



COLLECTION DEVELOPMENT PRACTICES OF ELECTRONIC SERIALS IN UNIVERSITY LIBRARIES IN SOUTH-EAST, NIGERIA

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Abstract

The increasing reliance on electronic serials in academic research and teaching, coupled with the complexities of digital information management, necessitates a comprehensive understanding of how university libraries build and sustain such collections. This study investigated the collection development practices of electronic serials in university libraries in South-East Nigeria, with a focus on practices of building e-serials collection, challenges of building and managing e-serials, and strategies for addressing and improving collection development of e-serials. The study adopted a descriptive survey research design. Total population of 327 librarians and library officers across eight public university libraries (five federal and three state universities) were sampled, with sample size of 175 respondents determined using proportionate stratified and random sampling techniques. Data were collected through structured questionnaire and analyzed using descriptive statistics. Findings revealed that while electronic serials are recognized as essential resources, university libraries in Southeast, Nigeria adopted various collection development practices in the building of their e-serials, such as: defined and clear collection development policy; had licensing agreements with publishers and vendors; used mixed acquisition methods, such as subscription and direct purchase, among others. The study identified limited budget for e-serials subscription, copyright, licensing and access fees, insufficient IT infrastructure to support e-serials access and management, technical challenges in the preservation and archiving of e-serials selection and evaluation problems, digital rights management, limited expertise and experience by staff in the management of e-serials collection, etc. Based on these findings, the study recommends adequate and comprehensive budget provisions for e-serials subscription and acquisition, that would enable them to provide and maintain IT infrastructure to support e-serials access and management, plan and implementation through collection development policies a robust e-serials management that would enable staff stay current in managing e-serials collection, among others.

Keywords: Collection development, electronic serials, e-serials management, university libraries, South-East Nigeria



Introduction

The primary purpose of a university library is to support the teaching, learning and research activities of their parent institution, to meet the information, research and curriculum needs of its students, faculty and staff. Therefore, it is the statutory obligation of the university library to provide the bibliographic and information services necessary to fulfil the mission of the university and to satisfy the diverse information needs of entire university community, which include students, faculty, researchers and staff. For a university library to provide effective information services to the university community, it must strive to make available adequate information resources, which are generally referred to as library collection (University of the West of Scotland 2025). These resources are made available by the library through various collection development activities.

Collection development in libraries refer to the strategic techniques and procedures utilized by librarians to build, maintain, and enrich comprehensive and relevant collection of resources that align with the needs and interests of the library's patrons. It is the process of systematically building the collection of a particular library to meet the information needs of the library users in a timely and economical manner, using information resources locally held as well as resources from other libraries (Okolo et al., 2019). The major activities or practices involved in a library's collection development are selection of library resources, procurement, management, storage, removal (weeding), and collaborative resource utilization. The major objective of collection development in a library is to make sure that the library's collection stays vibrant, current, and inclusive, so as to continually address the ever-changing informational demands of its user base (Bonaya & Mwilongo, 2020). It is apposite to state that the foundation and success of any type of library, especially university libraries to a great extent lies in its collection. This is because every aspect of library operations- cataloguing, classification, reference services etc., depends heavily on the quality, depth and breadth of its collection.

Library resources, which are provided through collection development practices can be categorized into monographs; comprising of books of different kinds, theses and dissertations; serials made up of journals, magazines, newspapers and other materials published at regular or irregular intervals. Other collections of university libraries include database, indexes and abstracts; electronic or digital collections, multimedia collections, special collections such as rare books, manuscripts, etc. Among the various categories of library collections mentioned above, books and



serials are most prevalent (Krause, 2020). According to (Iroka et al., 2022), serials are publications appearing in a continuous, indefinite or open-ended sequence under a common title with some sort of sequence designation. They are publications issued in successive parts appearing in intervals, usually regular, bearing numerical or chronological designations and intended to be continued indefinitely. Serial materials include journals, magazines, newspapers, annual reports, proceedings, transactions, bulletins, newsletters, yearbooks and almanacs (Southeastern Louisiana University, 2024). Serials are characterized by their periodicity, often appearing at regular intervals, and serve as vital sources of information for researchers, academics, professionals, and the general public. Serial publications are considered a cornerstone of research and scholarly communication, providing a platform for the dissemination of research findings, current affairs, and specialized knowledge. It can be in any format (print or electronic) and are expected to continue indefinitely. The emergence of ICT and use of other digital technologies in libraries in the 21st century have resulted to changes in user needs and user behavior. Consequently, university libraries are faced with the challenge of acquiring information resources in print and electronic formats, including electronic serials.

Electronic serials (e-serials) refer to serial publications in electronic format or serial materials that are published online, typically in digital formats such as PDF, HTML, XML, and issued at regular intervals, such as daily, weekly, monthly and are often peer-reviewed (Donkor, 2021). Examples of e-serials include electronic journals (e-journals), online magazines, digital newspapers, e-newsletters, blogs and online forums, etc. In today's digital environment, electronic serials offer numerous advantages over their print counterparts, including instantaneous access, searchability, multimedia integration, and global dissemination. E-serials have the unparalleled ability to disseminate knowledge globally without physical constraints, transcending geographical boundaries and reaching a diverse audience of scholars, researchers, and practitioners (Bosman & Kramer, 2018; McKiernan, 2019).

To enable university libraries, provide access to their e-serial collection to satisfy user needs, they employ various e-serials collection development practices, which are categorized into five broad areas, namely collection building, organization and management, collection maintenance, storage and preservation, and collection evaluation. ((Sharma & Kumar, 2018; Nicholas, 2019). In fact, the adoption of electronic serials by university libraries reflects a strategic response to the evolving landscape of scholarly communication and information dissemination.



Recognizing the many benefits that e-serials offer, such as immediate access, enhanced searchability and the capacity for global knowledge dissemination, university libraries currently prioritize the acquisition, organization, and provision of electronic resources to serve their clientele better. To this end, university libraries are adopting various collection development practices for their e-serials. This proactive approach not only enhance the efficiency and effectiveness of information delivery but also underscores the vital role of libraries in supporting academic pursuits and fostering intellectual engagement in the digital age. It is indisputable that in today's information world, it may be difficult for university libraries to provide effective and efficient information services delivery without e-resources, especially e-serials.

However, it is surprising to note that in this electronic era, university libraries seldom follow the rudiments for collection development of electronic resources, especially electronic serials. This is amplified by the result of a study by Okogwu (2020) which found that despite the numerous benefits that e-serials offer in research and scholarly communication, many university libraries in Nigeria still grapple with the challenge and complexities inherent in building and managing electronic serials collection, resulting in the poor collection development of e-serials. In fact, there seem to be lack of standardized practices for collection development of e-serials, as it relates to policy, selection, acquisition, evaluation, weeding, etc., leading to inconsistencies, inefficiencies and overall poor collection development of e-serials. Based on the researchers' preliminary observation, it becomes necessary to study the challenges faced by university libraries in the building and management of e-serials collection, using university libraries in Southeast, Nigeria as the focus of the study.

Research Questions

The study answered the following research questions:

1. What are the current practices of building and managing e-serials collection in federal university libraries in Southeast, Nigeria?
2. What are the challenges faced by libraries in the collection development of e-serials in federal university libraries in Southeast, Nigeria?
3. What are the strategies for improving e-serials collection development in federal university libraries in Southeast, Nigeria?



Literature Review

Overview of Collection Development in Libraries

Collection development in libraries refers to the systematic process of selecting, acquiring, and maintaining library materials, such as books, journals, databases and digital resources, to satisfy the information needs of users. According to Olubiyo (2023), collection development is the process within the library community involving the selection and acquisition of materials to expand a collection, alongside decisions regarding the inclusion of specific materials. Yakubu (2023) defines a collection development policy as a systematic written statement outlining a library's principles for material selection, including guidelines for selection and deselection decisions, as well as policies regarding gifts and exchanges. It encompasses the selection, procurement, and processing of library materials across various formats to meet both current and future user needs which is the bedrock of the university (Emasealu & Harcourt, 2021). It involves selecting, acquiring, and processing library materials across various formats to meet both present and future user requirements (Okogwu & Ekere, 2019). The evolution of collection development in university libraries showcases a diverse array of trends, and one of the importance of collection development, is to identify and address collection weaknesses to maintain a robust collection (Jan & Ganiae, 2019; Usoro, 2023). The overall goal of collection development is to create a balanced and relevant collection that supports the specific mission of the library and serve the needs of its users. Through collection development, libraries can assess the strength and weaknesses in a collection and then create plan to correct the weakness and maintain the strength (Ameyaw, 2020).

In the context of e-serials, collection development involves selecting and acquiring digital resources, such as journals, magazines, and other special publications to support teaching, learning and research (Chopra & Johnson, 2020). A comprehensive collection development plan, remain an essential tool for guiding activities related to the preparation, construction, selection, and acquisition of library materials. It presents a robust development strategy for ensuring a well - balanced and diverse collection (Johnson & Lyons, 2020),

A good collection development policy is a prerequisite for and effective and efficient collection development in a library. The main objectives of a collection development policy are to inform library staff and stakeholders, guide selection activities and maintain the integrity of the collection (Gregory, 2019). It serves as a framework for planning, budgeting, selecting, and acquiring materials, so as to ensure consistency and balance in collection growth. It establishes



acquisition priorities and provides a training tool for library staff; plays a crucial role in justifying selection decisions to both users and administrator. It serves as a guideline for sustaining collection balance, training new staff, and justifying selection decisions. A good and comprehensive collection development policy in a library may specify procedures and guidelines for selection, acquisition, evaluation and weeding of library resources organization, storage of library resource (Reed & Ferguson, 2017; Johnson, 2018; Evans & Saponaro, 2019). Despite, its significance, some libraries still lack comprehensive collection development policies, underscoring the need for greater awareness and implementation in library management (Huang, 2017).

Concept of E- Serials

Electronic serials (e-serials) refer to serial publications in electronic format or serial materials that are published online, typically in digital formats such as PDF, HTML, XML, and issued at regular intervals, such as daily, weekly, monthly and are often peer-reviewed (Donkor, 2021). Electronic serials, have become indispensable resources within academic libraries, playing a pivotal role in supporting scholarly research, teaching, and learning. Electronic serials facilitate the provision of seamless access to a vast array of scholarly literature in digital format, and offer numerous advantages over traditional print counterparts. Electronic serials offer unparalleled accessibility and convenience to users, enabling researchers, students, and faculty members to access scholarly content from anywhere with an internet connection. This accessibility transcends geographical boundaries, allowing users to retrieve relevant research materials at their convenience, thereby fostering a more inclusive and global scholarly community. With electronic databases and search engines, users can efficiently navigate vast repositories of scholarly articles, significantly reducing the time and effort required to locate relevant information ((Lewis & Oguz, 2016; Iwu, Haliso & Ifijeh, 2020). Unlike traditional print journals, which often have lengthy publication cycles, electronic serials offer expedited publication processes, allowing researchers to disseminate their findings more quickly to a global audience (Hanson, Barreiro & Crosetto, 2024). Electronic serials play a vital role in academic libraries by providing convenient access to scholarly literature, facilitating efficient research practices, enabling rapid dissemination of research findings, and promoting sustainability in library collections. As academic libraries continue to embrace digital technologies and online resources, the importance of electronic serials in supporting scholarly endeavors will only continue to grow, reaffirming their status as essential components of modern academic library collections.



Practices for Building and Managing E-Serials in Libraries

Effective management of electronic serials in university libraries involves building, organizing and maintaining a robust digital collection through clear collection development policies, strategic acquisition and technical user support. Key practices include using a mix of acquisition methods like subscription, purchase and consortia. Developing a selection policy that put into consideration user needs and cost effectiveness, and ensuring proper technical support and infrastructure and training of staff to manage dynamic electronic resources. In a study of e-journal management in in university libraries, Chadegani et al. (2017) found that libraries prioritize subscription-based e-serials, often through consortia or big deals. To ensure relevance and alignment with research needs, faculty involvement is very crucial (Kumar & Sigh, 2018). Chukwumusa (2019) conducted a study on collection development models in academic libraries in South-South, Nigeria. The finding of the study revealed that the main method for developing academic library collections was through purchase. Respondents had adequate knowledge of “Justin-case” and “just-in-time” models of collection development; and that a majority of the respondents used the “just-n-time” model in building the library collection. A study by Muhammad, Ahmed and Gusau (2020) on the acquisition, staffing and training issues for the management of electronic journals in state university libraries in North-West Zone of Nigeria. revealed that relevance of the resources, compatibility, and cost were mostly considered when acquiring electronic information resources, especially journals. The method of procurement by the libraries include: subscription, gifts and donations, licensing agreement, and direct purchase from vendors. The study also revealed that only ICT competent staff were posted to serve as e-resources managers.

Challenges of E-Serials Management in Libraries

Electronic serials, while offering numerous benefits to libraries in general, and academic libraries in particular also presents a myriad of challenges for their management. These challenges encompass various aspects of acquisition, management, and access, posing significant obstacles to librarians tasked with building comprehensive digital collections. One major challenge is the complexity of licensing agreements and pricing models associated with electronic serials. Therefore, addressing issues of perpetual access and sustainability in licensing agreements is crucial for mitigating the risk of content loss and ensuring the longevity of digital collections (Hane & Day, 2016). Hawkins (2022) notes that unlike print subscriptions, which often have



straightforward pricing structures, electronic serials may involve intricate licensing terms, access restrictions, and fluctuating costs. Negotiating favorable licensing agreements with publishers while navigating budgetary constraints can be a daunting task for librarians, leading to difficulties in ensuring equitable access to essential scholarly resources (Roncevic, 2021).

The proliferation of electronic serials has led to an overwhelming volume of available content, making it challenging for librarians to curate relevant and high-quality resources for their collections (Crawford, 2016). Selecting from an extensive array of e-journals while considering factors such as user needs, disciplinary relevance, and budgetary constraints requires careful evaluation and strategic decision-making. This challenge is further complicated by the dynamic nature of electronic resources, with new titles continuously being introduced and existing titles evolving explosively (Tenopir et al., 2019). Another significant challenge in electronic serials collection development is ensuring seamless access and discoverability of e-resources for library users. Librarians must address technical issues related to authentication, platform compatibility, and integration with library systems to provide users with efficient access to electronic serials (Cox, 2015). Preserving electronic serials for long-term access poses considerable challenges due to the rapid evolution of digital technologies and formats (Owusu-Ansah, 2016).

Indeed, collection development of electronic serials in academic libraries presents numerous challenges, such as navigating complex licensing agreements, selecting from a vast array of available content, ensuring seamless access and discoverability for users, and preserving digital resources for long-term accessibility. Addressing these challenges requires strategic planning, collaboration with publishers and vendors, investment in technological infrastructure, and ongoing assessment of user needs and preferences. Despite these obstacles, effectively managing electronic serials collections is essential for supporting scholarly research, teaching, and learning in the digital age.

Addressing Challenges of Collection Development of Electronic Serials

Different studies by various researchers have put forward various strategies by which the challenges of collection development, especially as it relates to electronic serials can be solved. For example, Mole and Obidike (2016) carried out a study to determine strategies for overcoming challenges associated with collection development in university libraries, using three Nigerian universities as a case study. The study recommended the following: constant evaluation of automation facilities, adequate and regular system upgrade, training and retraining of librarians



and paraprofessional in the use of modern information and communication technology facilities. As strategies to overcome the challenges. Okogwu and Ekere (2019) in a study on the challenges of collection development of electronic resources in university libraries in south-East, Nigeria. The study revealed twelve strategies to be adopted by university libraries to overcome the challenges. Some of the strategies include: increase in the library budgets, adequate funding of libraries, provision of alternative electricity/power supply, training and retraining of staff on the technical skills; training on the areas of software and hardware troubleshooting in developing electronic resources collection. Indeed, collection development of electronic resources in academic libraries is faced with numerous challenges, addressing these challenges requires strategic planning, collaboration with publishers and vendors, adequate investment in technological infrastructure, and regular assessment of user needs and preferences.

The existing literature reveals several gaps that justify the urgent need for a comprehensive study on the development of electronic serials collections in academic libraries in South-East, Nigeria. The gap lies in the absence of a comprehensive study specifically focusing on the development of electronic serials collections in academic libraries in South-East, Nigeria, considering geographical specificity, comprehensiveness, timeliness, and addressing specific challenges. Such a study would provide invaluable insights for policymakers, library administrators, and practitioners to enhance electronic resources management in the region. As recent developments in libraries accelerate the shift towards electronic resources, this transition introduces new challenges, such as licensing, access, and ensuring the quality and reliability of electronic materials. Consequently, effective management of serials warrants significant attention in libraries, particularly in academic settings, where the rapid evolution of technologies demands ongoing adaptation and strategic planning.

Research Methods

This study aims to investigate the collection development practices of e-serials in university libraries. The scope of the study is universities libraries in Southeast, Nigeria. The study, which adopted a descriptive survey was designed to answer three research questions. The population of the study consists 327 librarians and library officers in 8 public university libraries (5 federal and 3 state universities) in Southeast, Nigeria. A sample size of 175 was determined, using the Krejcie and Morgan sampling technique. Proportionate sampling was used to determine the number of respondents from each institution, while simple random sampling was used to select



the actual respondents. A researcher-developed questionnaire was used as the instrument for data collection. The questionnaire consists of three clusters with 32 item questions in Likert scale rating form. The Likert scale allowed respondents to express their level of agreement or disagreement with the statements provided by the researchers. The reliability of the instrument was established through a Trial Test. A single test was administered to 10 randomly selected librarians and library officers from the University of Uyo. After two weeks, the same instrument was administered to the same group. The two scores administered were correlated using PPMC, which yielded an overall r coefficient of 0.84. The high coefficient implies that the questionnaire is consistent and reliable in measuring the variables of the study. The questionnaire were self-administered. The administration and completion of the questionnaire took a period of about one month (July – August, 2025). Descriptive statistics, such as mean value and standard deviation were used to analyze the data and answer the research questions. A criterion Mean of 2.50 was used to determine the statistical decision. The implication is that any mean value up to or above 2.50 indicates agreement, while any mean value below 2.50 indicates disagreement.

Data Analysis and Discussion of Findings

Research question 1: What are the current practices of building and managing e-serials collection in federal university libraries in Southeast, Nigeria?

Table 1: Analysis of Responses on the Current Practices in the Building and Management of E-Serials Collection in Federal Universities in Southeast, Nigeria (n = 175)

S/n	Item Questions	SA	A	D	SD	X	STD	Decision
1	My library has a defined and clear collection development policy for e-serials, including criteria for selection and evaluation.	80	60	25	10	3.2	0.89	Agree
2	My library selects resources that align with the academic curriculum and research needs of faculty and students.	25	30	65	55	1.3	1.15	Disagree
3	My library makes adequate budget for acquisition of e-serials.	27	48	55	45	2.3	1.02	Disagree
4	My library has licensing agreement with publishers and vendors.	69	53	26	27	2.9	1.08	Agree
5	The e-serials collection development policy outlines acquisition methods and procedures.	74	60	33	08	3.1	0.88	Agree
6	My library uses a mix of acquisition methods, e.g. subscriptions, direct purchases and open-access sources.	70	68	20	17	3.1	0.88	Agree
7	My library has defined procedure for subscription management of e-serials: renewals, cancellations and tracking access.	73	59	30	13	3.0	0.94	Agree



8	My library provides training and support to staff and users for accessing and using e-serials.	60	68	27	20	3.0	0.97	Agree
9	My library has defined strategies for digital preservation of e-serials, such as digital archiving, downloading and printing, etc.	65	63	38	09	3.05	0.89	Agree
10	My library regularly evaluates e-serials collection to ensure it meets user needs of the university community.	30	31	74	40	2.3	1.01	Disagree
11	My library makes sure it provides users with platforms for accessing e-serials collection, such as library catalogue and websites.	71	62	22	20	3.04	0.96	Agree
12	My library often engages in the regular weeding of e-serials collection.	20	52	58	45	2.3	0.77	Disagree
Cluster Mean = 2.71						32.52	0.95	

Keys: SA = Strongly Agree, A = Agree, D = Disagree, SD = Strongly Disagree

Data presented in Table 1 shows the mean value analysis of respondents on the collection development practices adopted by university libraries in building their e-serials collection. From the result, four item statements (2, 3, 10, 12) had their mean values ranged below the Criterion mean (cut-off) of 2.50, indicating that respondents disagreed to the respective practices. However, eight item statements (1, 4, 5, 6, 7, 8, 9, 11) had their mean ratings above the Criterion mean (cut-off) of 2.50, indicating agreement to the practices in building e-serials collection in university libraries in Southeast, Nigeria. The result infers that university libraries in Southeast, Nigeria adopted such collection development practices as: defined and clear collection development policy; had licensing agreements with publishers and vendors; used mixed acquisition methods, such as subscription and direct purchase; defined procedure for subscription management, provided training and support to staff and users; defined strategies for digital preservation; regular evaluation of e-serials to ensure it meets user needs; and provided various platforms for accessing e-serials. The finding of the study corroborates Chadegani et al (2017) which identified key practices for building e-serials collection to include: using a mix of acquisition methods like subscription, purchase and consortia, developing a selection policy that put into consideration user needs and cost effectiveness, and ensuring proper technical support and infrastructure and training of staff to manage dynamic electronic resources. Conversely, the finding contradicts the studies by Nwosu and Udo-Anyanwu (2015), which found the absence of comprehensive collection development policy, especially for electronic serials, and Okogwu and Ekere (2018) whose finding revealed that university libraries adopted traditional policies for both print and electronic resources collection and did not have separate policy for electronic resources. Comparing the contradictions



from the previous studies, the implication is that university libraries in Southeast Nigeria may have improved in their collection development practices.

Research Question 2: What are the challenges faced by libraries in the collection development of e-serials in federal university libraries in Southeast, Nigeria?

Table 2: Analysis of Responses on the Challenges Faced by Libraries in the Collection Development of E-Serials in Federal University Libraries in Southeast, Nigeria (n = 175).

S/n	Item Questions	SA	A	D	SD	X	STD	Decision
1	My library has limited budget for e-serials subscription and acquisition.	60	62	30	23	2.90	1.02	Agree
2	There is challenge of copyright, licensing and access fees for e-serials.	65	65	18	27	3.00	0.88	Agree
3	My library has insufficient IT infrastructure to support e-serials access and management.	68	60	35	12	3.04	0.93	Agree
4	My library encounters technical challenges in preserving and archiving of e-serials collection.	70	68	17	20	3.07	0.97	Agree
5	There is challenge of digital rights management for e-serials collection in my library.	69	59	27	20	3.01	1.01	Agree
6	My library has staff with limited expertise and experience in the management of e-serials collection.	72	68	25	10	3.15	0.87	Agree
7	My library faces the challenge of access restrictions to some e-serials.	70	63	30	12	3.09	0.92	Agree
8	My library experiences selection and evaluation problems for e-serials collection.	75	62	30	08	3.17	0.87	Agree
9	My library faces weeding and cancellation challenges for e-serials collection.	67	58	25	25	2.95	1.05	Agree
10	Training of staff for handling of e-serials collection in my library is not regular.	76	60	21	18	3.11	1.50	Agree
Cluster Mean= 3.05						30.49	2.00	

Keys: SA = *Strongly Agree*, A = *Agree*, D = *Disagree*, SD = *Strongly Disagree*

Data in Table 2 indicates a cluster mean of 3.05 which is above the cut off mark of 2.50 on a four-point scale. This implies that the respondents are in agreement that all the item statements are the challenges of collection development practices for e-serials in university libraries in South-East, Nigeria. The challenges as identified by respondents include: limited budget for e-serials subscription, copyright, licensing and access fees, insufficient IT infrastructure to support e-serials access and management, technical challenges in the preservation and archiving of e-serials selection and evaluation problems, challenges of digital rights management, staff had limited



expertise and experience in the management of e-series collection, challenge of access restriction to some e-series, libraries faced selection and evaluation problems for e-series collection, weeding and cancellation, and irregular staff training for handling e-series. The high standard deviation cluster mean values of 2.00 confirmed that the respondents are in agreement that the item statements in the cluster represent the challenges in of collection development practices for e-series in university libraries in South-East, Nigeria. The result of the finding corroborates Tenopir et al. (2019) which affirmed that university libraries are faced with challenges such as; selecting from an extensive array of e-journals while considering factors such as user needs, disciplinary relevance, and budgetary constraints requires careful evaluation and strategic decision-making. The finding is also in agreement with Hawkins (2022) whose finding revealed that the complexity of licensing agreements and pricing models associated with electronic serials is a major constraint to most public libraries and other challenges are; print subscriptions, which often have straightforward pricing structures, access restrictions, and fluctuating costs.

Research question 3: What are the strategies for improving e-series collection development in federal university libraries in Southeast, Nigeria?

Table 3: Analysis of Responses on Strategies for Improving E-Series Collection Development in Federal University Libraries in Southeast, Nigeria (n= 175).

S/n	Item Questions	SA	A	D	SD	X	STD	Decision
1	University libraries should make adequate budget provisions for e-series subscription and acquisition.	71	61	23	20	3.05	0.96	Agree
2	Libraries should negotiate flexible licenses that allows for flexible usage.	67	73	20	15	3.09	0.92	Agree
3	Provision and maintenance of IT infrastructure to support e-series access and management.	70	58	24	23	3.00	1.03	Agree
4	Libraries should implement robust library management system and troubleshoot when necessary.	65	65	25	20	3.00	0.99	Agree
5	University libraries should implement digital rights management solutions for e-series collection.	58	71	30	16	2.98	0.93	Agree



6	Library staff should update their knowledge and stay current in the management of e-serials collection.	75	54	24	22	3.04	1.03	Agree
7	Libraries should explore open access alternatives to restricted e-serials.	63	78	16	18	3.06	0.93	Agree
8	Libraries should have defined and clear selection criteria and use of selection tools.	64	61	28	22	2.95	1.02	Agree
9	Libraries should establish clear criteria for weeding, and develop weeding schedule.	69	53	30	23	2.96	1.05	Agree
10	Libraries should make provision for and organize training of staff for handling of e-serials on regular basis.	80	65	24	06	3.25	0.82	Agree
Cluster Mean = 3.04						30.38	0.87	

Keys: SA = Strongly Agree, A = Agree, D = Disagree, SD = Strongly Disagree

Data in Table 3 shows a cluster mean of 3.04 which is above the Criterion mean (cut off mark) of 2.50 on a four-point scale. This implies that the respondents are in agreement with all the item statements on the strategies for improving collection development practices for e-serials in university libraries in South-East, Nigeria. The strategies as identified by respondents include: adequate budget provisions for e-serials subscription and acquisition, need to negotiate flexible licenses that allows for flexible usage of e-serials, provision and maintenance of IT infrastructure to support e-serials access and management. Implementation of a robust library management system and troubleshoot when necessary, updating of the knowledge of staff to enable them stay current in managing e-serials collection, explore open access alternatives to restricted e-serials, have defined and clear selection criteria and use of selection tools, establish clear criteria for weeding, and develop weeding schedule, and organize training of staff for handling of e-serials on regular basis. The high standard deviation cluster mean values 0.87 confirmed that the respondents are in agreement that the item statements in the cluster represent the strategies for addressing or improving collection development practices for e-serials in university libraries in South-East, Nigeria. The finding is in consonance with Kumar and Singh (2018) which advised that libraries should consider preservation and archiving strategies, such as LOCKSS (Lots of Copies Keep Stuff Safe), and CLOCKSS, a “Dark Archive” initiative to ensure long-term access. The finding also aligns with Okogwu and Ekere (2023), who identified increasing library budgets (mean = 3.36) as a major strategy for enhancing electronic resources collection development in Southeast, Nigerian university libraries.



Conclusion

The study explored collection development practices of electronic serials in university libraries in Southeast, Nigeria. The study was necessitated by the increasing use of electronic resources in general, and electronic serials in particular in university libraries in Nigeria. Specifically, the study was guided by three research questions, which centered on the specific collection development practices of e-serials in university libraries, challenges and strategies for improving the identified practices in the libraries. The literature review, which helped to build a strong base for the study, focused on five main areas: an overview of collection development, concept of e-serials; practices for building and maintaining e-serials; challenges of e-serials management; and strategies for addressing the challenges of collection development of e-serials. At the end, the study found that university libraries in Southeast, Nigeria adopted various collection development practices in the building of their e-serials, such as: defined and clear collection development policy; had licensing agreements with publishers and vendors; used mixed acquisition methods, such as subscription and direct purchase; defined procedure for subscription management, provided training and support to staff and users; defined strategies for digital preservation; regular evaluation of e-serials to ensure it meets user needs; and provided various platforms for accessing e-serials. The study identified limited budget for e-serials subscription, copyright, licensing and access fees, insufficient IT infrastructure to support e-serials access and management, technical challenges in the preservation and archiving of e-serials selection and evaluation problems, digital rights management, limited expertise and experience by staff in the management of e-serials collection, access restriction to some e-serials, selection and evaluation problems, , weeding and cancellation, and irregular staff training for handling e-serials, as some of the challenges of collection development of e-serials in university libraries in Southeast, Nigeria. e-serials.

Recommendations

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

1. University libraries should make adequate and comprehensive budget provisions for e-serials subscription and acquisition. The budget will enable them provide and maintain IT infrastructure to support e-serials access and management.



2. Plan and implement a robust e-serials collection management that would enable them stay current in managing e-serials collection, explore open access alternatives to restricted e-serials, have defined and clear selection policy, preservation and weeding criteria.
3. Libraries should explore suitable and convenient ways of updating the knowledge of staff in handling e-serials and troubleshooting by regularly organizing staff trainings on e-serials management.

Limitations of the Study

The study had the following limitations, which the researchers were able to overcome:

1. The use of rating scale as the sole instrument for data collection did not give respondents the freedom to express their opinion, which may have affected the result.
2. Reluctance of the respondents in filling the questionnaire resulted to delay in data collection, as the researchers had to visit repeatedly to collect the completed questionnaire.
3. The study is focused on university libraries in Southeast, Nigeria, which might not be representative of other geo-political zones of Nigeria.

Suggestions for Further Research

Based on the findings of this study, further research could be conducted on the following related areas:

1. Evaluation of digital literacy levels of librarians in the management of E-Serials in academic libraries in Nigeria.
2. Impact of ICT infrastructure on access and use of electronic serials in tertiary institutions in Nigeria.
3. The role of Institutional Repositories in the preservation and dissemination of E-serials in Universities.



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APPENDIX

COLLECTION DEVELOPMENT PRACTICES OF ELECTRONIC SERIALS IN UNIVERSITY LIBRARIES IN SOUTH-EAST, NIGERIA (CDPESUL) QUESTIONNAIRE

General Instruction to Respondents: Please tick (✓) in the appropriate box against your choice of option, or respond to the question as it may concern you.

SECTION A: Biodata of Respondents:

1. Name of Institution:

2. Librarian ☐ Library Officer ☐

2. Department/Unit of the Library:

3. Years of Experience:

SECTION B: Collection Development Practices of Electronic Serials in University Libraries Questions.

Cluster 1: Current Collection Development Practices in the Building and Management of E-Serials Collection in Federal Universities in Southeast, Nigeria

S/n	Item Questions	SA	A	D	SD
1	My library has a defined and clear collection development policy for e-serials, including criteria for selection and evaluation.				
2	My library selects resources that align with the academic curriculum and research needs of faculty and students.				
3	My library makes adequate budget for acquisition of e-serials.				
4	My library has licensing agreement with publishers and vendors.				
5	The e-serials collection development policy outlines acquisition methods and procedures.				
6	My library uses a mix of acquisition methods, e.g. subscriptions, direct purchases and open-access sources.				
7	My library has defined procedure for subscription management of e-serials: renewals, cancellations and tracking access.				
8	My library provides training and support to staff and users for accessing and using e-serials.				
9	My library has defined strategies for digital preservation of e-serials, such as digital archiving, downloading and printing, etc.				
10	My library regularly evaluates e-serials collection to ensure it meets user needs of the university community.				
11	My library makes sure it provides users with platforms for accessing e-serials collection, such as library catalogue and websites.				
12	My library often engages in the regular weeding of e-serials collection.				



Cluster 2: Challenges Faced in the Collection Development of E-Serials in Federal University Libraries in Southeast, Nigeria

S/n	Item Questions	SA	A	D	SD
1	My library has limited budget for e-serials subscription and acquisition.				
2	There is challenge of copyright, licensing and access fees for e-serials.				
3	My library has insufficient IT infrastructure to support e-serials access and management.				
4	My library encounters technical challenges in preserving and archiving of e-serials collection.				
5	There is challenge of digital rights management for e-serials collection in my library.				
6	My library has staff with limited expertise and experience in the management of e-serials collection.				
7	My library faces the challenge of access restrictions to some e-serials.				
8	My library experiences selection and evaluation problems for e-serials collection.				
9	My library faces weeding and cancellation challenges for e-serials collection.				
10	Training of staff for handling of e-serials collection in my library is not regular.				

Cluster 3: Strategies for Improving E-Serials Collection Development in Federal University Libraries in Southeast, Nigeria

S/n	Item Questions	SA	A	D	SD
1	University libraries should make adequate budget provisions for e-serials subscription and acquisition.				
2	Libraries should negotiate flexible licenses that allows for flexible usage.				
3	Provision and maintenance of IT infrastructure to support e-serials access and management.				
4	Libraries should implement robust library management system and troubleshoot when necessary.				
5	University libraries should implement digital rights management solutions for e-serials collection.				
6	Library staff should update their knowledge and stay current in the management of e-serials collection.				



7	Libraries should explore open access alternatives to restricted e-serials.				
8	Libraries should have defined and clear selection criteria and use of selection tools.				
9	Libraries should establish clear criteria for weeding, and develop weeding schedule.				
10	Libraries should make provision for and organize training of staff for handling of e-serials on regular basis.				