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# LIBRARY USER EDUCATION AS PANACEA TO STUDENTS SUCCESSFUL RESEARCH IN NIGERIAN UNIVERSITIES : A CASE OF FEDERAL UNIVERSITY LOKOJA, NIGERIA

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## **ABSTRACT**

Information dissemination has tremendously changed education and research by providing a lot of techniques on how to find and use relevant information sources in order to acquire knowledge. This study portrays how user education taught to university undergraduate enhances students' research by properly utilizing the library. Various library instructions given to students influence their attitude to research. This study uses quantitative method and survey technique and questionnaire as an instrument of data collection. Four research questions were proffered, and 130 questionnaire samples were distributed to students of 200 and 300 level of which 115 were returned and used in analyzing the data. The study finds out that the attitude of the respondents towards the library was positive; respondents benefit from the library user education in conducting research. Students' confidence in the library user education, staff and library is also positive and less problem is observed as regard to practicing what was taught in the course in relation to library.

**Keywords:** user education, attitude to library, use of library for research

**LIBRARY USER EDUCATION AS PANACEA TO STUDENTS'  
RESEARCH IN NIGERIAN UNIVERSITIES: A CASE OF FEDERAL  
UNIVERSITY, LOKOJA, NIGERIA**

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## INTRODUCTION

Library user education program is very important in the development of university education. It serves as a hub by which knowledge sharing is being actualized through enlightenment and orientations on how to trace relevant information at a relevant time in order to undertake a purposeful research. User education, library use education, user instruction and library orientation are all attributes denoting the teaching of how to use the library information resources efficaciously (Lwehabura, 1999). Whittaker defined a user as “a person who uses one or more library services at least once in a year. The user is prime factor by which library services are meant for. Mews (1972) defines that “user education as instruction given to help the users to make best use of the library. Fleming (1990) defines user education” as various programs of instruction, education and exploration provided by libraries to users to enable them to make more effective, efficient and independent use of information sources and services to which these libraries provide access”. The user deserves to know how key and fundamental issues are modeled and shaped in the issue of dissemination of information with a view to finding his desired knowledge for his academic pursuit. New students in the university would find user education helpful, because majority of them are not quite conversant with university environment, they need a platform through which their quest for education is demystified – via user education program.

Mellon (1988) highlighted that students enrolled into university with dearth knowledge of library operational tools and know how. Nany (1984) highlights that “user education is concerned with the library whole information and communication process and one part of this involves the total user interaction of user with the library”. Devarajan (1989) describes that users are people that can be categorized based on the responsibility accorded to them.

Mishra & Mahapatra (2013), define that the methods of imparting user education are: “lecture method; using audio-visual methods; using computer assisted learning; and on site visit to the library. They further clarify that enormous expansion of in the volume of publications, the difficulty of libraries as well as literature organizational pattern and processes involved in its delivery, resulted in the adoption of user education.

Federal university Lokoja introduced the use of Library course 105 as a compulsory first semester 100 level course which is designed to give the newly enrolled students an insight on how to use the university library as well as the available resources. The course is a 2 credit unit. It is called use of library and ICT.

## **STATEMENT OF THE PROBLEM**

Federal university Lokoja is among the newly established universities in 2011. Following the fact that the university is new and also the students, the issue of user education can be very crucial in the academic output of the university. The students as pioneers should adequately be informed on how to use the Library in conducting research. As a new university and library, there is the need to put a solid foundation with provision of concrete user education program to buttress the students' research capability to produce quality graduates. As new students who abridged from secondary straight to university with little or no knowledge of academic library and information search skills, need to be oriented on how to utilize their time in research; which can only be done through finding the relevant information materials. This study is aimed at finding out how this user education is provided as well as its related input and output in the university under the study, also, to ascertain whether the user education program in the university contribute in aiding the students research in the university; and is it given appropriately; and do students really put into practice what they were taught in user education class; and what impact do they acquire from it in terms of research. These preceding questions spur the researcher to undertake this study.

### **OBJECTIVES OF THE STUDY**

1. To know the students' attitudes towards user education program
2. To understand the benefits of user education program on the students' library research under the study.
3. To discover the opinions of the respondents on how user education program is given in the university
4. To analyze the constrains that hinders the successful application of the user education skills in making research in the library by the respondents

## **RESEARCH QUESTIONS**

1. What are the respondents' attitudes towards user education program in the university under study?
2. What are the benefits of user education program to the respondents' library research?
3. What are the opinions of the respondents on how user education program is given in the university under study?
4. What are the constraints that hinder the respondents' successful application of user education skills in making research in the library?

## LITERATURE REVIEW

Rasheed (1987) examines that user education has been a monumental development area in librarianship since 1980s; moreover, information seeking behavior as a component of user studies has rapidly grown. This statement was corroborated by Yu (2002) as cited by Suleiman (2012) in which he “explores how Taiwanese college and technical institutions libraries familiarize user with library facilities and information resources. The most common programs are basic introduction to library services, OPAC instructions, searching tools, internet instruction, CD-ROMS, databases and electronic journals, and audio and video materials”. Library user education program can positively transform the students’ academics to be more research oriented. Breviks (1982) in his research outlines that there is a considerable relationship in the obtaining of grade by students and library user education .This statement was vindicated by Prorack (1994) in his study on user education in terms of music students declares that there is remarkable relationship between students’ grade and user education.

User education is a mechanism used by library professionals to educate the users on how to make use of the available resources in the library in desirable and fruitful way (Bello, 2003). Muogulini (1986) undertook a study on the failure of students to make use of library facilities after offering a course in the use of library, where he outlined in his findings that students’ interaction with the library staff during the orientation program was minimal .There was overloaded information within a short time frame which disrupt retention capability for new information horizon. A library can attain its goals and objectives if it clearly defines who its readers are in order to assess the behavioral pattern of information gathering of various user groups (Hoadley & Clarke, 1972).

Oyesola (1984) in his research opined on the problems militating the library in the uplifting of students’ capability in tracing their desired information materials base on the library arrangement. This can be seen in the sense that through user education students can understand the appropriate location of material base on the library arrangement and to understand the various library and research techniques in the pursuit of the their academic activities . Cram



(2008) shows that librarian's performance should go beyond book custodian; he should act as an instructor that educate other clients and users of the library. It is very crucial to university libraries to give user education to its users in order to provide enabling environment by which library resources are being accessed and utilized judiciously to avoid Misinformation due to user's in-experience and alienation. This corroborated the view of Ishola (2005) in which he states that user education is necessary in Nigerian institutions of higher learning because most of the students enrolled with no knowledge of library and furthermore, they are not quite conversant with the environment ranging from the library resources to organizational structure which need to be demystified to them in order to access.

Muruga (2013), in his study –user education : Academic libraries, opines that user education is “ all the activities involved in teaching users how to make the best possible use of library resources, services and facilities, including formal and informal instruction delivered by a librarian or other staff member one –on- one- or in a group”. Hardesty et al. (1982) in their study outline that acquisition of use of library skills is more akin to library instruction than to natural intellectual capability or academic devotion. Britvic (1982) in her study opines that there is comparison between library instruction and entire academic pursuit of student. Palmer (1972) in her study posed an advice that student should be taught how to create an alternative means of metamorphosing from their present position to a higher one for a successful future through the use of an appropriate method.

## **METHODOLOGY**

The methodology adopted in this study is the survey method. Questionnaire was used as an instrument of data collection. 130 samples of questionnaire were distributed randomly to the 200 and 300 levels students of the university, of which 115 questionnaire samples were returned, and 15 were not returned.

## DATA ANALYSIS

Table 1. Distribution of respondents according to sex

| <b>GENDER</b> | <b>FREQUENCY</b> | <b>PERCENTAGE</b> |
|---------------|------------------|-------------------|
| MALES         | 75               | 74%               |
| FEMALES       | 40               | 26%               |
| TOTAL         | 115              | 100%              |

Table 1 shows that 75 respondents are males and 40 respondents are females. The total respondents are 115.

Table 2. Distribution of respondents according to Faculties

| <b>FACULTY</b>          | <b>FREQUENCY</b> | <b>PERCENTAGE</b> |
|-------------------------|------------------|-------------------|
| ARTS AND SOCIAL SCIENCE | 30               | 26%               |
| SCIENCES                | 85               | 74%               |
| TOTAL                   | 115              | 100%              |

Table 2 shows that 30 (26%) respondents are from the Faculty of Arts and Social Sciences and 85(74%) respondents from Faculty of Science. The total respondents are 115(100%)

Table 3: Distribution of respondents according to Departments

| <b>DEPARTMENT</b>                 | <b>NO. RESPONDENTS</b> | <b>PERCENTAGE</b> |
|-----------------------------------|------------------------|-------------------|
| English and literary studies      | 6                      | 5.2               |
| History and international studies | 5                      | 4.3               |
| Political Science                 | 10                     | 8.6               |
| Biological science                | 10                     | 8.6               |
| Physics                           | 14                     | 12.1              |
| Chemistry                         | 20                     | 17.3              |

|                  |            |            |
|------------------|------------|------------|
| Geography        | 4          | 3.6        |
| Geology          | 10         | 8.6        |
| Computer science | 15         | 13         |
| Economics        | 6          | 5.2        |
| Mathematics      | 15         | 13         |
| <b>TOTAL</b>     | <b>115</b> | <b>100</b> |

Table 3 shows the distribution of respondents according to departments.

## FINDINGS AND DISCUSSIONS

**RESEACH QUESTION 1:** What is the attitude of the respondents towards user education program in the university under study?

**Table 4:** I regularly attend library use class

| ITEMS                    | NO.        | %           |
|--------------------------|------------|-------------|
| <b>STRONGLY AGREE</b>    | 40         | 34.7%       |
| <b>AGREE</b>             | 29         | 25.2%       |
| <b>UNDECIDED</b>         | 12         | 10.4%       |
| <b>STRONGLY DISAGREE</b> | 24         | 21%         |
| <b>DISAGREE</b>          | 10         | 8.6         |
| <b>TOTAL</b>             | <b>115</b> | <b>100%</b> |

MEAN= 3.565217

STANDARD DEVIATION= 1.377325

T- VALUE= 2.58808

Table 1 shows that 40(34%) strongly agree that they regularly attend the library user education class. 29 (25.2%) agree, 12(10.4) undecided, 24(21%) strongly disagree, 10 (8.6).

Going by the above analysis, we can say that the decision is accepted because the mean 3.56 standard deviation 1.37 and T-value 2.58 signify that the research question” I regularly attend the library user education class” is accepted

**RESEARCH QUESTION 2:** What are the benefits of library user education to the respondents?

**TABLE 5:** Benefits of user education to the respondents

|  | <b>STRONG<br/>LY<br/>AGREE</b> | <b>AGREE</b> | <b>UNDECID<br/>ED</b> | <b>STRONG<br/>LY<br/>DISAGR<br/>EE</b> | <b>DISAG<br/>REE</b> | <b>TOTA<br/>L</b> | <b>%</b> | <b>MEAN</b> |
|--|--------------------------------|--------------|-----------------------|--|----------------------|-------------------|----------|-------------|
|  | <b>NO. %</b>                   | <b>NO. %</b> | <b>NO. %</b>          | <b>NO. %</b>                           | <b>NO. %</b>         |                   |          |             |
| I found the relevant materials in the library                  | 36 31.3                        | 30 26        | 6 5.2                 | 24 21                                  | 19 16.5              | 115               | 100      | 3.347826    |
| Knowledge I received for library use was satisfactory          | 26 22.6                        | 44 38.2      | 11 9.5                | 19 16.5                                | 15 13                | 115               | 100      | 3.4         |
| It helps me greatly in accessing electronic resources          | 39 34                          | 16 14        | 30 26                 | 20 17.3                                | 10 8.6               | 115               | 100      | 3.469565    |
| As a result of library user education my research was enhanced | 27 23.4                        | 34 29.5      | 12 10.4               | 26 22.6                                | 16 14                | 115               | 100      | 3.26087     |

MEAN OF MEAN=3.368912

STANDARD DEVIATION=0.086978

T- VALUE=38.73284

Table 5 shows the items under the research question “what are the benefits of user education to the respondents?” Item number 1 –I found the relevant information material in the Library has the mean of 3.347826. Item number 2 – knowledge I received for Library use was satisfactory has 3.4 as mean. Item number 3 – It helps me greatly in accessing electronic information resources has the total mean of 3.469565. Item number 4 – as a result of Library user education my research is enhanced has the mean 3.26087.

**RESEARCH QUESTION 3:** What is the respondents’ opinion towards user education?

**TABLE 6:** Respondents’ opinion towards library user education?

| Variables  | Strongly Agree |      | Agree |      | Undecided |      | Strongly Disagree |      | Disagree |      | Total | %   | Mean     |
|--|----------------|------|-------|------|-----------|------|-------------------|------|----------|------|-------|-----|----------|
|  | No             | %    | No    | %    | No        | %    | No                | %    | No       | %    | No    | %   |          |
| The lecturer fully cooperate during the lectures           | 40             | 34.7 | 26    | 22.6 | 10        | 8.6  | 19                | 16.5 | 20       | 17.3 | 115   | 100 | 3.426087 |
| There is discrepancy of what and found in the library      | 26             | 25.2 | 27    | 23.4 | 19        | 16.5 | 30                | 26   | 10       | 8.6  | 115   | 100 | 3.304348 |
| The course should be taught beyond 100 level               | 16             | 14   | 21    | 18.2 | 8         | 6    | 34                | 29.5 | 36       | 31.3 | 115   | 100 | 2.53913  |
| The course should be abolished because it has no relevance | 8              | 7    | 4     | 3.4  | 9         | 8    | 44                | 38.2 | 50       | 43.4 | 115   | 100 | 1.921739 |

Table 6 shows that the respondent opinion on the perso who taught the course was very cooperative. 40 (34.7) strongly agree, 26 (22.6%) agree, 19 (16.1%) strongly disagree, 20 (17.3%) disagree, the mean is 3.4226087.

On the discrepancy for what between what was taught and what found in the library: 29 (25. 2%) strongly agree, 27(23.4%) agree, 19 (16.5%) undecided, 30 (26 %) strongly disagree, 10 (8.6%) agree while the mean is 3.304358.

On weather user education should be taught beyond 100 level: 16 (14%) strongly agree, 21 (18.2%) agree, 8 (6%) undecided, 34 (29.5%) strongly disagree, 36 (31.3%) agree and the mean is 2.53913.

Whether library user education should be abolished completely: 8(7%) strongly agree, 4 (3.4%) agree, 9 (8%) undecided, 44 (38.2%) strongly disagree, 50 (43.4%) disagree. The mean is 1.921739.

*MEAN OF MEAN= 2.797826*

*STANDARD DEVIATION=0.703735*

*T-VALUE=3.975682*

**RESEARCH QUESTION 4:** What are the constraints that hinder the respondents' successful application of library user education to their library research?

**TABLE 7:** problems that hinder the respondents' application of library user education to their library research.

| Variables   | Strongly Agree |      | Agree |      | Undecided |      | Strongly Disagree |      | Disagree |      | Total | %   | Mean       |
|---|----------------|------|-------|------|-----------|------|-------------------|------|----------|------|-------|-----|------------|
|   | No             | %    | No    | %    | No        | %    | No                | %    | No       | %    | No    | %   |            |
| Inadequate research materials in the library      | 22             | 19.1 | 21    | 18.2 | 12        | 10.4 | 20                | 17.3 | 40       | 34.7 | 115   | 100 | 2.695652   |
| Lack of conducive reading atmosphere              | 28             | 24.3 | 14    | 12.1 | 5         | 4.3  | 41                | 35.6 | 27       | 23.4 | 115   | 100 | 2.782609   |
| Insufficient internet connectivity in the library | 12             | 10.4 | 31    | 27   | 3         | 2.6  | 29                | 25.2 | 40       | 34.7 | 115   | 100 | 2.530435   |
| Unfavorable rules and regulations                 | 28             | 24.3 | 16    | 14   | 2         | 1.7  | 34                | 29.5 | 35       | 30.4 | 115   | 100 | 2.721739   |
| Lack of interest to library                       | 12             | 10.4 | 18    | 15.6 | 10        | 8.6  | 24                | 20.8 | 51       | 43.9 | 115   | 100 | 2.26959565 |
| Lack of proper guidance in the Library            | 29             | 25.2 | 19    | 16.5 | 8         | 7    | 25                | 21.7 | 34       | 29.5 | 115   | 100 | 2.85087    |

Table 7 indicates that pertaining problems that hinder the respondents application of library user education program in research: on inadequate research materials - 22 (19.1%) strongly agree, 21 (18.2%) agree, 12 (10.2%) undecided, 20 (17.3) strongly disagree, 40 (34.7%) disagree with 2.695652 as mean.

On lack of conducive reading atmosphere: 28 (24.3%) strongly agree, 14 (12.1%) agree, 5 (4.3%) undecided, 41(35.6%) strongly disagree, 27(23.4%) disagree, the mean is 2.530635.

On unfavorable library rules: 28 (24.3%) strongly agree, 16(14%) agree, 2(17%) undecided, 34(29.5%) strongly disagree 35(30.4%) agree and the mean is 2.721739

On lack of interest to library: 12(10.4%) strongly agree, 8(15.6%) agree, 10(8.6%) undecided, 24(20.8%), 15(1%) disagree .The mean is 2.26959565.

Lack of proper guidance by library staff: 29(25.2%) strongly agree, 19(16.5%) agree, 8 (7%) undecided, 25(21.7%) strongly disagree, 34(29.5%) agree.

The mean is 2.26959565

*MEAN OF MEAN=2.643517608*

*STANDARD DEVIATION=0.213582098*

*T- VALUE= 12.37705608*

#### *SUMMARY OF RESEACH FINDING*

1. The attitude of respondents towards the Library use very positive by being punctual in it.
2. The research finds out that respondents benefit from the Library user education in conducting their research.



3. The opinion of the respondents on library user education was very positive to library staff and the library as well.

4. The research shows that there is less problem in the application of user education to their purpose.

## CONCLUSION

Effective user education helps and supports students vehemently in carrying out their research in Libraries and elsewhere by acquiring the necessary skills to search various information relevant to their needs and also the libraries to improve service delivery to their Clients.

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