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Undergraduate Library Instruction in Nigerian Universities: A Case Study of Hezekiah Oluwasanmi Library, Obafemi Awolowo University, Ile-Ife, Nigeria

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Introduction

The effectiveness of a library as an instrument of education is determined by the success with which it is able to provide the user with the information he/she seeks. The philosophy of librarianship is based on the concept of service and the provision of relevant materials for users. Librarians have information dissemination as their predominant function. To this end professional librarians continue to struggle to collect and organize printed and other forms of recorded knowledge in order to satisfy both present and future users. The library can fulfill its function best by pursuing a policy of constant self-evaluation in order to be alert to the changing needs of its users. Self-evaluation or assessment of any library can produce worthwhile results, particularly, it can provide information which will assist the library administrators in their planning. The library obviously supports the school in the process of developing an inquiring mind (Ray, 1990). According to Braimoh et. al (1997) the consequences of the students inability to use the library will include among other things, a serious debasement of quality of university education, which may consequently have a negative effect on the job performance of the university products. A great deal of effort is being made to assist fresh undergraduates (the incoming new students) into the university in the use of library resources. The attempt which include introduction of user education is to build good library culture into the students right from the foundation of their university education (Akande, 2003). The need to define the pattern of use of the library and its materials as demonstrated by undergraduates especially the freshmen is very significant because it would tell the librarians a lot about the library as the students see it. Academic library use studies have evolved over the years. Various user researches have probed user attitudes as well as the characteristics of use, reasons for library visits, and factors related to the use of different types of library materials. A number of statistical studies point to

various characteristics of the library habits of students. A study by Nicholson and Bartlett (1962) at the Massachusetts Institute of Technology Libraries showed that 71.9% of under-graduates use the library for class preparation. According to Barkey's study (1965) to determine the Broad pattern of student use of the library at Eastern Illinois University showed that 60% of the students did not borrow at all, a factor disturbing to the researcher. Jain (1966) studied the use of library materials exclusively, 19% used library materials while in the library. He also discovered that 29% checked out library materials for home use. While Lane (1966) study at the University of Delaware demonstrated that seniors use the library proportionately more than any other class. The collections of the library are accessible to students through catalogues created for them. Ola (2001) defines a catalogue as a list of book medium that constitutes a collection. Ojo-Ade and Jagboro (2000) state that subject catalogue is an invaluable key to the total library collection. It opens wide to the readers the resources of a library by subject irrespective of the authors, form or format, medium or language presentation. Catalogue use study is important in order to harvest a feed-back from the users (Egberongbe, 2000).

Osagie (2003) highlighted reasons why users' education becomes imperative in tertiary institutions. These include rapid growth of published materials, change in methods of teaching and course content, lack of awareness of library services and facilities. Others include users ignorance coupled with the fact that students come from diverse background and culture. Palssan in Etim (2002) confirms that access to and interaction with the library system improves students learning skills and academic performance.

Library instruction or user education aims to transmit knowledge, skills needed for the proper exploitation and utilization of knowledge as well as learning resources. In fact, user education is the second important role of the librarian in the development of academic institutions irrespective of level, size or specialization, (Ekere, 1992). Osinulu (2003) therefore suggests that failure of libraries to teach library users the necessary skills could amount to wasting of library resources as well as efforts and financial resources put into the acquisition, processing and dissemination of information. The average Nigerian does not have the reading habit and is not exposed to the library early enough in life. This is why fresh students in Nigerian universities have to be taught how to use the library, With the prevailing economic conditions in the country, books have become so expensive that they are beyond the reach of most Nigerian students. This is why most of the students have to solely depend on what libraries can offer. As if to compound the problem, many of the existing libraries in Nigeria cannot boast of enough staff or computerized systems to assist the clientele in retrieving materials as fast as possible. All these point to the fact that the Nigerian student must be able to use the catalogue if he/she is not to have a frustrating library experience.

Literature Review

Information is vital to the over all academic development of university students. Libraries are established in the universities to cater for the information needs of students, staff and other people in the community. In order to make library collections widely accessible to users, librarians create as many access points as may be required in form of catalogue. To justify the huge expenses, labour and time expended on library catalogue production, maximum use of the library catalogue is very much desired. According to Akande (2003) access to documents at the University of Ibadan Libraries is made possible to users through the various catalogues in the libraries which serve as indexes to the library holdings. Education is the process of turning information to knowledge.

Ogunsheye (1987) asserts that users education causes behavioural and developmental changes and these changes can be observed in attitude towards

knowledge and its utilization. In the study carried out on catalogue use at the E. Latunde Odeku Medical Library of the clinical medical students, Ezomo (1988) found that about 50% of the students were not aware of the location of the library catalogue not to talk of using it. This situation was hinged on the fact that many of the students were absent from the library orientation programmes and many would not ask for assistance as regards catalogue use. Ezomo (1988) study reveals a poor use of the catalogues as only 33% of the respondents claimed to have used them. Only 11% of the students made use of the subject access, 21% of them made use of author access while 25% of the students made use of the title access. Ajayi (1995) remarks that the mark of academic excellence and scholarship depends on the students' ability to develop an inquisitive mind. This is corroborated by Ogunsheye (1987) which states that acquisition of library skills is expected to effect behavioural changes in attitude to learning and to inculcate in the individuals, the spirit of enquiry and the habit of seeking knowledge. She concluded that such skills are required for life long learning. Ojo-Ade and Jagboro (2000) in a survey of use of subject catalogues in Hezekiah Oluwasanmi Library, Obafemi Awolowo University, found that users were well informed and versatile in the use of library catalogue especially the subject catalogue. The study also revealed that users record high success rate of user searches which was attributed to the respondents knowledge of the use of the library gained from library instruction.

Akin-Qjo (1994) states that library instructions would produce intelligent library users. Review from imperial studies among Ohio State University Students reported that library instruction programmes improved the attitude of students towards librarians and library services (Pearson and Tiefel, 1982). Braimoh, Jegede and Chadzinwa (1997) believe that exposure to library enables users to develop their talent, potentials and capabilities both academically and socially. Knapp in Popoola (2001) remarks that maximization of library resources is possible where lecturers and librarians share objectives. She therefore suggests good liaison between the library staff and academic staff. Braimoh et. al. (1997) while reporting a survey of library utilization and academic growth in the National University of Lesotho confirmed that 12.5% and 6% indicated that they use library to socialize and for personal pleasure while 6.4% indicated that library skills enhanced their intellectual development. In an evaluative study of students of Maiduguri Libraries, Amkpa (1999) discovered that majority of the students did not use the library effectively in pursuing their studies. He revealed that 76% used the libraries to check library materials. 8.5% used indexes and abstracts, 57% used non print media, 42.2% approached the collection in a wrong way due to ignorance while 18.09% study in the library without using library materials. In some other studies of library users in Nigerian academic libraries, Adelani (1998), Odusanya (2001) argued that majority of students are not well skilled, in the use of catalogues as information retrieval tool. Their findings also showed that manual searching of information through manual library catalogue consume time.

Ladendorf (1986) remarks that few people ever use libraries willingly. He stresses that most people have to be persuaded or prodded into it. In the study of university literacy of undergraduate students of the University of Northern Colorado, Stamatoplos and Mackoy (1998) it was found that students' confidence level increased with increased exposure to the library and its services. However, 7% of the students believed that bibliographic instruction was the primary influence in their development of library skills. With library automation gaining popularity world wide, some Nigerian libraries, particularly university libraries have introduced On-line Public Access Catalogue (OPAC) services. The advantages of OPAC use was attested to by Lancaster (1978) who wrote that "the introduction of On-Line subject searching (capabilities), increase the proportion of subject searches performed by library users as well as increase in catalogue use."

Akinade (2000) also affirms that the usage of electronic database aids

easy access and reduces the time spent while searching for materials compared to traditional service method. She added that availability of Information Technology (IT) has revolutionized operations and services.

Study Objectives

- Examine students' perception of library services
- Examine students' perception of library instruction to academic work
- Determine students' means of obtaining information and problem encountered in using the library
- Identify the search approaches usually used in accessing information
- Find out the students' impression about the efficiency of the library catalogue

Research Methodology

Obafemi Awolowo University, Ile-Ife (formerly University of Ife) belongs to the first generation universities in Nigeria. It was established in 1962 with an enrolment of 244 students. Currently, the total enrolment is 22,732 (including 2,300 postgraduate students) in thirteen (13) faculties. The computerization of Hezekiah Oluwasanmi effectively started in 1997. In 1998, the Library's Local Area Network (LAN) was connected to the Internet through the campus wide Obafemi Awolowo University Net while the number of PCs were increased to thirteen (13) in 1999). The year 2002 saw the launching of the second phase of the Library's computerization. Hezekiah Oluwasanmi Library has on-line services for its clientele. The Library can be accessed through the official OAU website. The Library can also be reached directly using its URLs. These are:

- official website: <http://www.library.oauife.edu.ng>
- E-Library Web OPAC: <http://www.elibrary.oauife.edu.ng>
- Searching the Library's Public Access Catalogue (OPAC), the University Library link takes one directly to the Library OPAC.

The design of this study was a descriptive survey. The study population comprises undergraduates of Obafemi Awolowo University in the following faculties: Administration, Arts, Environmental Design and Management, Education, Science, Law, Agriculture, Basic Medical Sciences, Clinical Sciences, Social Sciences, Pharmacy, Technology, Dentistry. The data was gathered through the instrument of a questionnaire. Eight hundred copies of the questionnaire were randomly distributed for equal representative of students across faculties and levels. Data were analysed through frequency count percentages. Out of the eight hundred copies of questionnaires distributed, seven hundred and eighty were returned in usable form representing 97.5% response.

Presentation of Findings

Out of the 780 respondents, 400 (51.4%) were males while 380 (48.6%) were females. Table one shows the field of study of respondents.

Table 1: Field of Study of Respondents

Field of Study	Frequency	Percentage
Administration	75	10
Agriculture	80	10
Arts	60	8
Basic Medical Sciences	40	5

Clinical Sciences	30	4
Dentistry	30	4
Education	75	10
Environmental Design & Management	45	6
Law	70	9
Pharmacy	50	6
Sciences 75		10
Social Sciences	65	8
Technology	85	11
TOTAL	780	100

Table 2 reflects distribution of respondents level of study. The analysis show that 200 and 300 level students use the library more frequently with 200 (26%) and 225 (29%) respectively.

Table 2: Respondents Level of Study

Level of Study	Frequency	Percentage
100	75	10
200	200	26
300	225	29
400	90	12
500	150	19
600	40	5
TOTAL	780	100

The Hezekiah Oluwasanmi Library Instruction Programme Course outline

consists of the following topics:

- The Use of the Library Catalogues subdivided into the following:
 - Library of Congress classification scheme
 - Sample of catalogue entries
 - Guides to the Literature
 - Encyclopedias
 - Dictionaries
 - Biographical dictionaries
 - Handbooks and Manuals
 - Yearbooks
 - Atlases and Gazetteers (Geography)
 - Guides to Published Information
 - Biographies
- Indexing and Abstracting Journals
- Periodical Guides
- Current Sources of Information
- Review Journals

Table 3: Perception of Library Instruction to Academic Work

Responses	Frequency	Percentage
Very Relevant	600	77
Relevant	170	22

Not relevant	-	-
Don't Know	10	1
Total	780	100

The responses presented in Table 3 show that 600 (76.9%) respondents find the library instruction programme very relevant to their academic work, 170 (21.8%) claimed it was relevant while 10 (1.3%) were unable to decide. Respondents were also asked about the

relevance of Library Instruction to their education and 750 (96.2%) claimed it was relevant while 30 (3.8%) were undecided. Similarly, in the assessment of the present method of library instruction 741 (95%) of respondents were satisfied.

Table 4: Ranking Distribution of Sources and Means of Obtaining Information

Means of Obtaining Information	Frequency	Relative Frequency %
Books	420	54
Journals	120	15
Indexes and Abstracts	45	6
Non-print Media	35	4
Reference Materials	90	12
Government Publication	50	6
Magazines/Newspapers	17	2
Others	3	0
TOTAL	780	100

Table 4 indicates that all types of publications are used though in varying degrees: 420 (54%) of the respondents sourced information from books, 120 (15%) of the respondents used journals, 45 (6%) of the respondents used indexes and abstracts, 35

(4%) of the respondents used non-print media, 90 (12%) of the respondents used reference materials, 50 (6%) of the respondents used government publications while 17 (2%) of the respondents obtained information from newspapers and magazines.

Since the Library Instruction Programme teaches the use of the Library Catalogues, questions were asked on the frequency of using library catalogue to locate their books. Table 5 shows the rate respondents use library catalogue to locate their books.

Table 5: Rate of Using Library Catalogue in Locating Books

Response	Frequency	Percentage
Very often	300	38
Often	350	45
Rarely	90	12
Never	40	5
Total	780	100

On the frequency of using library catalogue to retrieve books from the shelves, the

responses in Table 5 shows that 350 (45%) of the respondents often use library catalogues to locate their books 90 (12%) rarely use catalogues in

searching for books while 40 (5%) of the respondents never used the library catalogues at all. This implies that students really gained from the Library Instruction Programme and as a result are versatile in the use of the catalogues.

Questions were asked to find out the success rate of catalogue searches.

Table 6: Success Rate of Catalogue Searches

Response	Frequency	Percentage (%)
Highly Successful	350	45
Very Successful	300	38
Fairly Successful	100	13
Hardly Successful	30	4
Not Successful		-
Total	780	100

User success rate of using catalogue searches could be described as very impressive. This is so in Table 6 as 350 (45%) and 300 (38%) users record high successful and very successful rate respectively. Those who were hardly successful was 30 (4%) while there was nobody that was not successful in using catalogues for searching. The computerization of the Hezekiah Oluwasanmi Library, Obafemi Awolowo University, Ile-Ife is in progress. It is hoped that very soon the e-library will be functional. This will enable the students to access the Library data bases. Already, the Library Instruction Programme has commenced the instruction of the students on how to access Hezekiah Oluwasanmi Library on line services. This will further strengthen the learning and research activities in the Institution (Obafemi Awolowo University).

Discussion and Conclusion

An effective catalogue system makes book retrieval easier. Many a time, the students of Obafemi Awolowo University make use of author and title entries to locate books in the library. This is because books are popularly known to the users by authors name or the title of the book. Going by the responses of the students on catalogue searches in Table 5, it could be inferred that the use of catalogues to search often yielded positive results. The responses of users impression about catalogues in Table 6 described the system as highly and very efficient. The study establishes that a greater percentage of the samples of respondents is aware of the existence of library catalogues as the first port of call in searching and retrieving library materials. The effectiveness of the library catalogue in locating and retrieving library materials is affirmed as 83% of respondents successfully use catalogues.

Both librarians and faculty staff should co-operate and agree to a unified syllabus that will enhance students optimum learning. Knapp in Popoola (2001) remarks that the maximization of library resources is possible where lecturers and librarians share objectives. She suggests therefore good liaison between the library staff and academic staff. Lecturers should give assignments that would require the use of many resources in the library. Also they should give the students appropriate references. This will increase the utilization of library resources and in turn. increase students' knowledge.

User survey should be conducted in the library from time to time to know the exact needs of the clientele. If properly designed, the survey could be a self-evaluative tool that helps to determine the effectiveness of the programmes, the collections and services of the library. The findings of such study could be used to modify, upgrade and formulate future policies that could bring better library service.

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