



IMPACT OF USER EDUCATION PROGRAM ON UNDERGRADUATE STUDENTS IN UNIVERSITY OF ABUJA

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Abstract

Purpose: This study was carried out to investigate the impact of user education on the use of library resources by undergraduate students of University of Abuja.

Design/Methodology/Approach: The descriptive survey research design was adopted for this study. Four objectives and four research questions were formulated to guide the study. A Krejcie and Morgan formula was used to select a sample size of 379 undergraduate students of the university. Instrument for data collection was a well-structured questionnaire. Three hundred and seventy nine copies of questionnaire were distributed to the students with a return rate of 89.73%. The study used frequency counts, percentages, mean scores and ranking as statistical measures for data analysis.

Findings: The results revealed that user education have positive impact on the undergraduate students' use of library resources and their academic performance as it greatly improve their ability to find needed information and use the catalogue effectively to retrieve information. The results also revealed that user education makes them to be aware of the scope of the library among others.

Implication: Suggested solutions to challenges of effective user education program include provision of adequate qualified staff; proper ventilation and illumination of lecture venue; regular monitoring and control of user education procedures; adjustment of user education time to suit students; positive attitude of staff to the program among others.

Originality/Value: It was recommended that there should be a detailed course outline for user education based on National Universities Commission (NUC), Minimum Academic Structure (MAS) among others.

Keywords: User education, utilization of library resources, undergraduate students, University of Abuja

Paper type: Empirical research

Introduction

Universities are often referred to as the citadel of learning and represent the apex institution for knowledge acquisition. Based on this perception, Ifidon (1998) holds that universities are established for four related purposes of teaching, learning, research and community/public service. The university library is indispensable in the actualization of all four, as none of them can effectively take place in the absence of a functional library. That is, the university library supports the teaching, learning

and research needs of the parent institution they serve. The responsibility of academic libraries is to ensure that its information resources and services are optimally put to use by its users, hence the need for library user education program which is also in line with the National University Commission which encourage university libraries in other to equip students with the effective use of library materials (NUC, 2007).

Ajibero (1998) opined that the exponential growth of literature in diverse areas of human

endeavors, new methods of bibliographic control, the introduction and rapid wide application of Information and Communication Technology (ICT), the increasing emphasis on individual study and the widespread adoption of the Library of Congress Classification Scheme requires the users of libraries especially materials which could be of interest and use to them. As a result of the era of information explosion in which we are in, information is expanding at a very fast rate and new information resources are being introduced into the library (Aina, 2004). With the advent of information and communication technology (ICT), which has permeated all the activities of libraries, it is important to explain the working of a library to a new patron in detail. The ultimate objective of any library is to enable clientele exploit its resources to the fullest.

User education is variously referred to in the library profession as "Library instruction", "Library orientation" and "use of library instruction", etc. in whatever sense these are used, the ultimate goal is educating the library user for increased, effective and efficient use of the total library resources and services.

Fjallbrant (1990), defines user education as: "the teaching of those skills that will enable students to locate and use materials effectively and feel confident in using the library." Also, its aim is to acquaint users with the use of materials in the libraries. Similarly, Fleming (1990) defined user education as "various programs of instruction, education and exploration provided by academic libraries to users to enable them to make effective, efficient and independent use of information sources and services to which these libraries provide access."

Bello (2003) defined library user education as: "A device by the librarians to educate users on how to use the resources available in the library in a result oriented ways." Thus it is concerned with information retrieval, since the objectives of the user education in academic library according to Osagie (2003) are as follows:

- To enable users to know how to use the library catalogue independently in any

academic libraries, have a systematic rather than haphazard approach to their use.

These factors confuse and bewilder many students to the point where they avoid the library totally unaware of the avalanche of

library with particular reference to the author, title and subject catalogues.

- To enable users to understand the classification schemes in any library so as to be able to locate materials with little or no problem.
- To be able to see library catalogues as indexes to the entire collection and use them as such.
- To enable the users to see the library as a repository of knowledge that determines the success of the students since it is not possible for an individual to have the collection of a whole library.

Students in Nigeria tertiary institutions are introduced to the use of library in one form or the other, in order that they might know what to consult in their quest for information. Today, most students in tertiary institutions find it difficult to explore the world of information sources in the library thus, leading to poor appreciation of the library and its resources, which contributes to their inability to undergo meaningful researches or at best become poor library users. It is believed that a concerted effort to know and understand library more will eventually enable the individual to develop his/herself to the fullest potentials. This becomes very important as it will enable them to contribute effectively and positively to the development of the society at large.

1.2 Statement of the Problem

The importance of getting students equipped with knowledge and skills on how to use the library and information resources cannot be overemphasized. University libraries provide numerous information resources and services both print and electronic which are expected to be effectively utilized by students for their educational pursuit.

However, based on the avalanche of information resources and services in academic libraries, preliminary investigation has shown that most university students are unable to use information resources efficiently and effectively perhaps due to lack of proper user education, defaulting in locating materials easily on the shelves, poor use of library tools, problems encountered in retrieving required materials in the library.

With the explosion of information on a daily basis, the users need sufficient knowledge and skills to navigate and select relevant information. Library user education programs are necessary for all users especially the freshers, because it involves instruction on how to access and use information resources available in the library. This study seeks to investigate the impact of library user education on the utilization of library resources by undergraduate students in University of Abuja

Objectives of the study.

1. To find out how user education is conducted in University of Abuja
2. To identify the causes of poor use of the library tools by users
3. To ascertain the effectiveness of User Education in the library
4. To identify the impact of user education programs in University of Abuja

Research Questions

1. What is the impact of user education program on undergraduate student's utilization of library resources in University of Abuja?
2. What are the methods employed in teaching undergraduate students user education program in University of Abuja?
3. What are the problems that hinder effective library user education program to undergraduate students in University of Abuja?
4. What are the strategies that can be adopted to enhance effective user

education to undergraduate students in University of Abuja?

Literature Review

Considering the impact of user education on users, Vasanthi (2001) stated that, the aim of user education is to widen the use of the varying library resources which will enable lecturers to improve their teaching and research while the students learn more in order to achieve better results in their work.

Fjallbrant (1984), defines user education as: "the teaching of those skills that will enable students to locate and use materials effectively and feel confident in using the library." Also, its aim is to acquaint users with the use of materials in the libraries. Similarly, Fleming (1990) defined user education as "various programs of instruction, education and exploration provided by academic libraries to users to enable them to make effective, efficient and independent use of information sources and services to which these libraries provide access."

In a similar vein, Olaniyan (2007) state that user education acquaints students with the most useful reference works, books, periodicals and their field of study. It impacts on them on how to use the card catalogue, indexes, teaches them the proper form and rules for making a scientific bibliography, teaches them how to prepare a scientific or technical report.

Discussing on various methods of imparting or teaching the skills on the use of library, Maduako (2013) explained that, methods of teaching user education consist of all types of activities designed to teach user about library facilities, services, organizations, resources and search strategies in order to equip them with basic skills for optimal, effective, efficient and independent use of information resources and services.

Nna-Etuk (2003) traces the problems of user education in Nigeria to the unavailability of real library services at all levels of education especially earlier stages. This lack of solid base according to him is evident at various schools whose literature indicates the absence of libraries, reading materials and qualified staff to

provide library services. Similarly, Joseph (2005) identifies the following problems of user education: overdependence on one day orientation program, lack of collective curriculum for user education program in Nigeria Universities; use of unqualified personnel to teach the course.

Akimbola (2007) on the significance of user education recommends that the user education program 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 aspects taught effectively.

Akimbola (2007) in proffering solutions to the problems of user education recommended the time schedule for the teaching of the course should be reviewed to when most of the students must have arrived the campus irrespective of some unforeseen circumstance, practical lectures should also be organized at the university library to further enhance the

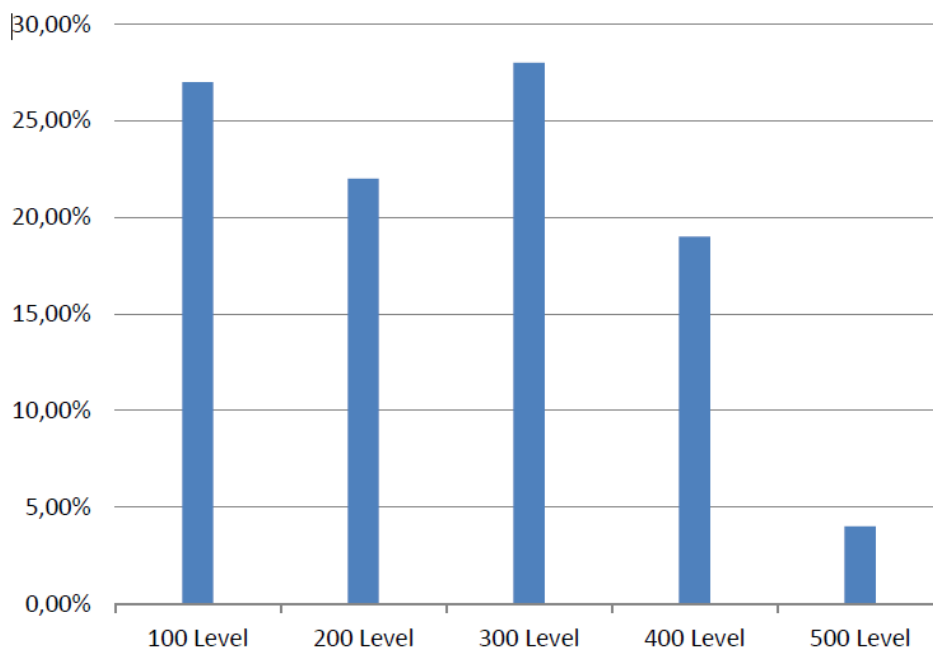
students' use of catalogue and other library resources. He further states that all the library rules and regulations should be documented and a copy of such issued to all the students to further acquaint them with some of the rules that were not mentioned during the use of library lectures.

Methodology

This study is a descriptive survey. The population is undergraduate students of University of Abuja, which has 25,282 undergraduate students in 7 Faculties. About 379 undergraduate students were selected using the Krejcie and Morgan formula. Information was gathered using a questionnaire of 36 open-ended questions. The collected data were analyzed using descriptive statistics, frequency, percentage and mean.

About 27% of the students were 100 level, 22% were 200 level, 28% were 300 level, 19% were 400 level and 4% 500 level undergraduate students in various faculties.

Figure 1. Frequency distribution of undergraduate students according to level of education



Research Question 1: What is the impact of user education program on undergraduate students' utilization of library resources in University of Abuja?

Table 2: Impact of user education program on undergraduate student's utilization of library resources

S/N	Impact of user Education	SA	A	UD	D	SD	Mean
1.	I acquire skills for independent learning	279 (82%)	45 (13%)	6 (2%)	-	11 (3%)	4.71
2.	It enhance my capacity to carry our research	198 (58%)	114 (33%)	-	12 (4%)	17 (5%)	4.36
3.	It has enlightened me on the various structures of literature in my field and related filed or areas	126 (37%)	200 (59%)	4 (1%)	11 (3%)	-	4.29
4.	It has enhanced my use of index as a retrieved tool	168 (49%)	114 (33%)	-	57 (17%)	2 (1%)	4.14
5.	It made me aware of the value of the library in academic pursuit	69 (20%)	228 (67%)	-	44 (13%)	-	3.94
6.	I acquire skills to cite references and documents for my research work	87 (26%)	171 (50%)	-	83 (24%)	-	3.77
7.	It exposed me to the bibliographic database of the library	126 (37%)	105 (31%)	2 (1%)	39 (11%)	69 (20%)	3.53
8.	It has greatly improved my ability to retrieve needed information from the library	66 (19%)	172 (50%)	2 (1%)	57 (17%)	44 (13%)	3.45
9.	It made me aware of the scope of library resources	114 (33%)	85 (25%)	-	45 (13%)	99 (29%)	3.22
10.	I can use the catalogue effectively to retrieve information	103 (30%)	48 (14%)	-	125 (37%)	65 (19%)	3.00
11.	It has increased my motivation to use the library	79 (23%)	34 (10%)	29 (9%)	165 (48%)	34 (10%)	2.88
12.	It develops my reading culture	57 (17%)	51 (15%)	5 (2%)	114 (33%)	114 (33%)	2.48
13.	It inculcate in me the ability to think critically	62 (18%)	46 (13%)	6 (2%)	125 (37%)	102 (30%)	2.39

The analysis on Table 2 reflects the respondents' opinion on the impact of user education on their use of the library. All the items on the table recorded a high response score with mean of >2.5. This indicates that the course user education has positively impacted the students. The implication of this finding is

that undergraduate students in University of Abuja can effectively and efficiently use their library resources.

Research Question 2: What are the methods employed in teaching undergraduate students user education program in University of Abuja?

Table 3: Methods employed in teaching undergraduate students user education program in University of Abuja.

S/N	Methods Employed	SA	A	UD	D	SD	Mean
1.	Lecture	171 (50%)	125 (37%)	2 (1%)	38 (11%)	5 (1%)	4.60
2.	Library orientation	228 (67%)	57 (17%)	2 (1%)	41 (12%)	15 (4%)	4.32
3.	Independent assignments	160 (47%)	125 (37%)	-	43 (13%)	13 (4%)	4.10
4.	Demonstration method	114 (33%)	162 (48%)	2 (1%)	12 (4%)	51 (15%)	3.81
5.	Practical exercise	159 (47%)	67 (20%)	4 (1%)	69 (20%)	42 (12%)	3.68
6.	Library tour	12 (4%)	40 (12%)	5 (1%)	159 (47%)	125 (37%)	1.99

Table 3 above shows that high mean are recorded with lecture method or teaching and less with other items. This indicates that the students are taught mainly through the lecture method and library orientation and

independent assignments with mean score of 4.60, 4.32 and 4.1 respectively.

Research Question 3: What are the problems that hinder effective library user education program to undergraduate students in University of Abuja?

Table 4: Problems that hinder effective library user education program to undergraduate students in University of Abuja

S/N	Problems	SA	A	UD	D	SD	Mean
1.	Over population	298 (87%)	31 (9%)	-	12 (4%)	-	4.80
2.	Lack of instructional materials	293 (86%)	38 (11%)	-	8 (2%)	2 (1%)	4.79
3.	Inadequate qualified staff	125 (37%)	103 (30%)	4 (1%)	41 (12%)	68 (20%)	4.79
4.	Students negative attitude to the program	64 (19%)	271 (79%)	-	6 (2%)	-	4.75
5.	Limited time allocation	280 (82%)	46 (13%)	-	12 (4%)	3 (1%)	4.72
6.	Unconducive environment	273 (80%)	50 (15%)	3 (1%)	7 (2%)	8 (2%)	4.71
7.	Inadequate learning facilities	267 (78%)	57 (17%)	3 (1%)	6 (2%)	8 (3%)	4.67
8.	Inadequate accommodation/space	277 (81%)	36 (11%)	2 (1%)	19 (6%)	7 (2%)	4.63
9.	Poor attendance by students	273 (80%)	35 (10%)	2 (1%)	12 (4%)	19 (6%)	4.56
10.	Unsuitable lecture periods	250 (73%)	65 (19%)	-	6 (3%)	17 (5%)	4.51
11.	Few staff teaching the program	231 (68%)	62 (18%)	-	31 (9%)	17 (5%)	4.14
12.	Attitude of staff to the course	48 (14%)	230 (67%)	-	57 (17%)	6 (2%)	3.75
13.	Poor monitoring of staff	78 (23%)	35 (10%)	35 (10%)	40 (12%)	153 (45%)	2.55

Table 4 shows respondents opinion on the problems hindering effective user education to undergraduate students in University of Abuja.

Almost all the items in table 6 recorded a high mean, over population (mean=4.80), lack of instructional materials (mean=4.79), inadequate and qualified staff (mean=4.79) among others. The result of the analysis reveals that all the

items on table 6 are problems hindering effective library user education program to undergraduate students in University of Abuja.

Research Question 4: What are the strategies that can be adopted to enhance effective user education to undergraduate students in University of Abuja?

Table 5: Strategies that can be adopted to enhance effective user education to undergraduate students in University of Abuja

S/N	Strategies	SA	A	UD	D	SD	Mean
1.	Provision of adequate staff	311 (91%)	18 (5%)	-	12 (4%)	-	4.88
2.	Proper ventilation and illumination of venue	301 (88%)	18 (5%)	-	10 (3%)	12 (4%)	4.78
3.	Regular monitoring and control of user education procedures	307 (90%)	6 (2%)	-	13 (4%)	15 (4%)	4.69
4.	Adjustment of sure education time to suit students	296 (87%)	18 (5%)	4 (1%)	6 (2%)	17 (5%)	4.67
5.	Provision of handbill/print outs during user education session	285 (84%)	31 (9%)	-	14 (4%)	11 (3%)	4.66
6.	Provision of computers	291 (85%)	16 (5%)	-	25 (7%)	10 (3%)	4.63
7.	Payment of enhance honorarium to facilitators	283 (83%)	30 (9%)	-	13 (4%)	15 (4%)	4.62
8.	Expansion of user education programmes	279 (81%)	23 (7%)	3 (1%)	18 (5%)	18 (5%)	4.55
9.	Provision of public address system	258 (76%)	38 (11%)	-	31 (9%)	14 (4%)	4.45
10.	Workshops/seminars on capacity building of staff	114 (33%)	81 (24%)	20 (6%)	86 (25%)	40 (12%)	3.42
11.	Increase time should be allocated to the teaching of user education	217 (64%)	86 (25%)	4 (1%)	28 (8%)	6 (2%)	4.41
12.	Positive attitude of students	216 (63%)	86 (25%)	4 (1%)	29 (9%)	6 (2%)	4.40
13.	Training and retraining of staff	220 (65%)	80 (23%)	-	27 (8%)	13 (4%)	4.36
14.	Provision of enough instructional materials	201 (59%)	92 (27%)	-	30 (9%)	18 (5%)	4.26
15.	Provision of adequate staff/facilitators	109 (32%)	86 (25%)	3 (1%)	92 (27%)	51 (15%)	3.32
16.	Provision attitude of staff to the program	86 (25%)	81 (24%)	4 (1%)	113 (33%)	57 (17%)	3.08

The analysis in table 5 above shows that almost all the respondents representing mean > 3.08 and above indicates that the items above will help overcome problems that hinder effective library user education to undergraduate students in University of Abuja.

Discussion of Findings

From the data presentation, analysis and interpretation, the findings of the study could be summarized thus:

The students understand the concept of user education. This implies that they know what they stand to gain from the course. This understanding will help them to be serious with the program and attend lectures regularly.

The impact of user education on undergraduate student’s utilization of library resources, the

students indicated that it greatly improved their ability to retrieve needed information; they can use the catalogue effectively to retrieve information, made them aware of the scope of the library among others. This is in line with Vasanthi (2001) who states that the aim of user education is to widen the use of the varying library resources which will enable students to learn more in order to achieve better results in their work and research.

The library user education therefore has a positive impact on the quality of student’s education as there is a significant relationship between library user education and students performance. That is, effective and efficient use of the library and its resources is the bedrock of academic excellence.

On the methods employed in teaching the undergraduate students user education; lecture method was indicated as mostly used followed by library orientation, independent assignment, demonstration method, practical exercises and library tour.

The study also finds that the problems that hinder effective library user education relates to undergraduate students includes; over population, lack of instructional materials, poor monitoring of staff, inadequate qualified staff, limited time allocation, inadequate accommodation and space among others.

The strategies that can be adopted to enhance effective user education to undergraduate students as indicated in the findings includes; provision of adequate staff, proper ventilation and illumination of venue, regular monitoring and control of user education procedures, adjustment of user education time to suit students, positive attitude of staff to the program among others.

Conclusion

The library has been described as the life wire and the pivot of academic activities within the university system. Its role in teaching and learning process cannot be overstressed. For optimum utilization of the library and its resources, user education program was introduced. The major objective is to inculcate user basic knowledge and skills to make effective use of the library resources. This study dwelt on the impact of user education on the utilization of library resources by undergraduate students in University of Abuja. The study found that:

1. User education program has positively updated the undergraduate students' use of the library as well as their academic performance.
2. The methods adopted in teaching of the programs includes, library tour, lecture method, demonstration method and library orientation.
3. The problems that militate against effective user education includes; over population, lack of instructional materials, inadequate and unqualified staff, limited time allocation to the

program, unconducive library environment, inadequate space among others.

4. To remedy these problems, the following recommendations are proffered; adequate and qualified librarians should be employed to teach user education program, this will help the problem of over population.

When there is enough and qualified instructors to handle the course, the number of students assigned to a particular lecturer will reduce. This will create room for adequate monitoring of students as well as guarantee quality teaching and learning of the course. The time allocated to the teaching of the course should be relevant.

More time should be allocated to the course and the scheduling should be made to connect to students. Also, conducive and enabling environment should be made available for the teaching of the program. This calls for provision of more and larger spaces to accommodate the students. The facilities and the environment of the classroom should be made conducive for learning. Instructional materials such as public address system and projectors should be made available. This will help to make the course interesting and stimulate interest towards the course.

Recommendations

Based on the findings of this study, the following recommendations are made:

1. There should be a detailed course outline for user education. This is against the present situation of sketchy mention of use of library in NUC general studies scheme. This can be done by developing a well-articulated scheme of work based on National University Commission (NUC), Minimum Academic Structure (MAS). The scheme should include lectures and practical sessions in libraries to complement the theoretical aspect of it.
2. University authorities should provide venues that are conducive for teaching user education. The venues should have enough seats, tables, adequate

ventilation, illumination and functional public address system.

3. User education programs should no longer dwell largely on traditional library practices but should include lectures in the area of information literacy and information technology. This will further expose undergraduate students on how to use computerized libraries and internet facilities which are very vital in everyday living today

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