelves with cases behind them. Insufficient indexing of non-monographic resources has necessitated a more thorough cataloguing of serials (journals) than regular items (Fujita et al., 2023). Omalley (2023) disagreed with classifying serials, pointing out that they differ from monographs.

Problems Encountered in Cataloguing and Classification of Serials

Several issues have negatively impacted the cataloguing of serials. Without a doubt, these issues have slowed down the advancement of knowledge and research. Dare & Ikegune (2019) identified the significant cost commitment of procuring and processing serials as one of the main issues. According to Idhalama & Obi (2019), several restrictions on acquisition pricing result in fewer opportunities to buy them. According to him, the less significant publications' subscriptions must consider the limited funds. This directly or indirectly impacts the researchers' information demands for their study activities.

Shuzhen & Wei (2010) lists the rapid expansion in periodical production and rising costs as two of the issues academic libraries have with serial cataloguing. He claimed that because of the complexity of today's society, which drives people to research all areas of problems to find solutions, magazines are published in the millions every day in all subjects of expertise. He

also talks about how the cost of serial numbers is rising quickly. The ability of researchers who are currently working on research projects to obtain the pertinent materials is impacted by this equality. Adamu et al. (2022) identified the issues as insufficient funding, government regulations making buying supplies abroad tricky, and poor mail services.

Regarding costs, Irenoa et al. (2019) explored the issues with serials. He claimed that because of the expenses, many librarians could not purchase serial publications, negatively influencing library budgets. He claimed that social and collection development librarians had been the only ones experiencing these issues for some time.

Foreign exchange restrictions are possibly the most significant issues preventing Nigerians from purchasing serials Ukangwa et al. (2023). Because the Nigerian central bank takes a long time to authorize international transfers, some libraries have had their credit facilities halted or removed by their suppliers until their payment arrears are addressed.

According to Azaki (2021), ongoing financial cuts at university libraries result in frequent cancellations of serial subscriptions. Many university libraries lack the resources necessary for serial acquisition, and there is also a persistent lack of people with the qualifications for effective management (Okwu, 2021). He spoke about serial proceedings, noting that although they are costly to receive and utilize, they are a significant component of library collections that are crucial for research. Yakubu et al. (2022) cited several issues with serials in developing nations, ranging from low staffing to high journal-title mortality, foreign currencies, growing costs, and cost overruns.

The issues in purchasing library items were characterized by Yakubu et al. (2022) as the four F's: funding, focus, formats, and functions. Yet, he pointed out that funding is the biggest obstacle and opportunity of these four Fs because it is crucial to the library's ability to meet the other three Fs. According to him, the main issue is funding. By examining most universities' library resources, structure, and services, Otobrise & Omoefe (2021) concluded that a lack of suitably qualified staff causes the

serials division's ineffective administration. He added that budget constraints had left libraries with low-key employees who are educated about processing serials, which exacerbates processing issues.

The inherent issues with serials include their elusiveness because for-profit companies do not publish most of them, their propensity to change names, divide into two or have separate publications, die, or go dormant for an extended period. It is also challenging to know which issues have not yet been received. Changes in publishers could be blamed for this (Pambayun, 2021). Saidat et al. (2022) agree with Pambayun that serial collections are never static. Serials can close, reopen, merge, divide, or change the titles.

There can also be changes in the author or publisher, the frequency of publication, the numeration, or any other factors. According to Tabassum & Alam (2019), it is difficult to access both back and current issues of journals for several reasons, including insufficient printing and publishing because they cannot keep up with demand. He claimed that it is difficult to tell which title is live and which is dead due to how they are displayed. Because serial publications are frequently interrupted and discontinued, they do not adhere to the International Standard Book Description of Serials (ISSBDS) when issued.

Maidabino (2012) states book and serial mutilation is a library problem. Many libraries are concerned about the availability of out-of-print literature and the rising expense of repairing damaged books and serials. In a study on newspapers at various academic libraries, Akter (2011) found that the number of newspapers obtained was insufficient. Newspapers were maintained in multiple ways, including boxes, bound volumes, shelves, and cabinets. The management of newspapers is moving toward microfilm and microform preservation.

Otohrise & Omoefe (2021) discussed how serials are processed in huge libraries and pointed out several issues. The most crucial thing, he stated, is to process serials that enter the library, whether they are handled manually or automatically. He emphasized that journals

frequently undergo mergers, splits, and bibliographic revisions because of their nature. The issue of labour intensiveness during check-in and the challenge of cataloguing is expressed by Ejiroghene (2021) as a lack of serials classification norms. It's also possible that many libraries lack the equipment needed for cataloguing and classification. He referred to the issues caused by missing or insufficient processing tools. He claims that the bulk of serials created in less developed nations has incomplete bibliographic data, which makes processing difficult.

According to Ejiroghene, manually processing serials is an uphill task. Although readers are not affected by a delay in periodicals' supply, the work of librarians is also impacted because periodicals frequently undergo bibliographic changes like title changes, cessations, merges, and splits that must be promptly reflected in the records. Sadly, the modifications are not made known to the serials librarian until long after they have been announced. Nonetheless, in rare circumstances, some agents' updating services do help. There is a limited time for filing claims for unreserved or damaged journals in any university librarians submitting their claims late. Financial management, financial classification, and documentation of bibliographic modifications are laborious tasks that take some time.

Serial issues were noted by Nwofor & Ilorah (2022) as lacking the comprehensive bibliographic information provided for books; they are more challenging to manage than books. This makes it difficult for novice student library users to access serials. In addition, the indexing and abstracting of publications is a difficult task that needs expert employees to do, and in most circumstances, such qualified staff is hard to come by. They went on to say that there aren't many current serials databases available, and even when there are, many serials aren't listed. As a result, users almost always perform physical searches to locate any publications they might require. Szilvassy said that because serials lack the comprehensive bibliographic information provided for books, they are more challenging to manage, arguing that the issue of missing or insufficient processing tools makes categorizing and

classifying serial publications difficult. They added that cataloguing, categorization filing, and catalogue maintenance are necessary for the bibliographic control process for serials.

Strategies for Enhancing the Cataloguing and Classification of Serials

Improving the serials' cataloguing is necessary because they are among the library's most significant collections and will make them easier to access and utilize. According to Ujwary-Gil (2023), organization and budgeting are the keys to solving most library problems. The creation of budgets, he insisted, is one of the most crucial tasks a librarian is required to perform. Half of the problem is solved if the budget is done correctly. According to Dash et al. (2022), understanding the growing issues caused by serial publication is necessary as the twentieth century progresses. A librarian's core responsibilities are adapting resources, services, and thinking to the changing environment. For scholars who require current material for their research, the new situation should take the shape of electronic journal subscriptions.

Serials are helpful in every library. According to Gillies (2023), they can be arranged efficiently with competent administration. According to him, one of the most challenging responsibilities a librarian may take on is managing the collection of serials. The requirement for proper serial publishing management stems from students having access to the material they choose for their research when utilized. Even though they are temporary, newspapers have a high research value. Idhalama & Obi (2019) explains how to manage serials in the best way possible. According to them, an integrated system will raise the capacity of all system users. Idhalama believes that before anything can be done, library management must work incredibly hard to create their database and online files so their expectations can be met one day. This is a way of encouraging internet services so that you can be in your office and access all the necessary information for your research work. McEvilly (2019) believes that librarians should also consider the coordination of developing serials collections and larger consortia or shared access to databases. This will make the library's collection development

policy more successful in achieving its objectives.

According to Teel (2017), handling the serials component of collection expansion in research libraries requires Job's patience and Solomon's wisdom. Combining an experienced instructor with a bibliographic instructor is necessary due to the challenges posed by different formats, titles, content quality, bibliographic control, rising expenses, storage, preservation, and changing teaching and research needs of a large campus. All of these are strategies for ensuring that users use serials.

Cooperman (2015) noted that the presence of a photocopier is crucial in university libraries because, according to them, it helps to reduce the incidence of material theft and mutilation. As students run photocopies of journal articles they want to read on their own time, cases of journal pages being torn out by students are common in the absence of photocopies. A photocopy-equipped library is more practical and assists librarians in providing services. They claimed that increasing serial consumption requires selective information service delivery. They argued that each user should be informed of the worth of current or historical content concerning their unique needs. The librarians should keep track of each researcher's interests to keep track of the information they bring to researchers about the availability of particular publications relevant to their research interests.

By establishing internal databases, serials use issues in libraries can be resolved. Enabling the information unit to render specific services to the users, for example, abstracting and indexing services, and current awareness services, is essential, making information readily available and accessible to users; to save time and money by conducting local searches. They provide accurate bibliographic information that meets the user's needs and provides appropriate access in a timely fashion.

Nwofor & Ilorah (2022) noted that it is essential to note that serials, in many cases, are more important than textbooks. Hence they contain the most up-to-date information in almost, if not all, disciplines of human knowledge. They said serial reports of new findings and ideas in the universe are indispensable when you intend to

write your term or research paper. They maintained that you could equally depend on serials to update notes after lectures.

Serials are identified by their title, volumes, numbers and date of publication, and page numbers; for that notion, users should not play with them in their research work and can also be located through the abovementioned identification. Nworie & Anunobi (2022) noted that users of publications in universities want quick access to the current information contained in the serials volumes and issues. They added that library serials acquisitions processes are organized with such information preference in mind. Among the significant operations for making print serials available and accessible is processing them in every university library in Nigeria since they are in great demand by researchers.

Summary of the Literature Review

The area review covered Nigeria and outside Nigeria; although 75% of the articles reviewed are from Nigeria, the formats of publications reviewed are journals, student projects, textbooks, electronic articles and monographs.

This review explored related studies on the research topic "Improving the cataloguing and classification of serial materials", treating more significantly the various subtopics emanating from the cataloguing concept, the nature of cataloguing and classification, the problems and the strategies for their improvement.

Despite the reviewed literature's similarities, relevance and contributions, none dwelt on the cataloguing and classification of serials in the Michael Okpara University of Agriculture Umudike. Therefore, this study attempts to fill the gap already created by the absence of literature in this area.

Research Method

The methods employed to carry out the research cover the study's design, area of the study, the population of the study, sample and sampling technique, instruments and procedure for data collection, validation of the instruments, methods of data collection and analysis.

Design of the Study

This study used a descriptive survey as its research strategy. Nworgu (2015) stated that a descriptive survey design tries to systematically gather and describe the traits and facts about a specific population; To determine the relative incidence, distribution, and relationships among sociological and psychological variables. Mole (2019) emphasized that this method is appropriate for conducting surveys of large and small populations because the study's population is relatively large and cannot be independently studied; instead, a sample from the entire population is chosen and used to represent the population as a whole.

The area of the study is Umudike, located in Umuahia, Abia state. Umuahia is the capital of Abia state, one of the five states of the south-east geopolitical zone of Nigeria. Nigeria. It was created in 1991 from part of the Imo state, and 95% of the population is Igbo. There are other higher institutions of learning, each attached to a library. There are also polytechnics and private libraries in the state.

The study population comprises the professional and paraprofessional staff of Michael Okpara library, Umudike. Therefore, the population covered by this study constitutes a total of Nineteen (19) librarians. This population is the total number of university librarians in the study sections.

A sample of Nineteen (19) librarians was selected from the university. Librarians were selected specifically from cataloguing and classification and serials sections. The sampling based on the purpose sampling technique also included librarians who have worked in the listed sections previously.

The primary instrument used for data collection was a questionnaire based on the purpose and research question of the study. For example, a questionnaire entitled "Improving the cataloguing and classification of serials in an Academic Library Questionnaire" (ICCSALQ) is divided into parts A and B. Part A comprised general information regarding the respondents' bio-data, while part B was about the questionnaire concerning the study. The questionnaire items were in close-ended

format. The questions were administered to librarians who have worked in the section and are presently working. They are expected to respond appropriately using strongly agree, Agree, Disagree, Strongly disagree, very highly employed, highly employed, less employed, Not employed, Very high extent, high extent, little extent and Not at all.

The instrument was subjected to face validation by three experts in the Department of library and information science. Face validation was applied to determine the instrument's suitability in eliciting relevant information from the respondents.

The validates were requested to examine several questionnaires and make necessary inputs to make the instruments suitable for data collection. Accordingly, they subjected the instruments to critical examination, and information was reflected in the final draft of the instrument to conform to the research questions.

Method of Data Analysis

The data collected for this study were analyzed using frequency, count, mean scores, and percentages presented in tables. Since a four-point rating scale was used, the mean score is 2.5. It then follows that any factor with a mean of 2.5 indicated agreement (positive), while those with a mean less than 2.5 shows disagreement (negative); the weighted mean was used to determine the weight of be respondents' values were assigned to the four response categories of the questionnaire items as follows: for example

Strongly Agree (SA)	-	4 points
Agree (A)	-	3 points
Disagree (DS)	-	2 points
Strongly Disagree (SD)	-	1 point

The criteria mean was calculated using the weight of be response option thus:

$$\frac{4+3+2+1}{4} = \text{No of response option}$$

The criterion mean = 2.5

The formula used

$$X = \frac{EFx}{n} \text{ wher}$$

X stands for mean weight

EF stands for summation of frequency

X stands for nominal value
N stands for the number of respondents

research questions. The data were presented, analyzed and interpreted using frequency counts, mean and tables. Data are organized and presented in line with the research questions and the items in the questionnaire.

Results

The data collected from the questionnaire administered was presented according to the

Demographical Factors

Table 1: Distribution of Respondents by sex,

S/N	Sex	Frequency	Percentage
1.	Female	9	47.4
2	Male	10	52.6
	Total	19	100.0

Table 2: Distribution of Respondents by Highest Educational qualification

S/N	Educational Qualification	Frequency	Percentage
1.	First-degree or equivalent	11	57.9
2	Masters	6	41.6
3.	PhD	1	5.3
4.	Ordinary dip/NCE	1	5.3
5	Others	1	5.3
	Total	19	100.0

From the table 1 above, 9(47%) respondents were female, while 10(52.6%) were male. Thus the majority of the respondents are male. From the finding, it is clear that most of the staff in the library are males.

of the respondents were masters degree certificate holders; only 1(5.3%) of the respondent was a PhD certificate holder, only 1(5.3%) also had ordinary Dip/NCE. In summary, a more significant percentage of the population has a first degree.

The table 2 shows that 11(58%) of the respondents were first-degree holders, 6(32%)

Table 3: Distribution of Respondents by rank

S/N	Rank	Frequency	Percentage (%)
1.	Senior Librarian	3	15.8
2.	Higher Library Officer	7	36.3
3.	Assistant Librarian	7	36.8
4.	Assistant Chief Library Officer	1	5.3
5.	Chief Library Officer	1	5.3
	Total	19	100.0

The table above shows that 3(15.8%) of the respondents were senior librarians, 7(36.8%) were higher library officers; 7(36.8%) were also Assistant librarians; 1(5.3%) of the respondents were Assistant Chief Library Officer and Chief Library officer respectively, In summary, the more significant percentage of the sample population are higher library officers and assistant librarians.

The table above shows that 2(10.5) of the respondents were in the collection development unit, 4(21.1) were in the cataloguing and classification unit, 1(5.3%) were in the institutional repository unit; 2(10.5) of the respondents were in the reference unit, and 1(5.3) of the respondents was in the ICT unit. In summary, a more significant percentage of the population is found in the serials unit.

Table 4: Distribution of Respondents by units of the library

S/N	Units	Frequency	Percentage (%)
1.	Collection Development	2	10.5
2.	Cataloguing and Classification	4	21.1
3.	Documentation and Indexing	1	5.3
4.	Serials	7	36.8
5.	Institutional Repository	2	10.5
6.	Reference	2	10.5
7.	ICT	1	5.3
	Total	19	100.0

Table 5: Distribution of respondents working in the cataloguing units

S/N	Worked in the cataloguing unit	Frequency	Percentage
1.	Yes	15	78.9
2.	No		21.1
	Total	19	100.0

The table above shows that 15(78.9%) of the respondents have worked in the cataloguing unit before, and 421.1% have not worked in the cataloguing unit before. In summary, a more significant percentage of the respondents have

worked in the cataloguing unit or are presently in the cataloguing and (classification) unit.

Results of Findings

Research Question One: What is the nature of the cataloguing and classification of serials?

Table 6: Library staff response on the nature of cataloguing and classification of

S/N	Items	SA	A	D	SD	X	Rank	Decision
1.	It is done in the main cataloguing room	58	6	0	0	3.89	1 st	Accepted
2.	Serial cataloguing is done using standard cataloguing tools	56	15	0	1	3.79	2 nd	Accepted
3.	Classified numbers are assigned to serials for easy retrieval	56	15	0	0	3.74	3 rd	Accepted
4.	It is arranged according to subjects based on standard subject heading lists	40	27	0	0	3.53	4 th	Accepted
5.	Cataloguing is centralized in the main library	48	12	4	1	3.42	5 th	Accepted
6.	Serials classification is done using a standard classification scheme	36	27	0	0	3.32	6 th	Accepted
7.	The library employs simplified cataloguing	24	27	0	1	2.75	7 th	Accepted
8.	The library employs cooperative cataloguing	4	12	8	8	1.68	8 th	Rejected
9.	Cataloguing is done in the serials room	4	0	14	9	1.42	9 th	Rejected

Table 6 above, the result shows that cataloguing is done in the main cataloguing room, ranked highest with a mean of 3.89; serials cataloguing is done using standard cataloguing tools, and it is arranged according to subjects based on standard subject heading lists which are ranked 2nd and 3rd with the mean of 3.79 and 3.53 respectively. But numbers 5 and 7, with the mean weight of 1.42 and 1.68, show that cataloguing is not done in the serials room and that the library does not employ cooperative cataloguing, ranked the lowest.

Research Question Two: What is the extent of cataloguing and classifying serials in the library?

Table 7 below shows that the library catalogues and classifies journal publications, directories, yearbooks, conference proceedings, and monographic series to a high extent. These have a mean weight of 3.37, 3.37, 3.26 and 3.11, respectively. Research Question three: What resources are employed in cataloguing and classifying serials in the library?

Table 7: Library staff response on the extent of cataloguing and classification of serials.

S/N	Items	SA	A	D	SD	X	Rank	Decision
1.	Journals	40	18	6	0	3.37	1 st	High Extent
2.	Directories, yearbooks and other similar reference materials	36	27	0	1	3.37	1 st	High Extent
3.	Conference Proceedings	32	18	12	0	3.26	2 nd	High Extent
4.	Monographic Series	28	24	4	3	3.00	4 th	High Extent
5.	Abstracts	32	18	4	3	3.00	4 th	High Extent
6.	Government Documents	28	21	4	3	2.95	5 th	High Extent
7.	Statistical Publications	28	12	12	3	2.89	6 th	High Extent
8.	Transactions of Societies	24	18	8	3	2.79	7 th	High Extent
9.	Legal and Official Publications	28	15	6	4	2.79	7 th	High Extent
10.	Annual Reports and Recurring Reports	20	9	12	5	2.42	8 th	Low Extent
11.	Magazines	12	12	4	10	2.00	9 th	Low Extent
12.	Indexes	8	15	8	9	1.84	11 th	Low Extent
13.	Bulletins	0	18	8	9	1.84	11 th	Low Extent
14.	Memories	0	18	6	10	1.79	12 th	Low Extent
15.	Newsletters	0	18	6	10	1.79	12 th	Low Extent
16.	Newspapers	8	12	0	12	1.68	13	Low Extent

Table 8: Tools employed in the library in the cataloguing and classification of serial materials

S/N	Items	VHE	HE	LE	NA	X	Rank	Decision
1.	Kardex	64	6	12	0	3.79	1 st	Very highly employed
2.	AACR II	52	18	0	0	3.68	2 nd	Very high employed
3.	Library of congress classification schedule	60	6	4	0	3.68	2 nd	Very highly employed
4.	Register	36	12	4	3	2.89	3 rd	Highly employed
5.	Catalogue Card	32	6	6	2	2.42	4 th	Less employed
6.	The essential electronic agriculture library	24	0	8	7	2.05	5 th	Less employed
7.	Notebook	12	9	8	3	1.68	6 th	Less employed
8.	Bibliographic Search	8	9	6	5	1.47	7 th	Not employed
9.	e-journals	12	3	4	7	1.37	8 th	Not employed
10.	Sears List	4	0	8	8	1.05	9 th	Not employed
11.	CD-Rom Search	4	3	6	7	1.05	9 th	Not employed
12.	CONSER Serials Catalogue	0	0	8	8	0.84	10 th	Not employed
13.	Kalamazoo	0	0	4	9	0.68	11 th	Not employed

The results obtained from table 8 shows that kardex, AACR II, and Library of Congress classification schedule were very highly employed in the library in the cataloguing and classification of serial materials with a mean weight of 3.79, 3.68, 3.68 which were ranked highest. But the CONSER serials catalogue and

Kalamazoo, with a meanweight of 0.84 and 0.68, respectively, were not employed in the resources used to catalogue and classify serial materials in the library and were ranked the lowest. Research Question four: What problems are encountered in cataloguing and classifying serials in the Library?

Table 9: Library staff response on the problems encountered in cataloguing and Classification of Serials

S/N	Items	SA	A	D	SD	X	Rank	Decision
1.	Lack of funds	52	12	2	0	3.47	1 st	Accepted
2.	Inadequate staff in the serials section	40	12	10	0	3.26	2 nd	Accepted
3.	Lack of computerized aspects of serials management	36	12	12	0	3.16	3 rd	Accepted
4.	Foreign exchange restrictions leading to the poor acquisition of serials	28	24	2	3	3.00	4 th	Accepted
5.	Lack of serials acquisition policy	32	15	10	0	3.00	4 th	Accepted
6.	Lack of proper space for the storage of serial back issues	28	241	2	0	2.84	5 th	Accepted
7.	Inadequacy of serials materials relevant to the work	32	6	10	3	2.68	6 th	Accepted
8.	Inadequate organization of serials through indexing and abstracting	32	9	10	0	2.68	6 th	Accepted
9.	Inadequacy of access tools in the library	24	27	0	0	2.68	6 th	Accepted
10.	The escalating prices of serials resulted in a lack of serials to catalogue and classify	28	9	12	9	2.58	7 th	Accepted
11.	Serials which libraries subscribe to may fail to arrive	16	12	16	1	2.37	8 th	Rejected
12.	Staff indifference behaviour	12	16	12	3	2.8	9 th	Rejected

It can be observed from table 9 above that among other problems encountered in the cataloguing and classification of serials showed that lack of funds, inadequate staff in the serials section, lack of computerized aspects of serials management and lack of serials acquisition policy were the major problems encountered these had mean weight of 3.47, 3.26, 3.00 were ranked highest respectively. But staff

indifference behaviour and serials which libraries subscribe to may fail to arrive, with the mean weight of 2.26, 2.37 were seen as the minor problems encountered in the cataloguing and classification of serials and were ranked lowest.

Research Question Five: What are the strategies for improving serials' cataloguing and classification processes?

Table 10: Library staff response on the strategies for improving the cataloguing and classification of serials

S/N	Items	SA	A	D	SD	X	Rank	Decision
1.	Staff sponsorship to workshops and conferences for enhanced competences	64	9	0	0	3.87	1 st	Very Appropriate
2.	Employment of adequate skilled professionals.	64	9	0	0	3.84	1 st	Very appropriate
3.	Provision of adequate funds for the acquisition of serials	64	6	2	0	3.79	2 nd	Very appropriate
4.	Aspects of serials management should be computerized	44	18	4	0	3.47	3 rd	Appropriate
5.	The motivation for cataloguing staff	48	12	4	0	3.37	4 th	Appropriate
6.	The use of ICT to enhance the accessibility of serials and their resources	40	21	2	0	3.32	5 th	Appropriate
7.	The introduction of SDI services to encourage the use of serials among researches	48	9	6	0	3.32	5 th	Appropriate
8.	Provision of adequate access tools like indexes, abstracts, bibliographies etc	48	12	0	1	3.21	6 th	Appropriate
9.	Cataloguing and classification policy should be formulated for the library	36	18	6	0	3.16	7 th	Appropriate
10.	Library of congress association should set a standard for organizing serials	28	27	2	2	3.10	8 th	Appropriate
11.	Postal and customs authorities in Nigeria should treat library materials carefully and prioritize reaching their destination.	28	12	12	1	2.79	9 th	Appropriate

From table 10 above, it can be abstracted that the strategies, among others, needed to improve the cataloguing and classification of serials in the library include sponsorship to workshops and conferences, employment of adequate skilled staff and provision of the improved fund. These had mean weights of 3.84, 3.84, and 3.79, respectively.

Summary of Major Findings

The findings based on the analyzed data from this research have been summarized as follows; Cataloguing of serials is not done in the serials room, and the library does not employ cooperative cataloguing; cataloguing is done in the cataloguing room, serial cataloguing is done using standard cataloguing tools; classification numbers are assigned to serials for easy retrieval of white serials classification is done using a standard classification scheme.

Journals, directories, yearbooks and other similar reference works were catalogued to a high extent. But Memoirs, bulletins, and newsletters were catalogued and classified to a low extent. Regarding the resources employed in cataloguing and classifying serials in the library, the resources used mainly include the Kadex, the AACR II and the Library of Congress Classification Schedule.

Lack of computerization of the serials in cataloguing and classification and inadequate staff in the serials section are the major problems affecting the cataloguing and classification of serials, among others.

As revealed by the findings, the strategies to be adopted include staff sponsorship of workshops and conferences to enhance competencies, provision of adequate funds, and motivation of cataloguing staff, among others.

Discussion of Findings

According to the data's conclusions, consistent with the research questions, most of the population studied was male. Hence more men are working in libraries than women. In addition, most respondents had first degrees in their fields of study. According to their status, there is a higher number of senior library officers and assistant librarians; the findings also revealed that most of the sampled

population has previously or now worked in the cataloguing area.

The Nature of Cataloguing and Classification of serials Materials

The outcome demonstrates that the library uses fundamental procedures for cataloguing and classifying serial resources. Serial materials are catalogued in the main cataloguing room using instruments typically used.

This result is consistent with Nwofor & Ilorah's (2022) argument that serials should be catalogued separately. As records have always been created by staff, it is necessary to ensure knowledgeable staff is constantly available to answer questions. Koke & Castillo (2022) agreed that separate records for serials should be kept to make cataloguing and assembling holdings, which are time-consuming and could be automated, easier. On the other hand, this data refutes Ernest's(2022) claim that serials are distinct from monographs and should not be catalogued. To ensure that the cataloguing is done correctly, I believe the cataloguing and classification of serials materials should be done in the room of a separate publication from the library's main cataloguing room.

The extent of cataloguing and classification of serials

According to the respondents, the following materials are typically seen in libraries: journals, conference proceedings, monographic series, directions, yearbooks, and other comparable references; abstracts; transitions of societies; government documents; statistical publications; and legal and official publications. In addition, according to Rakesh & Krupa (2023), there are more than 1,000 current magazines and newspapers, development plans for serials, statistical data, and consensus documents that are given in-depth with a wealth of secondary sources for the study of African history.

The results agreed with those of Kashaija (2022), who noted that non-monographic materials had not been sufficiently indexed; it has become necessary to catalogue serials (Journals) in greater detail than other types of content. This finding implies that more of these items, i.e. serial publications, should be

introduced to the library to accommodate a wide range of library users.

Resources Employed in Cataloguing and Classification of Serials

The questionnaire results reveal that the Library primarily uses the Library of Congress categorization schedule, Register, and AACRII (Anglo-American Cataloguing Rule II). The results support Rao & Reddy's (2018) assertion that subject-based organization is the best for library serials. Serials are arranged similarly to books, except that shelves with compartments store books, and sloping display shells with sections are used to store serial back issues. So, the research's key finding is that most resources are not utilized at this library to catalogue and categorize serials. When these resources are scarce, the labour becomes more tiresome.

Problems Encountered in Cataloguing and Classification of Serials.

The results demonstrated that the significant issues with cataloguing and classification in the library include a lack of funding, insufficient staff in the serials section, a lack of computerized serials, and a lack of serials acquisition policies in the library. Additionally, the response to the questionnaire disagreed with staff indifference behaviour and suggested that serials that libraries subscribe to may cause issues.

According to Shuzhen & Wei (2010), the two main issues academic libraries have regarding serial cataloguing are the rapid expansion of monthly publication and rising costs. Okwu (2021) developed a successful strategy for managing the serials division by examining the library's resources, administration, and services. At the same time, Otorise & Omoefe (2021) considered that librarians should also consider the coordination of the serials collection development policy of the library to operate more effectively in achieving its goals, which lends credence to this conclusion.

The research's findings showed that the university Administration and the library terminology are to blame for the issue with the incomplete categorization and classification of the serials. Cooperation between the highest and lowest levels of government is required to

make serials and trained people available at the university library.

Strategies for Improving the cataloguing and classification process of serials.

Out of the eleven options the researcher listed as strategies, the questionnaire results reveal that staff sponsorship of workshops and conferences for improved competencies, employment of adequate stalled professionals, and provision of sufficient funds for serial acquisitions are the top three ranking strategies. Yakubu et al. (2022), in their study "Educating cataloguers", held the opinion that cataloguers needed to conduct and attend workshops to enrich themselves with current trends to support this conclusion.

Managing the serials component of collection expansion in research libraries requires the Wisdom of Solomon and the endurance of Job (Ujwary-Gil, 2023). When deciding on serials, the relationships between the library staff, faculty, and the library administration had to be tested to their absolute limits due to the challenges presented by variation informant, title and quality of content, bibliographic control, escalating costs, storage, and preservation, as well as the shifting teaching and research needs of a large campus. These are all strategies for ensuring that users use serials. This conclusion implies a pressing need to expand the serials collection and hire qualified personnel for the serials section.

Implications of the Study

The study has implications for researchers, librarians, users, and library management. From the results, it is evident that library management needs to be very knowledgeable about the strength and capacity of serials materials and acquisition strategies to avoid providing unproductively, ineffectively, and inefficiently to the users of such libraries.

The study's findings also have implications for librarians, who must be informed about information communication infrastructure to use it to manage serial publications. Moreover, they ought to demonstrate the worth of serial materials carefully.

Recommendation

The following recommendation has been made in light of the findings; the discussion that follows and the implication has been highlighted,

- ❖ The library management should ensure special funding for the library's serial publications. There is a need to acquire materials for the library equitably
- ❖ The library management should also recruit competent librarians versed in serial publication. Recruitment of such librarians will make every other policy work effectively.
- ❖ For the library staff, there should be intensified training and orientation; This is a way of equipping them with the most current trend in librarianship.
- ❖ Librarians should adopt inter-library loans/cooperation. This will serve as a strategic way of enhancing the availability of serials when other sources like funds and grants are unavailable.
- ❖ Librarians should also be trained in the application of computers in the processing and organization of serial materials. This will play a dual role in making their computer literate and ensuring effectiveness.
- ❖ Organizing seminars, conferences, symposiums and workshops to train cataloguers in current cataloguing and classification trends. Catalogues should organize these conferences to equip themselves with current trends in cataloguing and classification practices.
- ❖ Procurement of current tools and schemes the school authority should provide tools that will cover issues on current trends in serial materials.

Conclusion

The Michael Okpara University of Agriculture, Umudike, cataloguing and classification of serials are covered in this study. Professionals and paraprofessionals were among the respondents the researcher used to study

library employees. The nature of cataloguing and classification of serials materials, the scope of cataloguing and classification of serials materials, resources used in the cataloguing of serials, issues encountered in the cataloguing of publications, and methods for improving cataloguing and classification processes of serials materials were all covered in the research questions. The tool used to acquire the data was a questionnaire. Nineteen professionals and paraprofessionals in the library received it from them. Tables containing frequency counts, mean scores, and percentages were used to examine the data acquired for this study.

Some of the conclusions are that serials are given classified numbers for easy retrieval, that serials are classified using a standard classification scheme, that legal and official publications, journals, Kardex, and the Library of Congress classification schedules are used, that there are not enough finds in the serial section, that there is not enough staff there, and that there are not enough qualified individuals working there. They will inevitably boost and improve serials publication cataloguing.

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