LIBRARY USERS' EDUCATION PROGRAMME IN NIGERIAN UNIVERSITIES: A CASE STUDY OF LAGOS STATE UNIVERSITY, OJO

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ABSTRACT

User education is an academic programme that is designed by Universities and other higher institutions to educate library users on how to effectively utilize library resources and services. This study employed the survey design to evaluate the library instructional programme at the Lagos State University, Ojo, Lagos. Statistical data were collected through the use of questionnaire administered to 1000 respondents using stratified random sampling technique. Out of this number, only 866 copies of the questionnaire with adequate information were retrieved. Data for the study were analyzed using simple percentage. The findings revealed amidst others that though more than half of the respondents do not attend lectures regularly yet the course has positively influenced the utilization of the library resources. It was therefore recommended that practical lectures should also be organized at the University library to further enhance the students' use of the catalogue and other library resources.
Keywords: Library, User education, Universities, Catalogue, Resources

INTRODUCTION

Over the years, various terms have been used denoting ways of imparting knowledge on how library users can effectively utilize library resources. Some of the terms that have been used are reader instruction, user instruction, library orientation, library instruction, use of library, library and information skill, user and staff education, information literacy and so on. Though, these terms are used interchangeably. What is common is that, it refers to formal and informal library programme of educating and enlightening users on how to maximally utilize library resources. User education is a process that is concerned with the whole information and communication process involving the total interaction of the user with the library for a continuous process.

User education can be defined as instruction given to readers to help them make the best use of the library. Aina (2004) opines that user education is to help library users get information they desire as well as developing the skills to use the resources of the library independently and appropriately. Edoka (2000) asserts that the objective of user education is to help the users make the best use of overall library resources. Also, a careful, planned and executed user education programme greatly ensures the realization of the objective aimed at the following:

i   To develop readers awareness of the overall information resources available to them in their own and other libraries.

ii To develop skills necessary for retrieving required materials.

iii   To develop in-depth knowledge materials in readers subject areas.

iv   To develop skills in presenting bibliographic references.

v   To develop skills required in making advanced studies, and

vi   To create a positive attitude to information searching which will stimulate the user to make use of the resource available in different libraries.

USER EDUCATION PROGRAMME IN NIGERIAN UNIVERSITIES

Many writers have examined user education in some higher institutions in Nigeria in the relevance of the programme to effective utilization of library resources and also, on how to improve on some problems relating to the dissemination of the course. Aina (2004) is of the view that, user education is literacy service which emphasis that users are to acquire skills that will enable them search for information independently on any aspect of knowledge by using traditional and electronic methods. Joseph (2005) has identified the following as problems of user education programme in some Nigerian academic libraries

i   Over dependence on one day orientation programme

ii   Lack of collective curriculum for user education in Nigerian tertiary institutions

iii   Lack of examinable library instruction

iv   Over concentration (on the part of Librarian) on library technical services like acquisition, cataloguing and classification and shelving of books rather than information retrieval mechanism, and

v   The use of unqualified personnel to teach the use of library in some institutions.

To solve these problems, Joseph (2005) asserts on the need for explicit statement of objectives, availability of infrastructure, qualified trainers, careful choice of teaching methods and regular systematic evaluation. Livehabura (1999) is of the opinion that user education should be integrated within the curriculum of the institution so that the contents and coverage of the programme accommodates information development, learning, teaching and research within and outside the university. Bello (2003) study of library user education evaluation at the Ibadan Polytechnic observed that 93% of the respondents agreed that library user course has helped in the proper use of the library. Ojo-Ade and Jagboro (2000) research on catalogue use at the Hezekiah Oluwasanmi Library, Obafemi Awolowo University, Ile-Ife revealed that users of the library were well informed and versatile in the use of library catalogue especially, the subject area of their interest.

High success rate of user's searches could also be attributed to the respondents' knowledge of the use of the library gained from Library Instruction (LIB 001). Ogwu (2010) study of the impact of library studies at Kogi State College of Education observes that 73.48% of the students do not attend lectures. Busayo (2003) at the University of Ado-Ekiti observes that 95.11% of the fresh students admitted that, they learnt new things through the use of library course. Adedibu (2007) study

on catalogue use by Science students in the University of Ilorin notes that 90.01% use library catalogues. Idowu (2008) argues that four main areas affecting the programme that need to be re-appraised are:

i   Timing of the programme delivery.

ii   Quality of course delivery.

iii). Funding of the programme.

iv   Lack of continuity and follow-up.

        Edem and Lawal (1996) contributing to improved user education programme in Nigerian University Libraries identify lack of personnel, lack of professional, time for teaching and practical work as major problems. Akinbola (2007) on the significance of user education recommends that: the user education programme in our tertiary institutions should be overhauled to make it more standard. Adequate qualified personnel should be recruited to undertake the teaching of the course effectively; the course should be allocated reasonable time on the time table so as to enable practical aspect taught effectively.

        The Lagos State University library was established under the Lagos State University Law 15 of 1983. The library thereafter becomes operational on 7th May 1984. The library has collections on all the disciplines offered in the university. The library now comprises the Fatiu Ademola Akesode Library (Main Library), the Taslim Olawale Elias Law Library (both at Ojo); the Medical Library, and Ikeja, School of Communication Library at Surulere and the Engineering library at Epe. The library software currently in use is Alice for Windows. It comes in 3 modules (circulation, acquisition and management). Retrospective conversion of manual library record is presently going on. A virtual library/e-library that will link the library with the world via Internet has been set up.

        The library user education at the Lagos State University is coded GNS 101. The Center for General Nigerian Studies at the University has tailored the course to meet the standard of the Nigerian Universities Commission for the award of Bachelor's degree in which all students are expected to write and pass some units of General Nigerian Studies (GNS) courses. One of which is the 'Use of Library' to be taught by only professional librarian. It is a 2 unit course which includes: use of the library catalogues, CD-ROM searches, mode of accessing the library collection, the loan system among others. The Center has published a book titled: General-Studies book of Readings and, the audiovisual version containing lectures on the use of library. The course contents of the programme include:

i   History, roles and types of libraries.

ii   Reference sources and research activities in libraries.

iii   Organization of library resources.

iv   Information and communication technology (ICT) in libraries.

v   Copyright and libraries.

In the light of the above, this study seeks to:

i   Determine the regularity of students at lectures.

ii   Find out if the course has influenced the attitude of Lagos State University students towards the use of library facilities and services.

iii   Examine the time schedule for lectures on the time table that is 8.00 - 10.00 a.m. Tuesdays during the harmathan semester is convenient.

iv   Find out if the course has enhances the use of library catalogue as a search tool for the library resource.

v   Find out if their knowledge of library ethics has been enhanced.

vi   Find out if the acquired knowledge has enhanced the effective use of various sources of information in the library.

vii   Find out if the course content is adequate enough to enhance effective use of other library resources.

METHODOLOGY

A survey method was employed in the conduct of this study. The study is limited to regular students in the main campus of the Lagos State University, Ojo in the faculties of Arts, Education, Law, Sciences, Social-Sciences and Management Sciences. One thousand 1000 copies of questionnaire were administered to 1000 respondents the targeted audience at the various facilities. 200 respondents were selected from each of the five faculties using stratified random sampling technique. Of the 1000 questionnaire, 866 were retrieved, fully completed and were found usable. This represents 87% which was considered well enough for the study. The collected data were analysed using descriptive statistics.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

Table 1: Student's response to some basic issues on library user education programme at the Lagos State University, Ojo

Item	Yes	%	No	%
Do you attend the use of Library course GNS: 101 Lectures regularly?	393	45.38	473	54.62
Has the course influenced your attitude to library usage?	670	77.37	196	22.63
Is the time table scheduled convenient to you?	430	49,65	436	50.35
Has the course enhanced you effective use of library catalogue?	582	67.21	284	32. 79
Has your knowledge of library ethics (rules and regulations) enhanced your behavior in the use of the University Library?	622	71.82	244	28.18
Has the knowledge acquired exposed you to the numerous information sources in the library?	638	73.67	228	26.37
Is the course content adequate enough to enhance your effective use of other library resources and facilities.	720	83. 14	146	16.86

Source: Survey 2010

The seven questions asked on table 2 were meant to deduce some facts from the answers given by the students of Lagos State University, Ojo. The survey showed that more than one quarter of the respondents do attended lectures regularly while majority of them admitted that they did not attend lectures regularly. This finding corresponds with Ogwu (2010) where 73.48% of the respondents did not attend lecturers. The survey also showed that a substantial proportion of the respondents admitted that the course had influenced their attitude to library usage while few said no. About half of the respondents asserted that the timetable schedule for lectures

that is 8.00 a.m. and 10.00 a.m. on Tuesday was not convenient while half of the respondents admit that the time-table schedule was convenient. An appreciable proportion of the respondents opined that, the course has influenced their effective use of library catalogue while few held negative view. This finding is in agreement with Adedibu (2007) where 90.01% of the science students of University of Ilorin consulted library catalogue. On library ethics, the ratio of the respondents who affirmed that, the course has exposed them to library rules and regulations were encouraging while few others had some reservations. In the same regard, majority of the respondents affirmed that the knowledge acquired has exposed them to the numerous information sources in the library while a smaller fraction of the respondents said that the course did not influenced them. When they were asked if the course content was adequate to enhance effective utilization of library resources and facilities, an overwhelming ratio of the respondents said yes while, a smaller proportion said no.

CONCLUSION AND RECOMMENDATIONS

The University library is the heart of every learning activity within the University campuses. As a storehouse of knowledge, its impact on the learning process cannot be overemphasized. Library user educational programme is one of such programmes that introduces and inculcate in the library users the basics of library activities and usage. This study has brought into limelight some facts that would require urgent attention as it bothers on library issues.

i   More than half of the sampled population did not attend lectures.

ii   It has been established that the course has positively influenced users' attitude to the use of library facilities.

iii   Majority of the respondents admitted that the time schedule for the lectures which is 8.00a.m-10.00a.m is not convenient.

iv   It has also been observed that the course has influenced their use of library catalogue.

v   The course content is adjudged as being adequate enough to enhance their effective utilization of the library resources and facilities.

The use of library course aims at acquainting the users with skills to enable them access library information and resources independently. Some problems have been observed. To remedy these problems, the following recommendations are hereby made.

i   Attendance at class should be a prerequisite for examination. Students who fail to attend classes regularly should not be allowed to write the semester examination.

ii   The time schedule for the teaching of the course should be reviewed from 8.00 a.m. to 10.00 a.m. and 2.00 p.m. to 4.00 p.m. when most of the students must have arrived at the campus irrespective of some unforeseen circumstances.

iii   Practical lectures should also be organized at the University library to further enhance the students' use of the catalogue and other library resources.

iv   All the library rules and regulations should be documented and a copy of such issued to all the students to further acquaint them with some of the rules that were not mentioned during the use of library lectures.

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