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# Assessment of Library Registration between Fresh and Returning Undergraduate Students of the Federal University of Agriculture, Abeokuta, Nigeria

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Assessment of Library Registration between Fresh and Returning Undergraduate Students of  
the Federal University of Agriculture, Abeokuta, Nigeria

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## **Abstract**

The paper examines the rate at which students register with the library by comparing the fresh and the returning undergraduate students in the Federal University of Agriculture, Abeokuta Nigeria. Two hundred and fifty (250) copies of questionnaire were randomly distributed among students in late August, 2015 while two hundred and twenty four (224) copies were returned. Also used as databases for the study are the library statistics of registered students and the University's student enrolment list for a period of five years starting from 2009/2010 to 2013/2014 academic sessions. The study revealed that fresh undergraduate students registered more than the returning undergraduate students. Those who registered believed that they did so, so that they could be able to borrow books and read during examination periods. Reasons given for not registering were ownership of personal books, cumbersome registration procedures and registration time clashing with lecture time among others. Out of the nine colleges that were covered by this study, the College of Management Science (COMAS) had the largest percentage of registered students in the library while the College of Plant Science (COPLANT) had the least number of registered students. Recommendations were also made on how to improve library registration so that students can register more with the library in order to use library materials that have been carefully selected for them.

## **Keywords**

Assessment, library, registration, fresh students, returning students, university, Nigeria

## **Introduction**

University libraries have always been described as the heartbeat of their universities and this is because they serve as hub for all academic activities in the university. Popoola and Akande (2009) opined that the library is a component part of the history of civilization and it has a responsibility to its immediate environment, hence, the basic philosophy of the university library is based on the concept of service and the provision of relevant information materials for users (Asiru, 2003). These relevant materials include books, journals, documents, e-resources and audio-visual materials. Libraries are often referred to as growing organism; this growth can only be seen in terms of materials, staff and users. The population of users therefore, must be taken into consideration so that the library will be guided while making decision about collection development for scholarship, provision of other learning resources and facilities such as furniture and other equipment.

Users' registration is thus, the only way to determine the users' population in real time. User registration therefore, is the process of establishing a data bank of information about library users. This information is often very useful when a user wants to make use of library materials outside the library or requesting for inter-library services. Users' registration in university libraries is restricted to the groups of people for whom the libraries were established, however, it can be extended to other external users who may want to use the library for a specific period of time.

## **Background Information**

The Federal University of Agriculture, Abeokuta is one of the three specialised universities of agriculture in Nigeria. The University was established in 1988 and started with six colleges. Presently, there are ten colleges in the University and these are, College of Animal Science and Livestock Production (COLANIM), College of Engineering (COLENG) College of

Environmental Resources Management (COLERM) College of Plant Science and Crop Production (COLPLANT) and College of Veterinary Medicine (COLVET). College of Agricultural Management and Rural Development (COLAMRUCS), College of Food Science and Human Ecology (COLFHEC), College of Management Science (COLMAS), College of Biological Sciences (COLBIOS) and College of Physical Science (COLPHYS). The last two colleges used to be known as College of Natural Science (COLNAS) until September 2014 when it was split into two. The University Library was named after the pioneer Vice-Chancellor of the University in person of Professor Nimbe Adedipe.

### **Users' Registration at Nimbe Adedipe Library, Federal University of Agriculture, Abeokuta.**

The potential users of 'Nimbe Adedipe Library are required to register at the library's circulation desk before being permitted to use the library. Fresh students are to produce admission letters and evidence of payment of school fees while the returning students are to produce their identification card including receipt of payment of school fees to the circulation staff before their registration is processed. The library identity cards are later issued free of charge to registered students. Afterwards the library identity card must be presented to the library porters each time a student decides to use the library or borrow out some books or other materials.

This card is not transferable and must be presented on demand by any library staff. It is mandatory for the returning students to renew their library identity card every year until they graduate from the university. On the other hand, graduating students must submit their library identity card during their final clearance in the university. This is to make sure that there is no book or any other library material in their possession. Failure to do this may result in the student not being given his/her certificate.

## **Statement of the Problem**

It has been observed over the years that with the increase in the number of colleges, coupled with the increasing population of students, the number of undergraduate students who registered with the library was very low compared to the number of students enrolled in the University; as reflected in the University students' enrolment list. This therefore, calls for concern and needed to be examined because a library that is not use cannot justify its existence and the prerequisite of using the library is to register with the library. It is against this background that the researchers set out to assess the library registration among the undergraduate students.

## **Objectives of the Study**

The primary objectives of this study are to:

- a) examine why students register or not register with the library
- b) find out the problems militating against students' registration with the library
- c) determine the difference in the rate of library registration between fresh and returning students; and
- d) find out which college has the highest percentage of registered students in the library

## **Literature Review**

The place of libraries in the university community as an indispensable part of the system have been emphasised by scholars. Oyedun and Nwalo (2011) noted that undergraduate students need to use the libraries of their universities more as this would, in turn, assist the students to gain mastery of their subjects of specialization, and enable the universities to achieve their core function of promoting learning and knowledge. Onwubiko ( 2005), Mbashir and Adeoti (2008), Nkosi, Leach and Hoskin (2011) and Adegun et al, (2015) have all described the

library as the power house of a university. It is often said that a university is as good as its library. University libraries therefore, do invest heavily in acquiring resources to meet the intellectual needs of their users and communities.

However, acquiring resources is only one aspect of the game while utilization is another thing entirely. In fact the use of library resources is one of the deepest concerns of a library because it is the users that make a library to be active. Corroborating this, Abiolu (2010) confirmed that it is the use to which the library is put that infuses life into its resources and services. Consequently, Edem, Ani, and Ocheibi (2009) posited that libraries should ensure that students have effective and efficient access to their resources, but the question is how can students assess the library resources without identifying with the library? This can only be done through registering with their library. Substantiating this fact, Nwezeh (2010) claimed that books have become so expensive that they are beyond the reach of most Nigerian students, therefore, students have to solely depend on what library can offer them and the opportunity to use these library materials can only be enjoyed if students are duly registered with their libraries.

A lot of studies have been done on the utilisation of library and its' resources whereas few studies only sometimes mentioned the aspect of library registration in passing. Obadare (2014) for instance, examined the present sources of income in two academic libraries and found out that registration of users can serve as other sources of income which could fetched the libraries a lot of money to keep them afloat. Adebowale (2013) on the other hand considered the activities that make up circulation of library materials and discussed the processes and procedures for the registration of library clientele and other circulation activities. These studies therefore, only saw the library registration as a means to an end Itedjere (2005) also examined registration of users as a revenue generating source and discovered that despite the fact that not all students registered to use the library or pay the

stipulated registration fee, the registration mechanism still help the library to generate some income. A more recent study by Vera and Edore (2015) evaluated the adoption of KOHA Integrated Library System for library online registration at the University of Jos and find out that KOHA was selected to provide a solution to challenges often faced by the staff involved in the registration processes. None of these studies actually examine the challenges faced by students in registering with their university libraries.

However, an earlier study by Doek (1995) who studied membership registration procedures in four public libraries in Netherlands outline the challenges often facing the students in library registration. The study revealed that staff often failed to explain fully all library procedures to students and this often affect students' registration with the library. Since students' registration is fundamental to the use of library in most university settings, it is important to ensure that a larger percentage of students register because this will grant them access to the resources that have been carefully selected for them. This will in turn make them better students who would be able to stand out academically.

### **Methodology**

A descriptive survey method was used for this study. The survey was carried out during the lectures free period towards the end of the first semester of 2014/2015 academic session in August 2015. A self-designed questionnaire was used to obtain data for the study. Observation was also made on the University records of students' enrolment list and library statistical record to complement the data. 250 copies of the questionnaire were randomly distributed at the students' centre on campus out of which 224 copies were duly completed and used for the study. The response rate was 89.6% and was distributed as thus; 105 (42%) returning students and 119 (47.6%) fresh undergraduate students.

### **Findings**

The respondents were asked to give reasons for registering with the library; their responses were presented in Table 1



**Table I: Reasons Why Students Registered with the Library N =178**

<b>Reasons</b>	<b>Frequency</b>	<b>Percentage%</b>
To borrow books	64	35.95
To read for examination and work on assignment	75	42.13
Not to have problem with clearance	27	15.17
Because it is compulsory	12	6.74
	-----	-----
	<u>178</u>	<u>100</u>

The result of the study as represented in table 1 clearly shows that majority of the respondents 42.13% registered with the library so that they can make use of the library to read for examination and work on their assignments. 35.95% registered so that they could enjoy loan service and 15.17% (who are mainly returning students) registered so that they will not have problem with their library clearance at the end of their programs. 6.74% registered because they felt it is compulsory. This shows a similarity with Adelani, (1998) study on the use of library among the sandwich students in a college of education where majority of them saw the library as an extension of their classrooms where they can read and work on their assignments as opposed to the role of the library as the power house for self-discovery and self-development.

The respondents were also asked to give reasons why they did not register with the library and these were presented in Table II

**Table II**

**Reasons Why Students did not Register with the Library. N=46**

<b>Reasons</b>	<b>Frequency</b>	<b>Percentage%</b>
I have personal books	21	45.65
Library is too noisy	2	4.35
Registration procedures are too cumbersome	14	30.43
It is not compulsory	9	19.56
	-----	-----
	<u>46</u>	<u>100</u>

According to data presented in table II, 45.65%, of the respondents did not register with the library because they felt they have personal text books. This group of students assumed that their lecture notes and personal textbooks were enough for them therefore; they felt it is not necessary for them to register with the library. This reflected the nonchalant attitude of some students who usually rely absolutely on their lecturers' notes and knowledge. 30.43% of the respondents indicated that the registration procedures were too cumbersome; hence, they were afraid of going through it, while 19.56% did not see registering with the library as compulsory. 4.35% of the respondents revealed that they did not register with the library because the library was too noisy for them. Looking at this result, it is necessary for the library to have a clear policy on students' registration and this should be communicated to students during the students' orientation. The registration procedure also needed to be reviewed and the process should be made easier for students to accomplish.

Furthermore, the respondents were asked to mention the challenges they encounter during library registration their replies were shown in table III

**Table III: Challenges Confronting Students Registration. N=224**

<b>Problems</b>	<b>Frequency</b>	<b>Percentage%</b>
Registration time is too short	68	30.4
Registration time clashes with lecture time	84	37.5
Registration procedures are too many	16	7.2
Delay in getting the library pass	9	4.0
Lack of awareness on library registration	47	20.9
	----- 224 -----	----- 100 -----

The result in table III revealed that 37.5% of the respondents stated that the library registration time clashes with their lecture time and this did not give them opportunity of registering with the library. 30.4% of the respondents indicated that the registration time was too short, while 20.9% of the respondents showed that they were not aware that library

registration was compulsory for students. On the issue of shortage of time probably the students did not know that library registration is open to students throughout the session. 7.2% of the respondents indicated that registration procedures are too many while 4.0% of the respondents stated that the delay in getting their laminated library pass was a challenge to them. In order to overcome these challenges just like Minkel (2001) suggested in his study, the library should consider automating students' registration so that users can register online at their own convenience. This can even make the work of circulation staff less cumbersome by letting the computer do the time-consuming work of registration and record keeping of users.

Another instrument used in this study was observation, the result of this was presented in table IV and V

**Table IV: Rate of Fresh Undergraduate Students' Registration with the Library**

Colleges	2009/2010			2010/2011			2011/2012			2012/2013			2013/2014			OP
	NE	NRL	%	NE	NRL	%	NE	NRL	%	NE	NRL	%	NE	NRL	%	
COLAMRUD	176	125	71	278	219	78.8	261	223	85.4	286	261	91.3	242	222	91.7	84.5
COLPHEC	229	213	93.0	323	307	95.0	291	195	67.0	274	216	78.8	267	230	86.1	84
COLANIM	426	366	86	450	296	65.8	499	355	71.1	492	395	80.3	375	296	78.9	76.2
COLNAS	646	370	57.3	642	477	74.3	653	554	85	659	595	90.3	598	486	81.3	77.6
COLPLANT	455	335	73.6	407	386	95	454	320	70.5	449	326	73	346	277	80.1	77.9
COLENG	119	106	89.1	125	102	81.6	203	196	97	181	177	97.8	147	143	97.3	93.4
COLMAS	-	-	-	-	-	-	506	493	97.4	619	593	95.8	508	489	96.3	96.4
COLERM	328	153	46.6	296	229	77.4	363	225	61.9	338	238	70.4	328	213	64.9	64
COLVET	30	21	70	33	26	78.8	38	30	78.9	42	37	88.1	33	30	90.9	81.8
Total	2409	1689	70.1	2547	2042	80.2	3268	2591	79.3	3340	2838	84.9	2844	2386	83.9	80.1

Source: Federal University of Agriculture, Abeokuta, Student Enrolment List and Library Registration Statistics

**Note:** NE means number of students enrolled in the college per session.

**NRL** means number of students who registered with the library for the session.

**OP** means overall percentage of students that registered from each college for five year period.

The data from the above table showed that the rate at which fresh undergraduate students register with the library was very high. This may be due to the excitement of being part of the university system and therefore, they make sure that they do all the necessary things required of them and these include registering with the library. The data also revealed that the College of Management Sciences had the highest percentage of fresh undergraduate students with 96.4% registered students within the period of five years covered by this study. The College of Engineering came second with 94.3% of registered students while the least percentage of registered students came from the College of Environmental Science with 64% of registered students. However, the overall percentage of fresh undergraduate students who registered with the library for the period covered by this study was 80.1% and this is really encouraging.

**Table V: Rate of Registration of Returning Undergraduate Students 2009- 2014**

COLLEGES	2009/2010			2010/2011			2011/2012			2012/2013			2013/2014			PPA
	NE	NRL	%	NE	NRL	%	NE	NRL	%	NE	NRL	%	NE	NRL	%	
COLAMRUD	643	292	45.4	680	176	25.9	816	185	22.7	958	380	39.7	1074	351	32.7	33.2
COLFHEC	694	284	40.9	744	219	29.4	938	239	25.5	1059	569	53.7	1030	600	58.3	42.8
COLANIM	1209	360	29.8	377	249	66	1648	250	15.2	1827	659	36.1	1970	644	32.7	32.6
COLENG	345	124	35.9	411	212	51.6	464	225	48.5	575	316	54.9	703	256	36.4	45.4
COLERM	838	262	31.3	960	354	36.9	1043	359	34.4	1271	593	46.7	1374	627	45.6	40.1
COLNAS	1827	841	46.0	2008	750	37.4	2191	780	35.6	2053	956	46.6	2101	1147	54.6	43.9
COLPLANT	1246	384	30.8	1387	279	20.1	1579	383	17.6	1667	564	35.7	1835	655	35.7	29.4
COLVET	131	41	31.3	128	50	39.1	132	56	42.4	149	65	43.6	171	63	36.8	36.7
COLMAS	-	-		-	-	-	506	235	46.4	543	257	47.3	1207	554	45.9	46.3
TOTAL	6933	2588	37.3	6695	2289	34.2	9317	2712	29.1	10102	4359	43.1	11465	4897	42.7	37.8

Unlike the fresh undergraduate students Table V revealed that the rate at which returning undergraduate students register with the library was very low. This was not encouraging at all because the overall percentage of those who registered with the library for the period under consideration was below average which is 37.8%. However, the College of Management

Studies still had the highest percentage of students who registered with the library with 46.3%, followed by the College of Engineering with 45.4% of registered students, while the least percentage of registered students was from the College of Plant Science with 29.4%.

The result was not encouraging at all because one would have expected that the returning students should have been mature enough to appreciate the importance of the library and also the consequence of not registering with university library. Furthermore it is expected that lecturers should be able to lead their students back to the library through class assignments that require the use of library and if students do not register with the library how can they use it? It is also amazing that the highest percentage of registered students came from among the least populated colleges in the University knowing that the College of Management Studies was relatively new being established in 2011 and the College of Engineering Sciences usually do have fewer students.

### **Discussion**

The study revealed that fresh undergraduate students registered more with the library than the returning undergraduate students. In fact there is a wide gap between the fresh and returning undergraduate students' registration with the University library. This is really worrisome because according to Roseroka (1999) cited in Ijirigho (2009) the library should be seen as an intellectual common where many forms of information could be accessed, utilised and manipulated but the reversed is the case, as the majority of the respondents only see the library as a place where they can just read their notes and do assignments. Fernandez-Villavicencio (2010) pointed out that students should be made to realise that acquiring knowledge and information has a permanent strategic value and not just temporary and transitory value for passing examination. Therefore, if students do not register with the library how would they use the information resources that have been acquired and carefully

developed for them? This implies that they will be missing out vital information that could have made them better students.

On the issue of students who felt they had enough books to carry them through their study, the library still has a lot to do to sensitise them and make them understand that the University library exists in order to service their information needs. They must be made to realise that a well-stocked and organised library is more useful than the internet because materials on the internet are varied and unorganised while a library acquires scholarly material based on their users' need. These materials usually do cause the library some fortune to acquire and no student could be so rich to the extent that he/she will be able to acquire all his/her books and other information resources.

The University library will also need to work with the lecturers so that they would know how to lead their students back to the library by giving them research oriented assignments. In supporting this, Onifade (2012) postulated that excellent as the lecturer/student relationship may be, it has failed if the lecturer has not taught his/her students to depend on themselves and this can only be done through the use of the library.

Although the percentage of respondents that indicated noise as their deterrent was minimal, nevertheless, it is also important for the library to find a way of making the atmosphere more conducive for study. Crumpton (2007) noted that noise in the library can cause a huge distraction for those who see the library as their sanctuary for quiet study and review of resources. It is therefore, necessary that the level of noise in the library should be controlled and users should be educated as to why they needed to maintain silence and respect the rights of others

The era of technology has brought a lot of change to how libraries operate these days. It is thus, expected that our users should be able to get fast and quality services from the library, as a result, the library registration procedure should be reviewed and automated so that the

users would be able to register anywhere without necessarily getting to the library through the networking of a computer. If the University Library can automate students' registration there will be no excuse for students not being registered with the library since this will be done online and the issue of clashes of time will be removed permanently.

### **Conclusion**

Despite the fact that the University Library is making all effort to satisfy the needs of its users, the patronage is still very low compared to the number of students' enrolment in the University. The attitude of returning undergraduate students to library registration is not encouraging because one would have expected that they should have known the importance of library as a knowledge hub than just a reading room. One expects that as they progress in their studies their usage of the library should improve and higher percentage of registered students should have come from them. However, the reverse is the case, hence, a lot of awareness programmes need to be done by the library to attract students back to the library.

### **Recommendation**

In view of the above, the following recommendations are made to improve the rate of students' registration with library

1. The library should create more awareness for the students to let them know the importance of the library to their academic pursuit
2. The library should work with the colleges to lead students back to the library through research oriented assignments. Also through collaboration with the lecturers, the librarians should compile reading lists for each College
3. Library stock should be evaluated to see if it is serving its users and community. In addition to this the library environment should be made inviting and the level of noise should be controlled to make the library conducive for studying.

4. The library registration procedure should be review with the intention of making it electronic so that it will be very easy for students to register without necessarily coming to the library.

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