USER EDUCATION PROGRAMMES AND STUDENTS' USE OF THE LIBRARY IN COLLEGES OF EDUCATION IN CROSS RIVER STATE, SOUTH-SOUTH, NIGERIA.

IDAKWO, Sunday Innocent, INYOKWE, Godwin Adie, NWEZE Odinakachi Chimatara & OKUBE Nwakaego
idakwa.sunday@bazeuniversity.edu.ng[1], godwininyokwe@gmail.com[2], carrromzy86@gmail.com[3], odinakachinweze@gmail.com [4] & nwakaegookube@gmail.com[5]
Baze University, Abuja[1], Federal College of Education, Obudu, CRS[2], Gloryland Polytechnic Ankpa, Kogi State[3] & Federal University Lokoja, Kogi State[4]

ABSTRACT

Purpose: The purpose of this paper is to explore the influence of user education programmes in Colleges of Education in Cross River State and Students' use of the College Library.

Design/Methodology/Approach: The paper adopted the exploratory approach to investigate critical concepts such as user education, objectives of user education, structure of user education programme and the teaching method, user education programme and ICT, user education and students' attitudes to use of academic libraries. Other relates concepts examined were: Colleges of education libraries and user education programme, the problems of teaching user education programme and strategies for enhancing the teaching of user education programme.

Practical Implication: The college libraries should do all it can to achieve effective user education programme in order to attain it aim in enhancing learning and research. To achieve this, college libraries should ensure that they have enough qualified professional librarians to teach and orient freshers about the use of library, training and retraining of librarians and library staff on the use of ICTs in carrying out user education programmes among others.

Finding: The paper points out that the implementation of effective user education programme will help the users to be well informed and versatile in their subject area of interest as well as encourages them to do independent learning and research. Also, it will also help the users to make proper use of the library which will in turn result to academic excellence.

Originality/Value: This research has not been published in any journal before. It value lies in its identification and discussion of the role of user education programme in Colleges of Education as well as bringing to limelight factors that inhibit full scale achievement of user education programme in Colleges of Education, thereby proffering solutions such as employment of more librarians to handle the user education programme, expansion of user education programme to cover all levels of studies, , improvement of teaching methods among others.

Key words: User Education, Programme, College Library, Students' Use, Cross River, South-South, Nigeria
Paper type: Conceptual

INTRODUCTION

Colleges of Education in Nigeria form part of what is usually referred to as the higher, tertiary or academic education system. They are specialized in the training of professionally qualified middle level teachers for basic education classes in the country; and mandated by law to establish libraries in order to actualize the institutional aims and objectives of effective teaching/ learning and research. According to National

Commission for Colleges of Education (NCCE) (1994), each College of Education in order to maintain standards is by law mandated to establish and run a functional library with the following objectives:

- Ensure that its collection and services are designed to meet the objectives and information requirement of college education.
- Ensure that the resources and facilities provided are maximally used through proper organization and dissemination.
- Give qualitative reference and information services for study, teaching, and research needs in the college community.
- Evaluate from time to time the success of the library in meeting the library and information needs of its users.

The major objective of the academic library is to effectively meet the information needs of the institution and her community members (students, staff members, and by extension 'friends' of the Institution). Federal Government of Nigeria in National Policy of Education (NCCE) (2004) states that the library is at the heart of the education enterprise and the virtual library as a platform for sharing knowledge aimed at rejuvenating Nigerian schools through the provision of current books, journals and other library services. NCCE has perhaps emphasized on virtual library because we are in the 21st century where the traditional library is almost de-emphasized.

The 21st century library along with the trend of events (Information and Communication revolution) has become virtual in her materials, users and usage. Thus the 21st century library (which is virtual) is defined by Reitz (2005) as a "library without walls" in which the collections do not exist on paper, microform, or other tangible form at a physical location, but are electronically accessible in digital format via computer networks. From the definition above, the library users require 21st century technologies to access library collections, as access is no longer restricted to the user paying a visit to the library (building) physically. The 21st century library therefore, emphasizes access rather than ownership. In this vein, the library user needs to take more responsibility and training in locating and retrieving information from the library's collections more than they have done in the traditional library enterprise.

An assemblage of reading materials without access by users will qualify more for a store-house than a library. Aguolu and Aguolu (2002) states that availability of an information source would not necessarily mean its accessibility, because the source may be available but access to it prevented for one reason or the other. According to them, the problem of Nigerian students is not just the question of wanting to use what the College or University library can provide for their needs, but whether or not there is access to what has been provided. They affirm that the more accessible information sources are, the more likely they are to be used. One of those reasons for restricted access could be lack of and poor application of users' knowledge of user education. .

User education is an academic programme that is designed by tertiary institutions and other higher institutions to educate library users on how to effectively utilize library resources and services. It is a major service in the practice of librarianship, and the user, a pivot around which this library service revolves. Nwezeh, (2010), states that 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. According to Nwezeh, the library can fulfill this function best by pursuing a policy of constant self-education and education of users in order to be alert to the changing needs of its clients.

User Education can be defined as instruction given to readers to help them make the best use of the library. According to Akalumhe (2006) user education refers to formal and informal library programme of educating and enlightening users on how to maximally utilize library resources. According to Akalumhe, it 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.

Fang and Callision (1990) however recommend the three levels of user education based on users' educational background-

- Library orientation for freshmen;
- Bibliographic instruction for juniors/seniors; and,
- The more sophisticated involving the sorting and summarizing of documentation, and the studying/analyzing of information for all graduate students.

User education remains a critical service in modern libraries/librarianship especially academic ones owing to numerous reasons. To be able to undergo a meaningful education in a tertiary institution, the students must learn how to effectively, efficiently and independently exploit the resources of an academic library which is usually large and complex in collection and organization. According to Aina (2004) library processes have become so complex that an average user may not easily comprehend how to utilize the available resources. He explains further that at the era of information explosion and information technology

in which we are, information is expanding at a very fast rate and new resources are being introduced into the library.

Colleges of Education in Nigeria form part of the tertiary education system specialized in the training of middle class teachers for the basic education system which is made up of pre-primary, primary and junior secondary school classes. User Education (Introduction to Library Studies –GSE 112) is part of the curriculum of the institutions and taught by professional librarians. The various College authorities as part of the user training programmes also organize general fresh students' orientation at the beginning of each academic session and invite librarians to present talks/papers on use of the College library.

According to National Commission for Colleges of Education(NCCE)(1996), most of the teachers' institutions in Nigeria that are today known as Colleges of Education have experienced one form of transformation or the other in their proprietorship, supervision, programme management and even in application. The Commission states that the oldest of the first generation Colleges started at the inspiration of external aid from the UNESCO to the Nigerian Government. They were named Advanced Teachers Colleges which later transformed into Colleges of Education.

The Colleges operated under varying instruments of affiliation to different universities in the country until the advent of the National Commission for Colleges of Education (NCCE), as supervising parastatal which injected harmony and minimum standards into the operations. Federal College of Education, Obudu being one of the Colleges under study, and one of the early established colleges before the emergence of NCCE was affiliated to the University of Calabar, Calabar in Cross River State – Nigeria.

There are two colleges of education in Cross River State of Nigeria. They are the Federal College of Education, Obudu, and the State owned College of Education, Akamkpa. The schools are located in Obudu in the northern senatorial district and Akamkpa in the central senatorial district of the state respectively. All the colleges are situated along the way to the famous Obudu Cattle Ranch Resort from the state capital-Calabar.

Cross River State was created in May 27, 1967 from the Eastern Region by the General Yakubu Gowon regime. Its name was changed to Cross River State in the 1976 States creation exercise by the then General Murtala Mohamed regime. The present Akwa-Ibom state was excised from it in the state creation exercise of 1987 by the then regime of General Ibrahim Babangida. Its capital is Calabar. Its major towns are Akamkpa, Calabar, Ikom, Obubura, Odukpani, Ogoja, Okundi, Ugep, Akpabuyo, Obanliku, and Obudu. There are three major language groups in the State- Efik, Ejagham and Bekwara. English language is however the lingua franca for the State (NigeriaGalleria.com).

The state is a coastal state in South Eastern Nigeria, named after the river 'Cross River' which passes through the state. Located in the Niger Delta, Cross River State occupies 20,156 square kilometers. It shares boundaries with Benue State to the North, Enugu and Abia States to the West, to the East by Cameroon Republic and to the South by Akwa-Ibom and the Atlantic Ocean.

Conceptual Definition

Concept of User Education

User education would be understood better if a library user is emphasized. Who is a library user? Nwalo (2003) defines him as anybody who visits the library with the purpose of exploiting its resources to satisfy his information need. The underlined word "visits" as used in the 21st century, include remote access to the library portal or website. Aina (2004) sees the term "user" to include all those who avail themselves of the services offered by a library. The term encompasses various terms such as patrons, clients, information users, information seekers, consumers, readers, etc.; these terms can be used interchangeably, because they all apply to those seeking the services of a library.

Users of the library especially an academic one must be given available opportunities to access the collection of a library including opportunity to be educated on library use to facilitate accessibility. Recognizing the importance of the library user, Ogunmodede and Emeahara (2010) states that the user is very critical to the services of the library, hence the user of a library must be constantly asked to assess the services and resources provided, as this will

help the library to improve upon its services. They state further that any attempt on the part of the library to ignore the satisfaction of its users will be done at the library's peril.

Traditionally, library users have been classified into groups. However, virtual library users are identifiable by their Information and Communication skills irrespective of age or physical challenges. Whitakers (1993) classified users into general readers, subject readers, special readers, and none- reading users. Similarly, Nwalo (2003) grouped them into specialists, students, disadvantaged majority, and the indisposed. In addition, Aina (2004) grouped users into children, pupils, students, adults, professionals, researchers, policy-makers, artisans, hearing and visually handicapped, and physically handicapped. According to Aina skill is also a basis for categorizing users. The categories include:

1. Unskilled user/ computer illiterate user

2. Semi-skilled user/ semi-computer literate user

3. Skilled user/ computer literate user

4. Absent-User

There are varied conceptual definitions of user education. Chopra, (2001) defines user education in generic form as any effort or programme which will guide and instruct existing and potential users, individually or collectively with the objective of facilitating;

a. The recognition of their own information needs,
b. The formulation of these needs,
c. The effective and efficient use of information services, and
d. The assessment of these services. Aguolu and Aguolu (2002) aptly states that instruction in library use aims at developing the bibliographic skill of library users so that they can make the most effective use of the library and its information resources.

Objectives of User Education

The objectives of a well planned and executed library use education according to National Commission for Colleges of Education(NCCE)(1994) include; to make students aware of the availability and scope of library's resources/services; to contribute to the personal and intellectual development of the student including the ability to continue independent learning outside the formal education context; to ensure those students are aware of and can effectively use information sources and techniques, which can assist in their learning and future career; and to enable student to control and structure the varied information available and regularly used by him/her to solve academic and later professional problems. Edoka (2000) asserts that the objective of user education is to help the users to make the best use of overall library resources.

Aguolu, and Aguolu, (2002) states that the ultimate aim of library instruction is to develop in the reader a bibliographic skill, which enables him to locate, sift, and access critically, on his own, information or data collated from variety of sources, sometimes conflicting, to satisfy his intellectual, social or personal needs.

Similarly, Edoka, (2000) outlined the specific aims of user education programme to include:
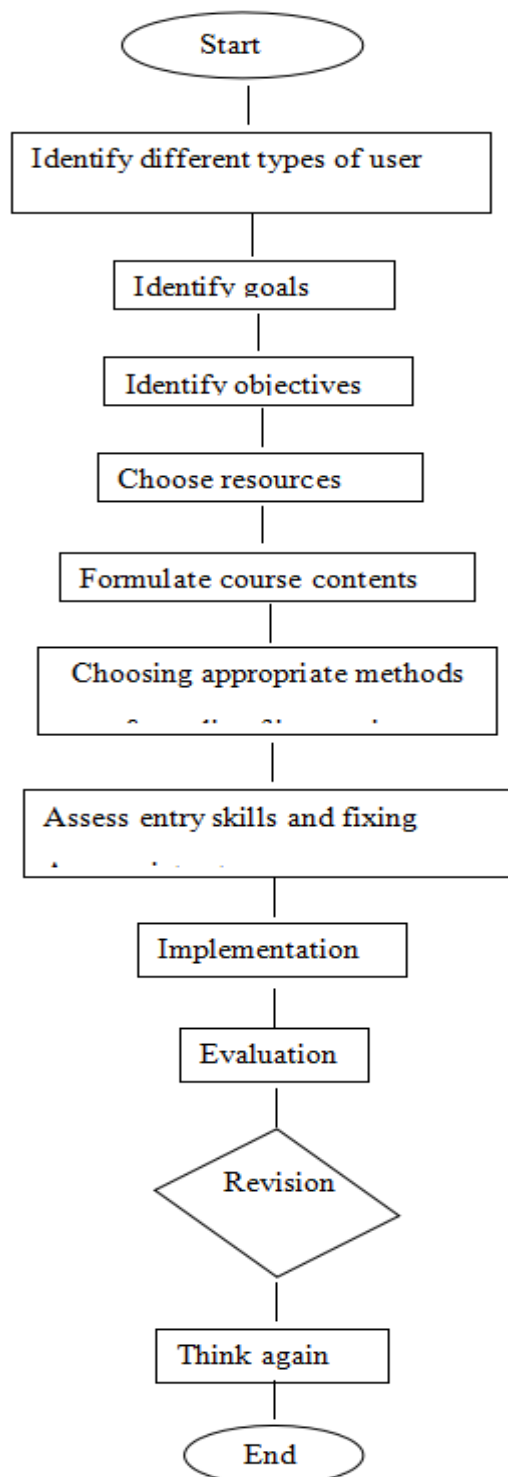
- To develop readers' awareness of overall information resources available to them in their own and other libraries.
- To develop skills necessary for retrieving required materials.
- To develop in-depth knowledge of materials in reader's subject area.
- To develop skills in presenting bibliographic references.
- To develop skills required in making advanced studies.
- To create a positive attitude to information searching which will stimulate the user to make use of the resources available at different libraries. Edoka, argues that to achieve these specific aims, two levels of user education programmes are necessary: user orientation and user instruction. User orientation is designed to give new library users a general awareness of the library resources and to emphasis that, in addition to materials, there are also library staffs that are there to help them with their needs. While skills and knowledge for in-depth use

of the library is provided by a well planned and executed programme of library instruction.

The Structure of User Education Programmes and the Teaching Methods

The first step in designing a library instruction programme is to identify the specific categories of library users for whom the programme or courses of instruction are prepared. Appropriate attention must be given to the needs of these specific categories, whether undergraduates or post graduate. Much as user education programme are usually designed for undergraduates, there is no doubt that the advanced instruction in subject literatures given to postgraduate students can be very beneficial to those faculty members who are modest enough to admit their limited bibliographic knowledge. There should be a clearly written profile of the information needs of various segments of the academic community as well as a written statement of objectives of the instruction, conforming to the needs of the diverse users. As each university has its unique identity, it is unlikely that programmes of any two libraries could be more than superficially similar. Each university must design its own course to meet the immediate needs of its clientele as well as fit into the university's teaching programmes (Nwoye and Anafulu, 1973 as cited in Aguolu and Aguolu, 2002).

User Education Program Flow Chart

Start
↓
Identify different types of user
↓
Identify goals
↓
Identify objectives
↓
Choose resources
↓
Formulate course contents
↓
Choosing appropriate methods
↓
Assess entry skills and fixing
↓
Implementation
↓
Evaluation
↓
Revision
↓
Think again
↓
End

The last two sentences of this assertion may not be true of user education in Colleges of Education as there exist a programmed user education curriculum

in this sector of Education applicable to all Colleges of Education in Nigeria.

Hiller (2001) in specific terms recommends a successful user education programme to identify user population, their information needs and how well they are to be met. Padmini (2004) also affirms that thorough planning is needed to ensure that all activities carried out are thus meeting the institutional goals and presents the following chart to explain the basic steps of designing a user education programme that would reflect the mission statement of the library: Source: Padmini, (2004)

Effective user education programme requires effective planning which includes appropriate timing, motivation, and teaching method. Unomah, (1986) states that students would be likely highly motivated if user instruction is given when students are about to start writing their projects. Akindojutime, (2000) affirms that general observations have proved that some students find library instruction programme beneficial because of their good disposition to learning.

A good user education programme therefore need to cover and be developed in such a way that it accommodates information development, learning, teaching, and research even within colleges of Education in Cross River State and Nigeria in general. According to National Commission for Colleges of Education (NCCE) (2012), the course content of user education programmes (Introduction to Library Studies) in Colleges of Education include:

- Objectives and functions of the library
- Types of library;
- Types of library materials;
- Organizational structure of the library;
- Bibliography, cataloguing and classification;
- Use and care of the library;
- Basic library automation;
- Virtual and e-library.

This programme to the mind of this researcher is broad based and containing major components of Library and Information Science as a discipline, and therefore supposed to be taught for at least an academic session for effective teaching/learning. The objective of the programme as aptly stated by NCCE, (2012) is to expose students to acquire through independent research, the skills and information for appreciating the basis and nature/character of human knowledge, values and action, and to use such

knowledge/information in solving problems. Adequate time for learning is definitely needed to acquire a skill such as information searching and retrieval.

User Education Programmes and Information and Communication Technology (ICT)

Information and Communication Technology (ICT), is a composite term, which embodies three important concepts- Information, Communication, and Technology. To understand ICT, one must understand all three concepts.

According to DeWatteville and Gilbert, (2000) "Information" means many things to many people, depending on the context. Scientifically, information is processed data. Information can also be loosely defined as that which aids decision making. Information, though abstract, could also be visualized as a commodity, which could be bought or sold. DeWatteville and Gilbert state that other writers have defined information as; 'any potentially useful fact, quantity or value that can be expressed uniquely with exactness. Information is whatever is capable of causing a human mind to change its opinion about the current state of the real world".

Communication refers to the transfer or exchange of information from person to person or from one place to another. Communication takes place when an action produces a reaction, whether positive or negative. Other writers in the field of communication studies have defined communication as; "a process, a transfer of information, ideas, thoughts and messages. It involves a sender, a receiver, a code and, a language that is understood by both the sender and the receiver. It is a process involving the passing of messages through the use of symbols which all parties in the communication encounter understand. It involves the exchange of ideas, facts, opinions, attitudes and beliefs between people. It is not a one-way affair. There must be a sender to transmit the message and receiver to make appropriate decisions on how the rest of the exchange should continue" (James, 2004).

"Technology refers to the use of scientific knowledge to invent tools that assist human beings in their efforts to overcome environmental hazards and impediments to comfort. In this regard, technology refers to the things like the computer, telephone, cell

phone, GSM handsets, television, radio, etc. Put together, therefore, ICT has been defined as: The acquisition, analysis, manipulation, storage and distribution of information; and the design and provision of equipment and software for these purposes" (deWatteville and Gilbert 2000).

The application of modern information and communication technology (ICT) in every aspect of the present century is without limit, even on library services. The definition of librarianship has changed and developed because of changing methods of library science and services. These changes have affected library users, bringing a new pattern to librarianship. Ogunsola, (2004) explained that the pace of change brought by new technologies has had a significant effect on the way people live, work and play worldwide. According to Wallace, (1993) the widespread use of electronic technologies has had a tremendous impact upon information retrieval within the library, affecting not only access to resources but also users attitudes to using the library.

Padmini, (2004) states that " traditionally under the umbrella term user education, library and information science professionals have been initiating and instructing the end-users in the use of print-based publications. But now days, in this hybrid information systems environment, balance between the print-based sources and digital/electronic documents will be a basic norm in the near future. In this context, training and retraining the end-users in the use of IT based resources and services such as, email, ftp, www, browsers, CDs, and DVDs, etc should become an integral part of a library's user education and training programme".

The role of ICT in teaching and learning generally is rapidly becoming one of the most important and widely discussed within the education circle worldwide. According to Heinch, Molenda, Russell and Smaldino, (2004) most experts in the field of education have agreed that when properly used ICT holds great promise to improving teaching and learning in addition to shaping workforce opportunities. Bunnet, (1994) states that ICT aid instructional process and facilitates students' learning and general attitudes towards learning environment.

However, these researchers feel more concerned about the impact of information and communication technology in user education and students' library use of library in Colleges of Education in Cross River State

of Nigeria. Upon the numerous success stories, the main issue is to know whether ICT encourages or discourages library patronage.

Huff (2003) affirms that the ability to remotely access the content of libraries outside the walls of the traditional library buildings has decreased patronage to libraries. Commenting on a nationwide report in March 2004 in the United Kingdom which indicates that over the previous 10years overall library usage declined by 21% and circulation by 35% due to electronic librarianship, Applegate (2007) asserts that library within the United Kingdom would not be used and will be irrelevant if the situation remains unchecked by the year 2020. The same situation seems to be manifesting in Colleges of Education Libraries in Colleges of Education in Cross River State of Nigeria.

User Education and Students' Attitudes to Use of Academic Libraries

Libraries are central to the academic success of every educational institution. The main role of the library is to organize and offer services that will facilitate the effective and efficient use of the library. Such services include education on library use which is also aimed at motivating clients' interest for library patronage. Grimes and Charters, (2002) stressed that the ability to use library resources to identify, access, and retrieve information is essential for the successful completion of a University degree. Emphasizing the impact of user education to library patronage, Williams (1995) in a survey found that active learners who participate more in class and who read, write and study more are regular and active library users. Gus kin, (1996) in a finding reports that library use promotes active learning and contributes to students' ability to think critically and work well independently and in a group.

Umeozor, (2013) collaborating other authorities however observed that students often fail to patronize and exploit to the fullest the intellectual content of the library. Umeozor further observed that information over-load has dampening effect on the use of the library and that, students and researchers face an ever-growing mass of information distributed in a variety of formats – print and online/internet. Students are therefore required to be equipped with efficient methods of accessing, evaluating, and synthesizing information into a coherent whole. According to Chamani, (2010) "during the last

decades the interests in students library use and information needs in academic libraries has increased mainly because of the increase in student numbers and libraries' need to meet their clients' demands in the best possible ways."(p.43.). Eskola (1998) found large differences in how students of different disciplines use the library.

Many studies of students' attitude to and use of the library especially university libraries have been conducted in several countries. Chamani, (2010,) affirm that there are indications that many students have positive attitude to using libraries and derive benefits for doing so. Williams (1995) surveyed Canadian undergraduates library use and found that active learners who participate more in class and who read, write and study more are regular and active library users.

Fowowe (1989) found difference in the frequency of library use of faculty and students and that 94.8% of students use library facilities. Demas and Jeffery, (2002) state that from survey data, 36% of Carleton students use Gould Library daily and that an additional 50% use it at least once a week. They state further that an average student library use stood at three to four times a week; with an average visit lasting two-and-a-half to three hours and that the library is busiest Sunday through Thursdays evenings. Olanlokun (1982) found that students use the library for research, discussions, leisure, and other purposes.

Benefits Students Derive From the Study of User Education Programme

Library use education was introduced in order to realize the maximum use of the library to the greater advantage of students. Students in colleges of education would gain enormous benefits after taking user education programme "Introduction to Library Studies – GSE 112". Ajayi, (1993) asserts that students who do not appreciate the value of user education programme are at the disadvantage and need encouragement to change their attitudes towards the programme. According to Ojo-Ade and Jagboro, (2000) users of the library who take user education programme are well informed and versatile in the use of library catalogue, especially in the subject area of their interest. Bello, (2003) agreed that library use education course has helped in the proper use of the library. It is observed that user education course causes behavioral and developmental changes in the attitudes of users resulting to academic excellence. Nwezeh, (2010) states therefore that the mark of

academic excellence and scholarship depends on the students' ability to develop an inquisitive mind through library use education. Akin-Ojo, (1994) asserts that library instruction would produce intelligent library user.

Joseph, (2005) lists the following as benefits to be derived after taking user education programme;

- Creation of better interest in the use of the library.
- Enhancement of effective use of library resources.
- Better understanding of library rules and regulations.
- Reduction of library users' reliance on the library operators.
- Less friction between the users and the librarians that usually arise from communication breakdown.
- Encouragement of independent research, and
- A lot of time is being saved. User education programme if properly organized and delivered, will enable students to locate, access, use, compare and contrast information independently.

According to Umeozor, (2013) many authors from past and present have found out and agreed that the major benefits of user education programmes include: developing awareness for and application of library services and resources; encouraging users to exploit these for their intellectual growth and development; imparting in users information search skills essential for life-long-learning; and developing independent and efficient learners and users of the library. According to Sokari, and Okpkwasili, (2011) user education programmes produce a two way effects or benefits (to the library and the library user) and therefore these benefits are derived;

- It helps the user in developing needed skills and talents to make profitable use in the library.
- Educating the library users on ways and means of meaningful use stimulating the users' interest of the library, hence promoting greater library patronage.
- When users are educated on proper handling of library materials, the life span of the materials is guaranteed. This saves cost for the library.

Colleges of Education Libraries and User Education Programmes

Academic libraries support the teaching, learning and research needs of institutions they serve. Libraries are fundamentally about people – how they learn, how they use the library materials/or information, and how they participate in the life of a learning community. They are service – institutions that place priority on users' satisfaction and therefore the need for user education. Aguolu and Aguolu (2002) explain that effective use of academic library materials and other facilities depends on the skillfulness or competence of the user and the level of assistance given them. According to Okafor and Ukwoma (2010) "user education is now more demanding because of expansion and diversification of students' population in various universities and institutions of higher learning in Nigeria, including postgraduate research and mature part time studies. User studies will then involve integration of information skills with teaching, research and enterprise programmes and high level concerns about copyright and plagiarism".

Andaleeb and Simmonds as cited by Omehia,; Obi,; and Okon, (2008) find that students expectations of libraries vary, making it imperative to better understand and define specific student needs. According to Leckie and Fullerton (1999) information literacy skills are desirable across disciplines, especially in science and engineering, but that professional associations do not necessarily support that. Hiller (2001) therefore recommends a strategic plan that will "develop and implement a study to identify user populations, their information needs and how well they are to be met."

Christopher and Menon (1995) observe that one element of high quality service is the "incorporation of user personal needs and expectations into the development of programs and service." According to them, the continued success of a service organization depends on the organization's ability to adjust its products and services to correspond to user needs; hence, the need for user education studies in academic institutions.

According to Abubakar (2002) Colleges of Education in Nigeria are not exceptional in recruiting students from those post primary schools that have hardly even lived with books in their homes or schools. A good number of them might have never read anything outside the few prescribed textbooks. Even teachers on their parts are sometimes handicapped by their ignorance of how a library may be put to effective education use since they might have had little or no experience of it during their schooldays.

It is obvious that there is a tremendous change in the library and information environment. The emerging technologies like OPAC, CD-ROM, web, internet, etc pose a considerable challenge for library and information science professionals. It has now become a compulsory task of the library professionals to teach and assist the end users, who have little exposure to these technologies, in searching literature. It is evident that there is a dire need to provide training to the present day end-user to explore the information, which is available in various sources and in different forms, especially in electronic/digital form (Padmini, 2004).

According to Fidzani, (1995) it is believed that improving users' knowledge of their libraries' collection and services could be a motivating factor for more usage and more demands on the libraries. Leonard (1982) as cited in (Joseph 2005 p.26) states that academic librarians must look beyond their custodial duties and strive to attain the status of teachers for the purpose of inculcating in their client the skills needed to achieve the best result in information search. Information explosion and the proliferation of various media for the organization and dissemination of information coupled with the unprecedented rise in admission into institutions of higher learning in Nigeria forced academic libraries to give priority to user education (Aguolu and Aguolu, 2002, p.382). This is because to maximize individual attention of users to meet their information needs is not more feasible. The body of literature of each academic discipline is growing increasingly rapidly. According to Salony (1995) the explosion of information might appear overwhelming-with increased academic research publishing out-put, proliferation of formats of presentation of information, and enormous quantities of information of doubtful quality and origin that dilute the high quality of research out-put and make it more difficult to locate.

Okafor and Ukwoma (2010) acknowledges that user education has become more demanding with the multiple formats, huge volume and dubious quantity and quality of information available in the internet

and other sources. Thus, Danton (1993) observes that "a dominant, indeed perhaps the most dominant characteristic of University libraries is that they are open-ended collections; a finite limit cannot at least in any foreseeable future be placed upon their ultimate size. This is so because the world of knowledge is constantly expanding, proliferating and fractionating" (p.56).

Problems of Teaching User Education Programmes

User education programme provides a platform where librarians introduce new library users to the complexities of a library especially a tertiary institution library and its facilities. It familiarizes users who have little or no information seeking skills with the broad range of information resources and develops their skills for maximal usage of the library. This function of the librarian is not without some problems or challenges. Hooks, (2007) affirms that teaching students how to use the university library resources had been a challenge for academic librarians for most of the 20th century and has emerged as a high priority in the 21st century as well. This may not be an exception in Colleges of Education. Alimohammadi, and Sajjadi, (2006) asserts that library and information professionals have experienced the information seeking challenges of new-comers for many years and have planned a wide range of instructional programmes to tackle the problem.

Many problems seem to be militating against the user education programmes which affect both the librarians and the library users. Joseph, (2005) has identified the following as problems of teaching user education programmes in some Nigerian academic libraries;

- Over dependence on one day orientation programme
- Lack of collective curriculum for user education in Nigerian tertiary institutions
- Lack of examinable library instruction programmes
- Over concentration (on the part of librarians) on library technical services like acquisition, cataloguing and classification, and shelving of books rather than information retrieval mechanism
- The use of unqualified personnel to teach the programme in some institutions.

Relating the case of India, Rashid, (1997) highlights the problems of user education programmes to include;

- the state of the library profession,
- educational system,
- finance and attitude to financing library programmes,
- social and political factors.

These and perhaps many more issues may have added to the ineffective implementation of user education programmes to date in Colleges of Education in Nigeria and Cross River State in particular. Unlike what is obtainable elsewhere, the librarians especially practicing ones in Nigerian tertiary institutions seems not to be involved in the designing of the user education programmes.

Strategies for Enhancing the Teaching of User Education Programmes

There is naturally no problem without a solution. The problems associated with the effective implementation of user education programmes are therefore not an exception even though some strategies for solution may take longer to be actualized. Odusanya (2001) states that despite user instructions in universities majority of students are still not well skilled in the use of libraries and so would prefer to keep away from the library.

Various authorities have made contributions towards proffering solutions to user education programmes. Joseph, (2005) opine that there is a need for explicit statement of objectives that would encompass availability and provision of infrastructure, provision of qualified trainers, careful choice of teaching methods and regular systematic evaluation of the programme. Livehabura, (1999) is of the opinion that user education programmes should be integrated within the curriculum of the institutions of learning so that the coverage and content of the programme accommodates information development, learning, teaching and research within and outside the University system. The opinion of Livehabura though shallowly has been implemented within the Colleges of Education sector.

Idowu, (2008) argues that these areas of the programme need to be re-appraised which are;

- Timing of the programme delivery

- Quality of course delivery
- Funding of the programme, and
- Lack of continuity and follow-up. Discussing in the same vein, Padmini, (2004) in a more detailed position listed the strategies to include;
- General instruction sessions to be redesigned to acquaint new and continuing students, staff and faculty with the resources that are available to them through the libraries.
- Library institution must be continuous and linked to students course work.
- Develop a comprehensive user education and training programme at national level and customized at local level to suit individual's needs.
- User education programmes are to be taken up regularly and the target groups are to be the freshmen who enter into the institutions irrespective of their exposures.
- User education programmes can be conducted occasionally, whenever the changes take place in the library.
- Suitable and adequate number of teaching aids including computers and computerized systems for effective teaching and learning need to be developed.
- User education programme components are to be incorporated into the library and information science school curricula.
- Involving the Library and Information Science school faculty in the conduct of user education programme as a core course.
- Proper coordination and cooperation is to be established at various levels.
- At least one session should be included in the orientation and refresher course of all academic staff in the College or University.
- Library and Information Science professionals have to build up good personality and effective communication skills.
- Continuing professional education and training programmes for the library and information science professionals are to be organized and encouraged.
- Continuous evaluation of the programme will lead to effective utilization of the library and the information sources, resources and services.

Conclusion

It is worthy of note that user education programme is of utmost relevance to students and other categories of library users considering the role library plays in aiding teaching, learning and research functions of the parent organizations. Colleges of Education authorities are to be more dedicated and committed to the affairs of the library in order to get the best out of the library including user education programme. Students derive a lot of benefits from the study of user education programme. The most notable benefit is increase in reading and use of the library which results to academic excellence.

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