

A STUDY ON THE USAGE OF THE AFRICANA COLLECTION AT THE KENNETH DIKE LIBRARY, UNIVERSITY OF IBADAN, NIGERIA

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Abstract

This study examined the usage of Africana collection in Kenneth Dike Library of University of Ibadan. The collection is unique for its Africana content due to the responsibilities bestowed on it by the Nigerian legal deposit statutes. The research design adopted for this study was ex-post-facto study. The records of consultation kept in the Reference section of Kenneth Dike Library from 2009 to 2011 and statistics taken when there was relative stability in the academic calendar served as data. A qualitative analysis of data using frequencies and percentages was used to examine the usage of Africana collection and it showed that postgraduate students constitute the major users of the collection while library staff members are the least user-group. Theses and dissertations are the main resources consulted by all categories of users. The challenges faced in developing the collection include: lack of preservation policy, inadequate funding, shortage of staff, lack of space and harsh environmental conditions.

Keywords: Africana collection; Kenneth Dike Library; publications ordinance; legal deposits, Nigeria.

Introduction

The library is an important intellectual resource in the academic community. It helps to fulfill the curriculum requirements and to promote studies and research (Rajendran & Rathinasabapathy, 2005). Developing a balanced and usable collection is an important aspect of library services which are built to meet specific research and information needs of the institution's academic programs. Aguolu (1989) maintains that libraries are social agencies designed to conserve knowledge, preserve cultural heritage, provide information, support education and research, and serve as fountains of recreation. Academic libraries acquire conventional materials as well as specialized and unconventional materials that have research and educational value to meet their functional roles. Africana collection constitutes a part of the specially treated materials. There are various concepts of Africana by different writers and organizations. Afeworki & Holley (2006) stated that Africana resources cover the study of the African continent in general including their history, politics, culture, literature, religion and economics. Some organizations see it from the point of view of the African indigenous knowledge. Okore, Ekere & Eke (2009) define it as encompassing all forms of knowledge be it technological skills, practices and beliefs that enable the community to achieve stable livelihood in the environment. Africana resources are therefore essential information sources that ought to be preserved for both the present and future because of their special nature, rarity, type, subject, and origin. Much of the scientific research output from Africa are in the form of grey literature; that is, unpublished information and knowledge resources, such as research reports, theses and dissertations, seminars and conference papers. Africana resources cover subject areas of cultural anthropology, folklore, psychology, sociology, traditional medicine, etc. The resources also cut across different subject formats like almanacs, charts, pictures, subject files, internet information resources.

The Africana collection, like any other special collection in an academic library, is used generally for literature searching and bibliography preparation related directly to teaching and research programs. Use is made of the collection by those with special access rights during regular library opening hours and the users are free to call for assistance. In many special collections of this sort, the acquisition of materials is mostly through depositories, bequeaths and donations from individuals and/or organizations.

Kenneth Dike Library is the oldest University library in Nigeria serving as an Academic Library. The entire library collection consists of over 2 Million volumes of books, journals theses, and technical reports among other records. The Africana Collections consist of rare books, archival, photographic, newspaper collection, theses ,manuscripts The Library attracts a lot of users who constantly consult these information materials for research purposes However, a question that readily comes to mind is what is the extent and pattern of usage of Africana collections in Kenneth Dike Library by users such as: academic staff, other staff of the institution, students (undergraduates and postgraduates), other members of the institution and their immediate community. The study will try to find out also the library services that support the collection usage.

Objectives of the Study

- To identify the different classes of users who consult Africana collections
- To find out the category of users that consults the collection most.
- To find out the type of collection that is mostly consulted by users.
- To find information services provision that supports the collection usage.
- To establish the challenges faced in developing the collection.
- To make recommendations on the basis of the information gathered regarding the use of the Africana collection.

Methodology

The transactional log book for Africana collection forms the data used for this study. The statistics gathered spanned the period from 2009 to 2011. The data examine frequency of usage of resources under review by different category of users, types of materials consulted. From these, some recommendations were made.

The Africana collection in Kenneth Dike Library

The Africana Collection is housed within the Reference Section of Kenneth Dike's main library complex. The creation of the Africana Section was initiated by Professor John Harris, the founding librarian of the University of Ibadan Library. In 1950 the library was designated a 'national legal depository library for materials published within the country. The collection has been expanded and offers services for teaching and research to university staff, students and other external users from the university and beyond. It represents an invaluable repository of Nigeria's national heritage because its special interest is focused on Nigeria in terms of education, politics, culture, tradition, religion, technology, commerce, history, etc. The collection is directly under the supervision of the Reference Librarian. It is categorized as a closed-accessed section which consists of research and reference documents. The Collection houses materials such as books, theses, periodicals, reprints, newspapers, United Nations (UN) publications, maps, Arabic manuscripts and materials received through legal

deposits.

The use of the collection by users other than lecturers and researchers, namely, undergraduates and researchers from within and outside the country, is restricted and special permission is needed. The collection has facilities that serve teaching staff and researchers. Being a collection for research, it also provides services to other researchers who engage in research on various government projects in the country, and to scholars from other countries. However, in the past fifteen years, the condition of the collection has deteriorated in terms of availability of materials and over-use of the facilities and services. This is due to financial constraint faced by the library and increase in students' enrolment.

The Africana section comprised the following:

The Publications Ordinance consists of Monographs (which are textbooks), Serial (which are magazines, journals, newspapers).

Government Documents: These consist of publications by the Government of Nigeria such as gazettes, reports (commissions and panel's reports) and publications by governments of other countries and organizations such as the World Health Organization, World Bank, UNESCO, UNIDO, UNICEF, UNDP, etc.

Newspapers: The newspapers are stored in boxes or tied up and arranged chronologically on a monthly basis. They include very old Nigerian newspapers and current ones, namely: *West Africa Pilot*, *Eastern Nigerian*, *Guardian*, *Comet*, *Daily Star*, *Daily Poet*, *Nigerian Observer*, *Daily Sketch*, *Nigerian Tribune*, etc.

Africana Journals: These include publications of the Historical Society of Nigeria, Geographical Society of Nigeria, and some journals from religious bodies. Most of these are solicited by various departments in the university, e.g. Institute of African Studies, Religious Studies Department, etc.

Theses (PhD): As part of KDL policy, only PhD theses are kept in the Africana section of the library. They are housed separately in this section. At the time this study was carried out, there were 3,192 theses. The PhD theses are usually brought to the library from the Postgraduate School.

Staff Publications are also stored in the Africana section. Examples of these are text authored by staff, inaugural, university, postgraduate, and valedictory lectures.

The Africana Monographs (Textbooks): These are books written by Africans or about Africa, and are acquired and kept exclusively in closed access to be consulted only in the library. The policy in KDL is to keep at least one copy of such books in the Africana section while other copies (if applicable) are sent to circulation, faculty and departmental libraries, and other sections of the Library.

The organization of the Africana collection is done through cataloguing and classification. Each collection within the Africana Collection has a catalogue for easy access.

Library Services to Readers

In order to make these resources available to users, library provides services such as opening hours and both during the semester and break period, retrieval tools, (catalogues and list of resources), study room carrels and reading spaces, staff assistance to users to locate resources. Reference queries are handled by professional staff while document delivery is also offered when such requests are made. Photocopying service is also available for reproduction, but subject to the copyright law which limits the reproduction of a thesis and dissertation to twenty-four(24) pages only.

Results

For this study, six major resources were examined namely, theses, public ordinance, newspaper, African books, African journals and Arabic materials. Monthly consultations by each category of the users were summed-up into yearly statistics and this was presented in bar charts.

Table 1 below gives a break down and a comparison of users for the years 2009-2011 for Thesis usage. A total of 25,786 theses were consulted. Year 2010 recorded the highest of 9,414 consultations. Post graduate students top the list of category of users with 4718(56.49%), 5274 (56.02%) and 4717 (58.84%) respectively for year 2009, 2010, and 2011. Library staff was the least users of this resource with the frequencies of 479 (7.40%), 600 (7.67%) and 532 (6.34%) respectively.

Theses usage: Table 1

2009			2010			2011		
User Category	Yearly Usage	% Usage	User Category	Yearly Usage	% Usage	User Category	Yearly Usage	% Usage
PG	4718	56.49	PG	5274	56.02	PG	4717	58.84
UG	1699	20.34	UG	1653	17.56	UG	1193	14.89
FACULTY	618	7.4	FACULTY	722	7.67	FACULTY	508	6.34
EXT USER	839	10.05	EXT USER	1167	12.4	EXT USER	1067	13.31
LIB STAFF	479	5.74	LIB STAFF	600	6.38	LIB STAFF	532	6.64
Total=	8353		Total=	9416		Total=	8017	

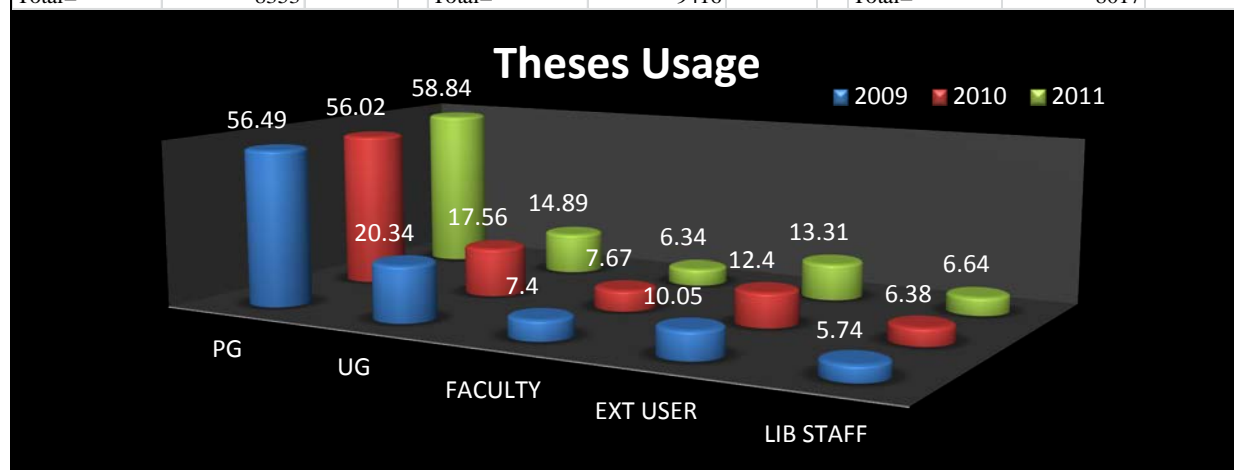


Table 2: Reflected Public Ordinance usage for the year 2009, 2010 and 2011, given the sum total of 7,750. Postgraduates consulted 694 (31.38%), 810 (31.87%) and 675 (27.05) of the total usage while undergraduates consulted more than external users in 2009 with 22.65% over 17,82%, external users consulted more in 2010 and 2011 with 24.83% and 23.12%.

Public Ordinance Usage: Table2

2009			2010			2011		
User Category	Yearly Usage	% Usage	User Category	Yearly Usage	% Usage	User Category	Yearly Usage	% Usage
PG	694	31.38	PG	810	31.87	PG	675	27.05
UG	501	22.65	UG	520	20.46	UG	500	20.04
FACULTY	349	15.78	FACULTY	307	12.08	FACULTY	368	14.75
EXT USER	394	17.82	EXT USER	631	24.83	EXT USER	577	23.12
LIB STAFF	274	12.39	LIB STAFF	274	10.78	LIB STAFF	376	15.07
Total=	2212		Total=	2542		Total=	2496	

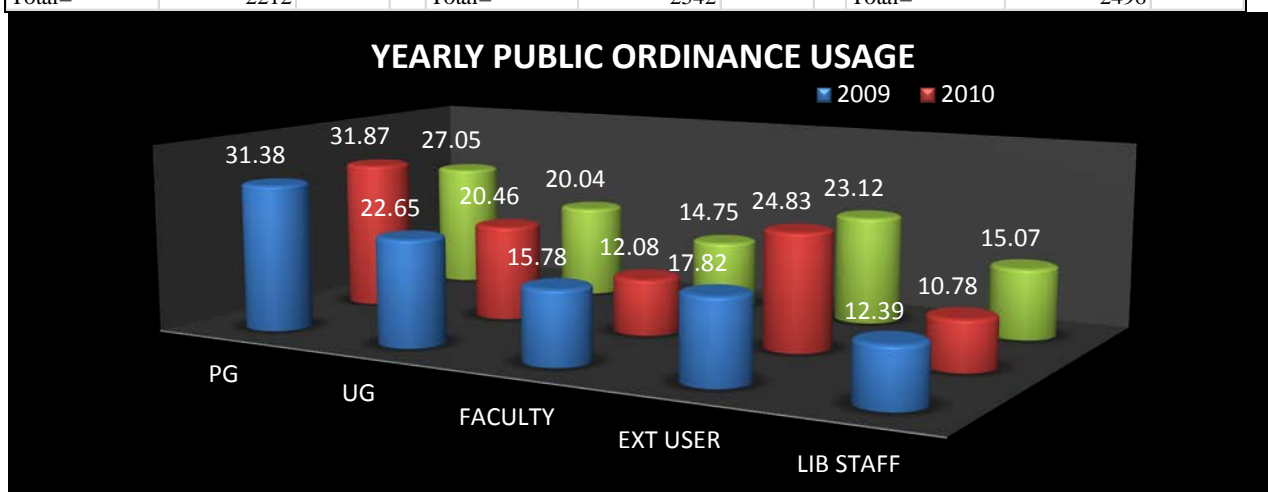


Table 3: Another most consulted material in the Africana section is Africana books with a total usage of 8,514. The year 2010 shows the highest of 1049 consultation recorded by Postgraduate followed by undergraduates with a usage of 724, library staff recorded the least figure of 394 for the year 2010. Year 2009 recorded 2374 consultation for all categories of users as compared with 2843 of year 2011. Consultation in 2009 is affected by closure of Federal Universities due to industrial strike.

African Books Usage: Table3

2009			2010			2011		
User Category	Yearly Usage	% Usage	User Category	Yearly Usage	% Usage	User Category	Yearly Usage	% Usage
PG	815	34.34	PG	1049	31.82	PG	896	31.52
UG	469	19.76	UG	724	21.96	UG	452	15.9
FACULTY	463	19.51	FACULTY	466	14.14	FACULTY	428	15.06
EXT USER	367	15.46	EXT USER	664	20.14	EXT USER	671	23.61
LIB STAFF	260	10.96	LIB STAFF	394	11.96	LIB STAFF	396	13.93
Total=	2374		Total=	3297		Total=	2843	

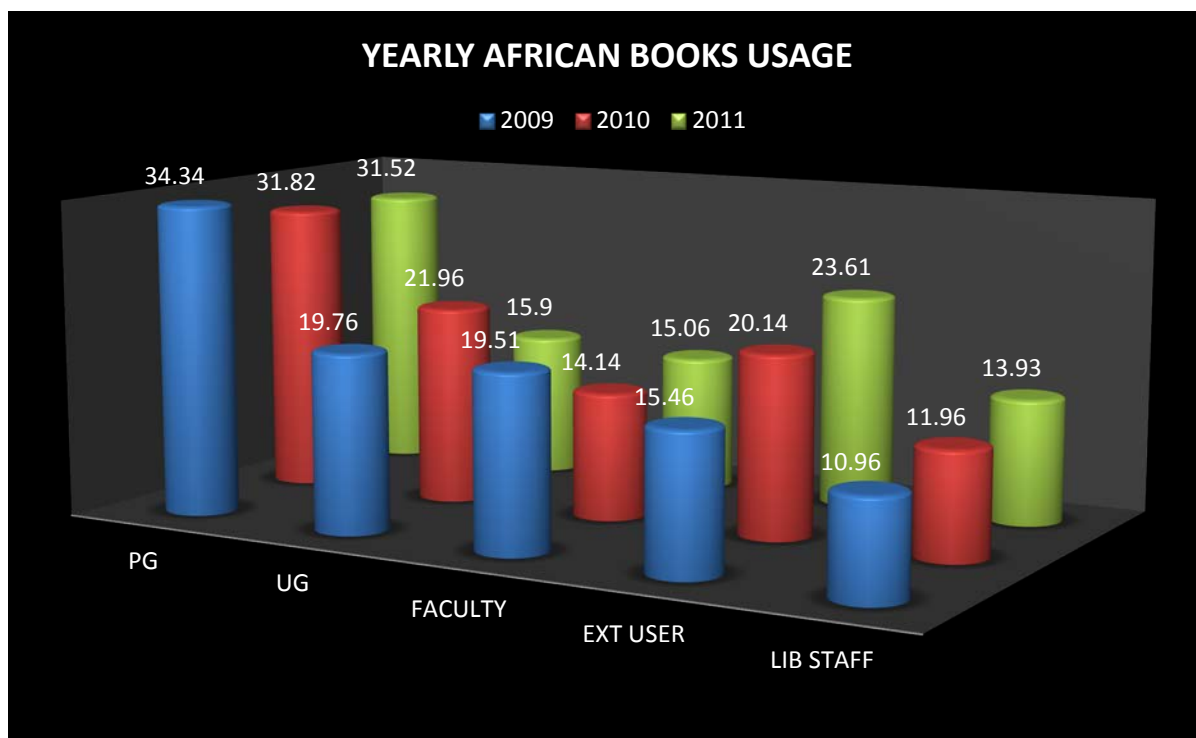


Table 4: Shows a record of 1462, 1519, 1394 for the three consecutive years of study to give a total of 4,375 consulted Arabic materials. Postgraduates made requests for the materials than any other group of users. For example, 503 (34.41%) was requested by postgraduate students in 2009, 62 (30.42%) in 2010 and 392 (28.13%) in 2011 as compared to 344 (23.53%), 313 (20.61), 274 (19.66) by undergraduates and 192 (13.14%), 235 (15.48%) and 211 (15.14%) by Faculty members.

Arabic Usage: Table 4

2009			2010			2011		
User Category	Yearly Usage	% Usage	User Category	Yearly Usage	% Usage	User Category	Yearly Usage	% Usage
PG	503	34.41	PG	462	30.42	PG	392	28.13
UG	344	23.53	UG	313	20.61	UG	274	19.66
FACULTY	192	13.14	FACULTY	235	15.48	FACULTY	211	15.14
EXT USER	301	20.59	EXT USER	325	21.4	EXT USER	312	22.39
LIB STAFF	122	8.35	LIB STAFF	184	12.12	LIB STAFF	205	14.71
Total=	1462		Total=	1519		Total=	1394	

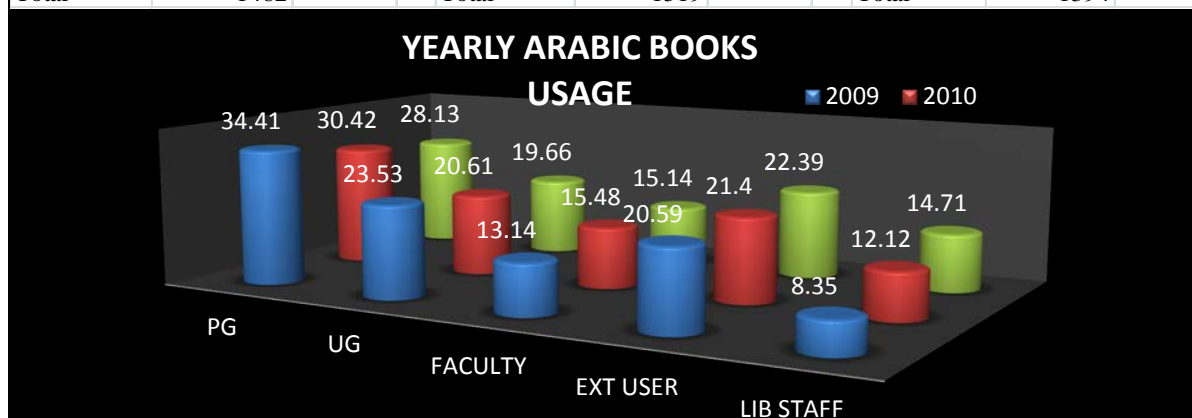


Table 5: Represent the consultation made by different categories of users of African journals, as usual, Postgraduates lead the chart with 553 (32.63%), 458 (26.28%) and 439 (25.42%) for each year under review while library staff shows the least consultation with 157 (9.27), 233 (13.32) and 251 (14.54).

African journals usage: Table 5

2009			2010			2011		
User Category	Yearly Usage	% Usage	User Category	Yearly Usage	% Usage	User Category	Yearly Usage	% Usage
PG	553	32.63	PG	458	26.28	PG	439	25.42
UG	389	22.95	UG	375	21.52	UG	331	19.17
FACULTY	284	16.76	FACULTY	272	15.61	FACULTY	289	16.74
EXT USER	312	18.41	EXT USER	405	23.24	EXT USER	417	24.15
LIB STAFF	157	9.27	LIB STAFF	233	13.37	LIB STAFF	251	14.54
Total=	1695		Total=	1743		Total=	1727	

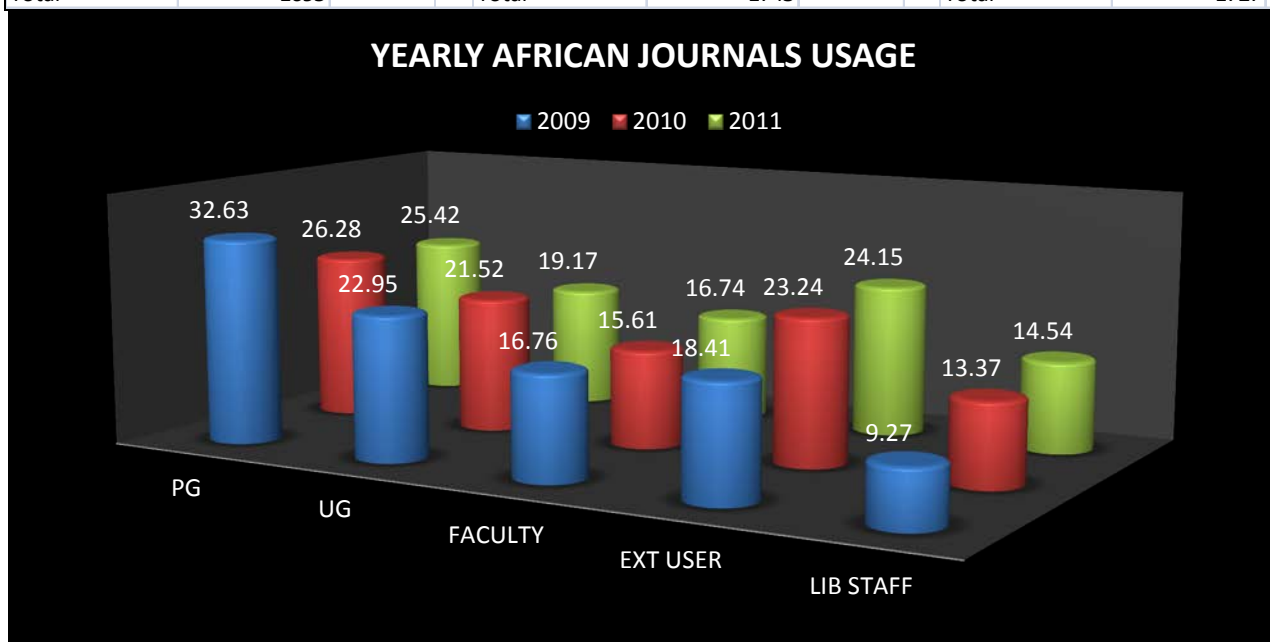
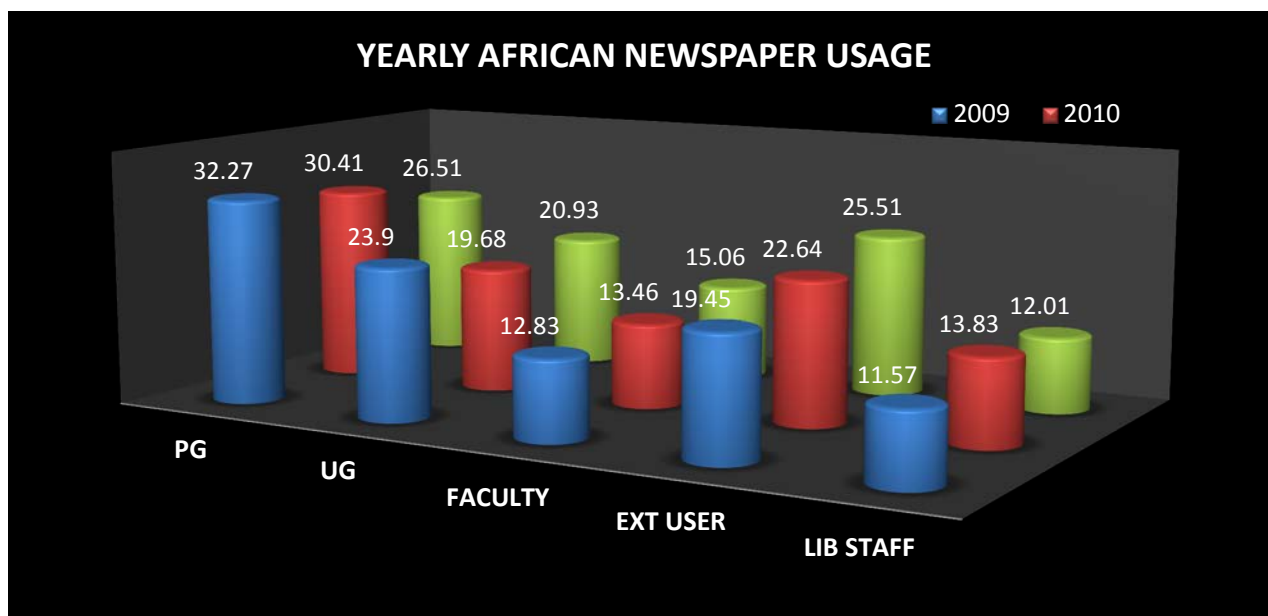


Table 6 shows the consultation of newspapers in the Africana section where postgraduates made use of 2,400 out of 8,144 total consultations for the period 2009-2011. Undergraduates consulted more in 2009 with 531 (23.9%) than other users, but external users performed better in 2010 (658) and 2011 (769) respectively.

African newspapers: Table 6

2009			2010			2011		
User Category	Yearly Usage	% Usage	User Category	Yearly Usage	% Usage	User Category	Yearly Usage	% Usage
PG	717	32.27	PG	884	30.41	PG	799	26.51
UG	531	23.9	UG	572	19.68	UG	631	20.93
FACULTY	285	12.83	FACULTY	391	13.46	FACULTY	454	15.06
EXT USER	432	19.45	EXT USER	658	22.64	EXT USER	769	25.51
LIB STAFF	257	11.57	LIB STAFF	402	13.83	LIB STAFF	362	12.01
Total=	2222		Total=	2907		Total=	3015	



Discussion

In addressing the first objective of this study, five classes of users of the Africana collection in Kenneth Dike Library were identified namely; postgraduates, undergraduates, faculty member, external users and library staff. Identifying each class of users was possible through the log book in the reference section where records of resources consultations are documented. Library staff were identified as a class of users because of their status as academic staff who have to publish to advance professionally. The study also identified post graduates out of the five categories of users as the group that consulted the highest number of materials (2009-2011). This finding is in contrast to the finding of Ezema & Ali (2011) which reported that undergraduates consulted thesis most in University of Nigeria, Nsukka library.

Theses/dissertation were noted as having the highest percentage of use by all categories of users followed by African books, newspapers, publications ordinance books, Arabic materials and African journals. Theses are sought after by researchers because of their research and academic values. They also guide potential research work.

CHALLENGES

The main challenge facing the development of Africana collection in Kenneth Dike Library is the lack of operational preservation policy which will restore damaged materials for posterity. Another problem is the environmental conditions that these materials are subjected to due to climatic conditions such as high temperatures, humidity, damaged cooling system and poor lighting.

Storage space

The space available for the use and management of these collections is shrinking while their acquisition is increasing. Examples are P.O, theses and newspapers.

Financial constraints

The collection is not left out of the financial constraints faced by university library. The acquisition process of the library has decreased in the last decade thereby affecting the collection of African books and journals. Users encountered problems of reproduction due to machine breakdown or power failure and such materials are not allowed to leave the library due to their uniqueness.

Staff shortage

Reduced number of staff to manage the collection is threatening effective service delivery. Furthermore, the library lacks an archivist/conservator to manage these rare collections.

RECOMMENDATIONS

Access is the operational language of modern librarianship and for Africana collection to be accessible, application of technology to its management is recommended. Digitizing these special materials would preserve their research values and promote their lifespan. This view is in agreement with Igbeka & Ola (2010). Library management should propose that a copy of postgraduate theses submitted to the library should be in compact disc (CD) format so as to conserve space. Attention should be paid to the management of these materials in the area of organization and security. The environment should be made suitable for both readers and materials. Review of collection's resources to ascertain adequacy should be considered as at when necessary.

CONCLUSION

Africana collection is a special collection with research values which content needs to be made available to users. Africana collection of Kenneth Dike Library is a national treasure that should be paid attention to due to the international patronage of the collection. These materials are well sought after by different categories of users such as postgraduates, undergraduates, faculty members and users from outside the university. The data show that theses and books are patronized more in the Africana section. Management and use of these materials are confronted with few challenges that affect quality service delivery. The library management should think of ways of improving and sustaining the Africana collection in order to meet the users' satisfaction which determines not only the effectiveness of the collection but also of the library as a whole.

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