



# Acquisition and Organization of Serials and other Continuing Resources in two Selected University Libraries in Nigeria

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Available online at: [www.isca.in](http://www.isca.in), [www.isca.me](http://www.isca.me)

Received 30<sup>th</sup> July 2015, revised 4<sup>th</sup> September 2015, accepted 16<sup>th</sup> October 2015

## Abstract

*This study investigated the acquisition and organization of serials and other continuing resources in two universities in North Central zone of Nigeria. It sought to find out the available serials and other continuing resources in the two university libraries, methods of acquisition of serials and other continuing resources in the two university libraries and methods adopted by the two libraries in organizing serials and other continuing resources. A descriptive survey design was used for the study with a population of 11 Serial Librarians. The instrument for data collection was structured questionnaire and observation checklist. Percentages, mean scores and frequency tables were used in analyzing the data. The result obtained from the findings revealed that all the listed serials, which includes Journals, Newspapers, Magazine, Annuals, Memoirs, Proceedings, etc. were all available, while some of continuing resource like Transactions of societies and Monographic series were not available. It was also discovered from the findings that the methods of acquisition include; through purchase, through donation/gift, exchange, consortia and publishing. The study also shows that serials are catalogued, classified and displayed on the rack for use. Conclusion and recommendations were made based on the findings.*

**Keywords:** Acquisition, organisation, serials, libraries.

## Introduction

Acquiring information resources is a core activity of libraries. University libraries all over the world still acquire and maintain massive serials and continuing resources collections while managing other formats. Despite prophecies of vanishing print collections and emergence of the digital paradigm, printed serials publications still have a central role in library collections and publishing industry<sup>1</sup>. Acquisition is the process of selecting, ordering, and receiving materials for university library which may include budgeting and negotiating with outside agencies, such as publishers, dealers, and vendors, to obtain resources to meet the needs of the university's users, in most economical and expeditious manner. However, scholars have individually defined acquisition from different perspectives but they all agree that the term acquisition refers to the process of obtaining library materials after they have been selected. Acquisition includes all the tasks related to obtaining all kinds of library materials<sup>2-5</sup>.

Acquisition functions are generally located in the technical services divisions whose operations provide access to information in all its forms and formats. Acquisition process may include identifying and selecting materials for the library's collection; pre-order searching to identify duplicate orders and to verify correct author and title as well as availability and price; ordering of materials from vendors or publishers; negotiating licensing agreements and contracts for electronic resources;

claiming materials not delivered within the expected time frame; receiving materials; approving invoices for payments; physical processing such as ownership identification, security taping, and call number marking; binding; and preserving materials as needed. From the forgoing a typical mission statement for acquisition might read thus "to support the mission of the parent institution by acquiring, processing, and ordering materials for the collection in an efficient, cost-effective, timely, accurate and courteous manner"<sup>6</sup>. Wilkinson and Lewis argued that the core management function of acquisition remain the same regardless of the type of library or number of its staff which is to acquire materials for use of its users.

University libraries acquire print serials and continuing resources through purchase, gifts, and exchange programs. While most electronic serials and other continuing resources acquired by university libraries through purchase, consortia, and licensing agreements are available over the Internet, although some are still published on CD-ROM. The process of acquiring the electronic materials frequently involves verification of IP (Internet protocol) addresses, variable pricing ranges, and licensing agreements<sup>6</sup>. Which method is best in any particular case depends upon the nature of the serials, the publisher and the university library. University library with substantial holdings often find themselves using variety of methods.

Wilkinson and Lewis reported that the exact number of serials and continuing resources is constantly changing. Ulrich's

Periodicals Directory Online (2009) lists approximately two hundred fifty thousand serials currently published worldwide. In 1999-2000, American libraries spent almost 800 million dollars on the purchase of serials and continuing resources<sup>7</sup>. Members of the Association of Research Libraries spent more than 500 million dollars for serials and continuing resources in 2000 (Association of Research Libraries, 2001). University libraries generally spent well over half their acquisition budgets on purchasing serials and continuing resources. Brown, Lund and Walton advised using more than one method of acquiring serials and continuing resources<sup>8</sup>. Brown averred that serials acquisition by purchase may be limited by a number of factors, among them are explosion in the total number of serials and continuing resources published each year, the publish or perish syndrome and faster printing technology<sup>9</sup>. However it is interesting to note that “the process of selecting and acquiring electronic serials requires more time, more staff, and a higher level of staff than dealing with print journals. There is more decision making at every step, with the result that ordering electronic serials is far from routine”<sup>10</sup>.

**Objective of the Study:** The broad aim of the study is to examine the method of acquisition and organization of serials and other continuing resources in two selected university libraries in North-Central Zone of Nigeria. The specific objectives are to: i. To ascertain the available serials and other continuing resources in the two university libraries. ii. To find out the methods of acquisition of serials and other continuing resources in the two university libraries. iii. To identify the methods adopted by the two libraries in organizing serials and other continuing resources.

**Scope and Limitations:** The scope of the study encompasses the acquisition and organization of serials and other continuing resources in Federal University of Jos, Jos (UNIJOS) and Nassarawa State University, Keffi (NSUK). However the study has the following limitations: i. The study is limited to university of Jos, Jos and Nasarawa State University, Keffi. ii. The study includes only the serial librarians of both university libraries. iii. The study is limited to acquisition and organization of serials and other continuing resources.

**Literature Review:** Serials should be properly managed in the library for effective use by researchers. Mullis and Gascoigne averred that browsing in an unclassified collection, especially one of some size, leaves much to chance, and failure to classify or subject-index may lead to uneconomic underused of some titles<sup>11</sup>. Providing details of holding to readers, staff and other library users is an important aspect of serials management. In small libraries, the received records may be kept in the reading room for consultation by readers; intensive staff use makes this impossible for large collections and staff answer questions from record kept behind the scenes<sup>12</sup>.

Organisation of serials involves cataloguing, classification and display on the rack. Mullis and Gascoigne observed that the

major objectives of serials cataloguing are to provide the most efficient, economical access to serials represented in the catalogue; and to provide the most comprehensive and understandable bibliographic description for each serial represented in the catalogue.

Nwalo averred that all journals are displayed either on the periodical display racks or in pamphlet boxes. The latest issues of journals are displayed. If journals are displayed on racks, the back issues to each title are stored away in the rack, behind the displayed copies. After normal processing, serials are separated, arranged and organised accordingly. For instance, current titles/issues of journals are displayed on periodical racks and withdrawn the issues on display to be added to past issues kept underneath the rack. As the back issues increase, they could be added together and put in the Section of the books shelves for back issues of journals. In this case journals are arranged on the racks and shelves according to the classification marks. Magazines are displayed on magazine display rack while newspapers are hung title by title on newspaper stand for users' consultation. The back issues of magazines and newspapers are tagged together chronologically and kept in the store<sup>13</sup>.

Serials are arranged according to a classification system, where all journals on the same subjects are placed together. Classification of serials by subject is important in the sense that it makes the resources accessible with ease to those who would use them. Mullis and Gascoigne posited that the first and most important basic advantage of classification is that all materials on a subject, whether monographs or serials may be brought together on the shelves/racks. Bringing serials together on the shelves/racks by subject may allow browsers to come upon titles within their field of interest of which they may have been unaware.

Periodicals are often kept in a number of sequences, perhaps one location for the current issue or issues, another for some back years and perhaps a stack closed to direct user access for the rest of the set<sup>14</sup>. He added that the storage of microform reels is best accommodated in cabinets made for that purpose.

For effective access to and use of library materials including serials, proper management is essential. According to Woodward serials literature whether in print or non-print format, merits attention in a study of academic library collection management<sup>15</sup>. A comprehensive serials management practice is concerned with everything that happens to serials throughout their life cycle. Woodward asserted that major concepts of serials management are checking/receipt, claiming routing, binding, ordering and subscription, renewal, financial control, management reports, union lists, online user access and circulation of serials. Aghauche stated that in term of overall management strategy, some organisation create an independent section for their serials and that as a general rule, an effective management system for serials has to take into consideration

timeliness, the goal of the organisation as well as the needs of users<sup>16</sup>.

Also access problems to electronic journals are hugely frustrating for library users, and must be resolved quickly. It means improving subject access to print and electronic resources by applying subject controlled vocabulary or numbered classification scheme<sup>17</sup>. Furthermore, Thomas suggested organizing serials and other continuing resources might mean embedding electronic documents with metadata elements to facilitate search and retrieval, or mark-up language tags to provide richer information about digitalized documents<sup>18</sup>. Woodward explained that serials are expensive and difficult to manage. Their management needs special skills and experience from the serials librarian. Management and financial expertise, knowledge of automation and policy development skill are all expected of the serials manager. The type of managerial responses depend on the type of library

while methods and styles or organisations, staff and stock management differ among various academic libraries, the principles of management remain the same all over the world.

### Methodology

A descriptive survey design was used for the study with a population of 11 serial librarians from both universities which were used as sample for the study. The instrument for data collection was structured questionnaires and observation checklist. Percentages, mean scores and frequency tables were used in analyzing the data.

From the table 1 above, a total number of eleven questionnaires were distributed to the respondents and all were returned and correctly filled. This indicates a 100 percentage of which the researcher considers very much appropriate for use.

**Tables-1**  
**Distribution and return rate of Questionnaire**

University	Number of questionnaires distributed	Number Returned	Percentage of distribution %
University of Jos, Jos	7	7	100
Nasarawa State University, Keffi	4	4	100
Total	11	11	100

**Table-2**  
**Observation Checklist On Available Serials and Other Continuing Resources**

Types of serials available	UNIJOS		NSUK		Remark
	Yes	No	Yes	No	
<b>SERIALS</b>					
JOURNALS	√		√		Available
NEWSPAPERS	√		√		Available
MAGAZINE	√		√		Available
ANNUALS	√		√		Available
MEMOIRS	√		√		Available
PROCEEDINGS	√		√		Available
TRANSACTIONS OF SOCIETIES	√		√		Available
MONOGRPAHIC SERIES	√		√		Available
<b>CONTINUNG RESOURCES (databases, updating loose-leaf, Websites)</b>					
JOURNALS	√		√		Available
NEWSPAPERS		√		√	Not Available
MAGAZINE		√		√	Not Available
ANNUALS	√		√		Available
MEMOIRS	√		√		Available
PROCEEDINGS	√			√	Available
TRANSACTIONS OF SOCIETIES		√		√	Not Available
MONOGRPAHIC SERIES		√		√	Not Available
<b>Total</b>	11	5	10	6	

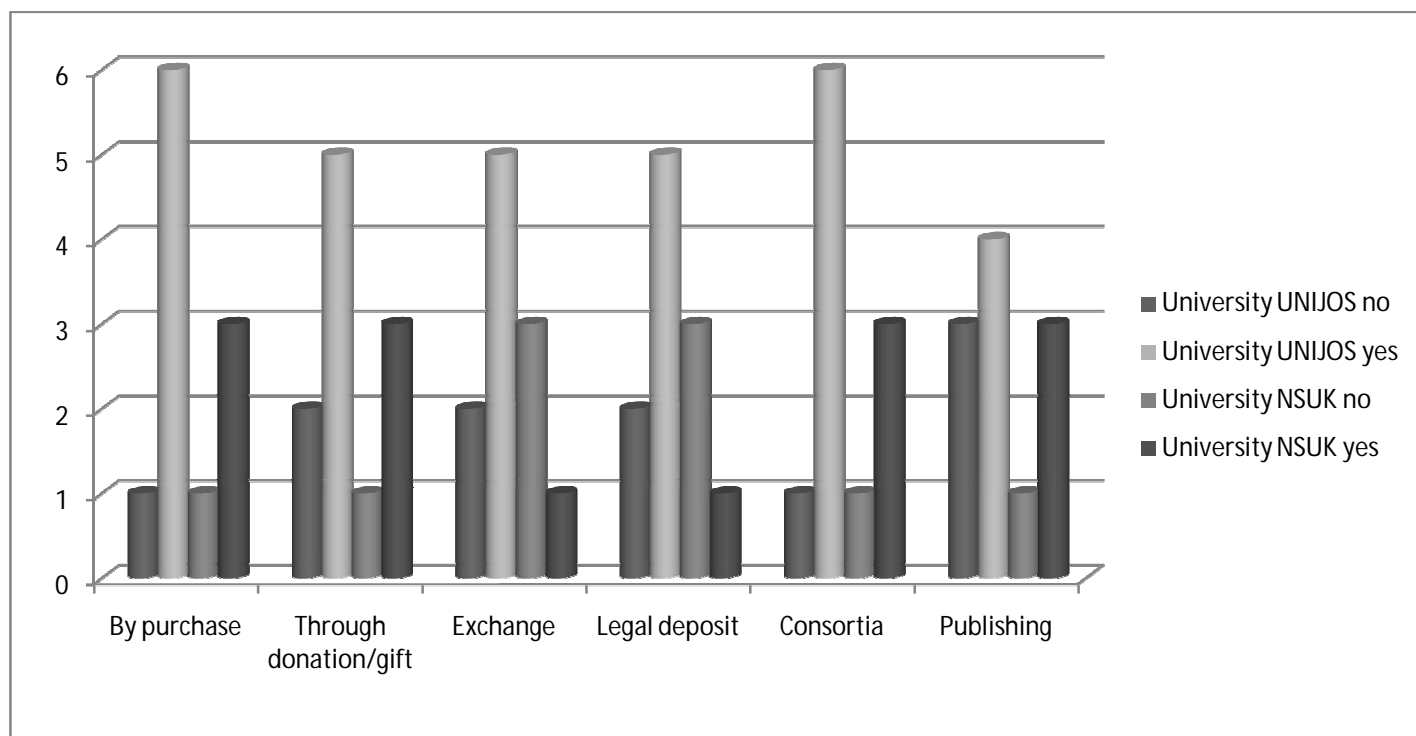
According to the table-2, the serials were grouped into two (2) thus: serials and continuing resources (databases, updating loose-leaf, and websites). the result shows that the available serials in both UNIJOS and NSUK includes Journals, Newspapers, magazine, annuals, memoirs, proceedings, transactions of societies, monographic series, while the available of Continuing resources (databases, updating loose-leaf, websites) includes Journals, Annuals, Memoires and proceedings. Those that are not available are newspapers, magazine, transactions of societies and monographic series.

The result of the table-3 reveals also that majority of the respondent in both university accepted that all the above mention methods are adopted in acquisition of serials and other continuing resources except in NSUK, which disagreed that it can be acquired through Legal deposit.

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**Table-3**  
**Methods of Acquisition of Serials and other Continuing Resources in the two University Libraries**

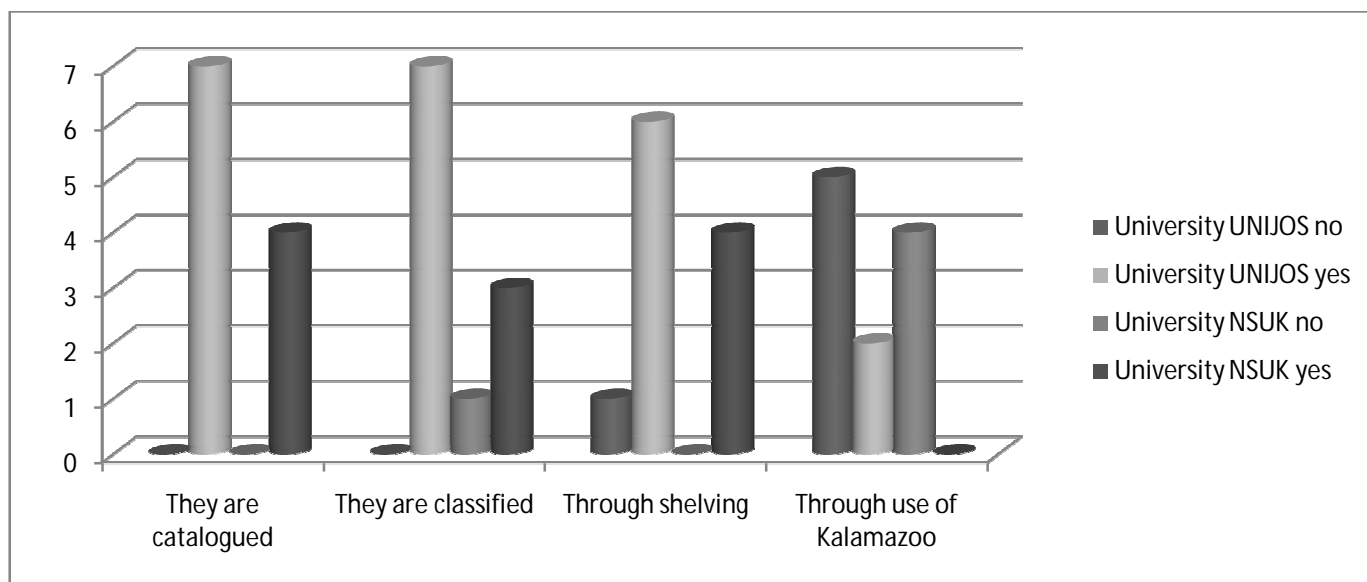
METHODS OF ACQUISITION	University					
	UNIJOS			NSUK		
	NO	Yes	Decision	No	Yes	Decision
By purchase	1(14.3%)	6(85.7%)	Adopted	1(25%)	3(75%)	Adopted
Through donation/gift	2(28.6%)	5(71.4%)	Adopted	1(25%)	3(75%)	Adopted
Exchange	2(28.6%)	5(71.4%)	Adopted	3(75%)	1(25%)	Adopted
Legal deposit	2(28.6%)	5(71.4%)	Adopted	3(75%)	1(25%)	Not Adopted
Consortia	1(14.3%)	6(85.7%)	Adopted	1(25%)	3(75%)	Adopted
Publishing	3(42.9%)	4(57.1%)	Adopted	1(25%)	3(75%)	Adopted



**Diag-1**  
 The above diagram illustrates views of method of acquisition by the two universities

**Table-4**  
**Mean ratings of respondents on methods used by the two university libraries in organizing these serials for use**

Method	University					
	UNIJOS			NSUK		
	No	Yes	Decision	No	Yes	Decision
They are catalogued	0(0%)	7(100%)	Adopted	0(0%)	4(100%)	Adopted
They are classified	0(0%)	7(100%)	Adopted	1(25%)	3(75%)	Adopted
Through shelving	1(14.3%)	6(85.7%)	Adopted	0(0%)	4(100%)	Adopted
Through use of Kalamazoo	5(71.4%)	2(28.6%)	Not adopted	4(100%)	0(0%)	Not adopted



**Diag-2**  
**Illustration of methods organizing serials for use by UNIJOS and NSUK**

## Results and Discussion

**Findings:** The research findings revealed that both serials and some continuing resources are available in the two university libraries. The findings show that all the listed serials, which includes Journals, Newspapers, Magazine, Annuals, Memoirs, Proceedings, etc. were all available, while some of continuing resource like Transactions of societies and Monographic series were not available. Non availability of continuing resources will not be unconnected with observation made that needed infrastructure like power supply and Internet facilities which are the vehicle for application of continuing resources are some of the constrain patrons encounter in the use of serials and other continuing resources. More so, in the oral interview conducted, 90% of librarian berates the school administration for their insensitivity in addressing the plight of librarian as result lack of these infrastructures in their library. Among two university libraries studied, the stories were the same.

With regards to method of acquisition, the study shows that the two universities under study adopt different method in

acquisition of serials and other continuing resources. These methods include by purchase, through donation/gift, exchange, consortia and publishing. The findings indicated that in the two universities under study, legal deposit is adopted in acquisition. Furthermore, interview with librarian support this finding, 80% of those interview reinstated that legal deposit is a form of acquisition of serials and other continuing resources. Also 90% of them stated that most of these facilities were through donation. Most university libraries receive serials and other library materials as gift from individuals, institutions, libraries and organization, countries etc.

The result of research also revealed that that the respondents agreed that serials are catalogued, classified. Nevertheless, organisation of serials entails cataloguing, classification and display on the rack. Mullis and Gascoigne observed that the major objectives of serials cataloguing are to provide the most efficient, economical access to serials represented in the catalogue; and to provide the most comprehensive and understandable bibliographic description for each serial represented in the catalogue. The finding of this research did not

fail to buttress the important of cataloguing in organizing serials and other continuing resource. More so, during the interview, the Librarian reiterated that cataloguing is the common means of organizing serials.

### Conclusion/Recommendation

The Section on Serials and Other Continuing Resources concerns itself with all issues which make serial publications unique in both the print and electronic environments. These include: bibliographic standards and control; holdings information; national and international library cooperation; access and availability; conservation and archiving; collection management and development; pricing issues; copyright; and, relationships with serial publishers, serial suppliers and other serials related organizations. The importance of this section calls for installation of effective management style, which will ensure that this section of the library form a critical aspect of the library service.

Based on the findings of the study, the recommendations are as follows: i. Emphasis should be made on training of librarians especially by embarking on conferencing/seminar/workshops, in-house training, and visits to other well established E- library facilities in all the university libraries. ii. There is need to embark on advocacy, promotion of continuing resources in the university libraries under study.

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