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Impacts of User Education on Users' Awareness, Accessibility and Use of Information Resources and Services in Federal Polytechnic Ede Library, Osun State, Nigeria

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Abstract

This study investigated the impacts of user education on users' awareness, accessibility and use of information resources and services in Federal Polytechnic Ede Library. The study employed a survey research design. The population of this study consisted of all registered student users of the library totaling 6,000; 10% of the entire population amounting 600 was used for the study. The random sampling technique was adopted. Structured questionnaire was used as instrument for data collection. Out of the 600 copies of questionnaire distributed, 517 (86.2%) were retrieved and found valid for analysis. Data collected were analyzed using mean and standard deviation. The findings of the study show that, user education programmes of the library do not have any significant impact on the users' awareness, accessibility and utilization of the collections and services in the library due to several challenges among which are; over dependence on one day orientation and lack of examinable library instruction. It was therefore recommended among others, that the Polytechnic Library Management should liaise with the Management of the Institution to ensure immediate commencement of "use of library" as a compulsory, credit-bearing and examinable course for all new students of the institution.

Keywords: User Education, Awareness, Accessibility Utilization Information Resources and Services, Federal Polytechnic Ede Library

Introduction

Tertiary education is almost impossible without the availability of library facilities and services. It is in recognition of this fact that supervisory agencies of higher education in Nigeria like the National Board for Technical Education (NBTE), Nigerian Universities Commission (NUC) and the National Commission for Colleges of Education (NCCE), as well as other professional accrediting bodies insist on the provision of functional libraries before any academic programme is approved to commence. This underscores the inseparable nature and value of libraries in higher education which justifies why the library is often described as the heartbeat and intellectual foundation upon which solid academic experience is built. Traditionally, the academic library undertakes such tasks as collection development, organization, storage, retrieval, preservation and dissemination of information resources to its diverse user communities who are usually engaged in the pursuit of the tripod mission of teaching and learning, research and community service.

The polytechnic sector in Nigeria was established to provide full-time or part-time courses of instruction and training to produce middle and high level manpower in technology, applied science, commerce and management; and in such other fields of applied learning relevant to the needs of the development of Nigeria (The Federal Polytechnics Act, 2019). Polytechnic libraries are an integral part of polytechnic system and play important roles in supporting the teaching, learning and research objectives of their parent institutions by acquiring and providing access to relevant information resources in various nature for the use of their patrons. However, beyond the provision of facilities, information resources and services, is all-important need to keep the library users aware and acquaint them with the processes and procedures for exploring the information materials and services of the library.

Indeed, availability, awareness, accessibility and utilizations are a sequence of information resources exploration that ought not to be broken if library services must be appreciated (Madu, 2019). As a result, libraries engage different user education programmes aimed at not only creating awareness, but also empowering their user communities with the competence to use their facilities and services. User education refers to the process of making library users learn how to make effective and efficient use of the library system through the acquaintance of skills in identification, location, search, retrieval and use of information resources. It encompasses all activities undertaken to help the library patrons become efficient users of library services and facilities.

These include library instruction, library orientation, bibliographic instruction and information literacy, among others. User education has the potential to transform library and information users from dependent learners into independent, self-directed, lifelong learners. According to Adeniran (2011), without information literacy which can be acquired through the user education, students are condemned to lack of information, dependence upon others for access to knowledge and information, and even to acute levels of information anxiety.

The library today is confronted with several challenges such as acute underfunding, stiff competitions from allied information industries, information resources explosion, among many others. However, the greatest of these challenges is a growing concern among libraries and librarians over low patronage of library services. Several reasons could be advanced for this rather disturbing development, but none of them can be totally divorced from the fact that libraries appear not to be blowing their own trumpets well in the ears of their patrons through aggressive user education programmes. It is against this background that this study examined the impact of user education on users' awareness, accessibility and use of information resources and services in Federal Polytechnic Ede Library.

Statement of the Problem

That academic libraries are the bedrock for academic excellence is an unquestionable fact. They are established to provide information resources, facilities and services to support and further the objectives of their parent institutions. Their resources and services are expected to be used by both the students, teaching and non-teaching staff of their parent bodies to meet their information needs which are mostly academic in nature. Effective and efficient use of library requires the users to possess some kind of skills without which the use of the library could become very frustrating and uninteresting.

Low patronage is a present challenge being reported across polytechnic libraries in Nigeria. Observations of the researchers seem to indicate that, most students and even staff of polytechnics lack adequate knowledge of the resources and services available in their libraries as well as the requisite skills to access and utilize them. This situation could be attributed to weak or inadequate user education programmes which is supposed to empower the user community with the relevant

knowledge of the library system. Several researches have attempted to study the implications of user education for academic libraries, however, there is still a paucity of empirical studies on its impacts on users' awareness, accessibility and use of information resources and services in polytechnic libraries, particularly in the Federal Polytechnic Ede Library. This study attempted to fill that gap.

Research Questions

The following questions guided the study:

1. What are the impacts of user education on users' awareness of the resources and services in Federal Polytechnic Ede Library?
2. What are the impacts of user education on users' accessibility of the resources and services in Federal Polytechnic Ede Library?
3. What are the impacts of user education on the use of library resources and services in Federal Polytechnic Ede Library?
4. What are the problems that hinder the effectiveness of user education programmes in Federal Polytechnic Ede Library?

Review of Related Literature.

The subject of library user education is one that cannot be exhausted easily given its central importance in the overall essence of library existence. Its importance cannot be over emphasized, because there cannot be a connection between the users and the resources cum services without proper education of the user community. This, perhaps explains the enormous researches that have been conducted by scholars from different countries at different times. Portman and Roush (2004) assessed the impacts of library instruction on the development of students' library skill in Hong Kong, Japan. The objective was to determine the influence of an hour of library training and orientation session on library use by college students. The study revealed that, there was a significant relationship between library instruction and students' continuance in the use of library. Hence, they believe that there was the need to go beyond the initial library orientation for fresh students by engaging them in a session of credit load course on use of library in order to sustain their interest in library use.

In Pakistan, Bhatti (2010) evaluated the user education programmes in the university libraries and reported that, user education is unpopular among students in universities in Pakistan because the programmes are designed without first articulating users' demands, their backgrounds and limitations, and it has affected the image of the library, library usage frequency, and library use instruction pattern. It was also reported that most librarians in the surveyed universities were not equipped with required knowledge and training to teach users effectively.

Moyane, Dube and Hoskins (2015) investigated the effectiveness of user education for post graduate students in the School of Management, Information Technology and Governance at the University of KwaZulu-Natal, South Africa, and reported that all the respondents recognized that user education programmes can enhance library use, which can in turn have a positive effect on their studies and academic performance. By their own admittance of the important of user education, it can be assumed that they realize the relationship between library use and academic success. The study also revealed the challenges of implementing user education programmes from the perspective of the instructors to include: students' lack of searching and retrieval skills; low attendance of user education programmes by students; students' lack of motivation; insufficient time allocated to training; timing of training interventions; marketing of programmes; lack of marketing resources including expertise; and insubstantial collaboration between relevant stakeholders (Moyane, Dube & Hoskins, 2015).

In Nigeria, there is a plethora of empirical studies on library user education. A survey the importance of user education in the utilization of College of Education libraries in Anambra State conducted by Okonkwo (2005) reveals that 76.4% of respondents affirmed to the very helpful nature of user education programmes in their library use with 78.2% affirming that they had a mastery of effective library use as a result of user education programmes. Similarly, Aziagba and Uzoezi (2010) reported that, there is a visible and encouraging beneficial impact of library instruction on library users, as library skill instructors have awakened the interest of students towards library use. Nonetheless, they observed that, library skill instruction courses taught in most tertiary institutions in Nigeria has not attained a firm footing.

Amusa & Iyoro (2013) studied the influence of instructional programmes on library use by undergraduate students in six universities across the South Western Nigeria and concluded that,

inadequate user education programmes is one of the reasons for poor patronage of library services by the students. Part of the essences of user education is to let users understand that, they can get help from library staff when the need arises. A total of 2145 respondents representing a whopping 80% reported not being aware that they could get help in their quest to obtain information from their university libraries (Amusa & Iyoro, 2013). This situation queries the effectiveness of user education proprammes being taught in those university libraries.

In 2016, Uwakwe, Onyeneke & Njoku examined the effect of user education on law students' use of the law library in Imo State University, Oweri, and reported that, user education programmes have positively affected the students' use of the library and their academic performance. The factors impeding effective implementation of the user education were also reported to include; inadequate infrastructure, overpopulation, inadequacy trained personnel, lack of instructional materials, among many others (Uwakwe, Onyeneke & Njoku, 2016).

Furthermore, the study by Adeyemo (2018) examined user education in academic libraries and information seeking behavious of users, and submitted that, user education in the form of library lectures has positively influenced the utilization of library resources in Obafemi Awolowo University, Ile-Ife and Ekiti State University, Ado-Ekiti. The main purpose of library user education is to improve students' awareness of library and entirety of what the library has to offer, it also provides users the opportunity to improve their information retrieval skills which has great impact utilization. Similarly, Ahemba and Terwase (2018) investigated the impact of user education on the utilization of library resources by undergraduate students of Benue State University Makurdi. The findings of the study revealed that, user education positively impacted the undergraduate students' use of library resources and academic performance. It further identifies some challenges of user education to include; overpopulation, lack of instructional materials, poor monitoring of staff, inadequate qualified staff, limited time allocation as well as inadequate accommodation. They authors subsequently recommend adequate provision of staff; good learning environment for library user programmes, proper supervision of user education programmes and procedures of implementation, among others.

The review thus far indicates that, library user education enjoys a lot of research attention particularly in Nigeria. This is so because the utilization of library information resources and services lays first on the awareness of their existence and the technical know-how to access and

use them, which are the core objectives of user education. A careful appraisal of the reviewed literatures, shows that none of the studies was conducted in the polytechnic subsector. As centres of technical and vocational education in Nigeria, the impacts of polytechnic libraries in the overall achievement of teaching and learning cannot be wished away. This study therefore seeks to the limelight the views of polytechnic students on the impacts of library user education on the awareness, accessibility and utilization of library information resources and services using the Federal Polytechnic Ede Library as a case study.

Research Method

The study employed a survey design. The population of this study consisted of all registered student users of the Federal Polytechnic Ede library as at 2018/2019 academic session totaling 6,000. 10% of the entire population amounting 600 was used for the study. The random sampling technique was adopted for the study. Structured questionnaire titled "Impact of User Education on Users' Awareness, Accessibility and Utilization of Information Resources and Services" developed by the researchers was used as instrument for data collection. The questionnaire was develop using four point rating scale responses of 'Agree; Strongly Agree; Disagree; Strongly Disagree. The research instrument was validated by two senior colleagues to ensure both content and face validity. All corrections, observations, comments and modifications will be painstakingly incorporated before the instrument was used for data collection. Copies of the questionnaire were administered to library users who visited the library. Out of the 600 copies of questionnaire distributed, 517 representing 86.2% were retrieved and found valid for analysis. Data collected were analyzed using mean and standard deviation.

Decision rule: The instrument was structured according to the modified scale on four point rating scale with a response set given as Agree 3.5-4.0; Strongly Agree 2.50-3.49; Disagree 2.0-2.49; Strongly Disagree 1.0-1.99. On the scale, the average cut off mean was 2.50, hence, an item was accepted if it is 2.50 and above. However, it was rejected if it is below 2.50.

Data Analysis/Result/Discussion

Research Question One

What are the impacts of user education on users' awareness of information resources and Services in Federal Polytechnic Ede Library??

Table 1: Summary of the respondents' Mean Score on of the Impact of User Education on Users' Awareness of Library Information resources and services.

S/N	Item	N	Mean	Remark
1.	It made me aware of most of available materials in the library	517	2.34	Rejected
2.	It has enlightened me on the various types of information resources	517	2.21	Rejected
3.	It made me aware of the value of the library resources	517	2.90	Accepted
4.	It made me aware of different sections in the library	517	3.20	Accepted
5.	It helped me to understand the relevance of IRs in the library	517	2.40	Rejected
6.	It made me aware of the electronic information resources in the lib.	517	2.05	Rejected
7.	It made me aware of the various services available in the library	517	2.04	Rejected
Grand mean			**2.44**	**Rejected**

*N-total number of respondents

Table 1 shows the item by item analysis of the impact of user education on users' awareness of information resources and services in the Federal Polytechnic Ede Library. The result indicates that, the user education programmes of the library are not effective enough to make the users aware of the various resources and services of the library. Although, the respondents agree that they are aware of the value of library resources (2.90) and the different sections in the library (3.20), all other items in the table attracted a mean score below 2.50. With a grand mean of 2.44, it is concluded that the user education programmes of the library does not have any significant impact in creating awareness of the information resources and services to its user community.

This result is not surprising given the fact that, there is no well-coordinated use of library course for the students of the Polytechnic like what obtains in other tertiary institutions across the Country were fresh students made to take a compulsory and examinable use of library instruction course. In the Federal Polytechnic Ede, fresh students are only given a 45 minutes library orientation in an over-crowded noisy pavilion prior to their matriculation. There is also the issuance of library handbook and irregular library tour that witnesses very low participation from the students. Indeed, most of them never really have the opportunity of knowing about the programmes, collections, facilities and services of the library. Majority of new students entering polytechnics do not know how to deal with new environment, they need to be educated on how to make use of various sources of information in the library independently. This is result is in line with the finding of Amusa and Iyoro (2013) who reported that, a whopping 80% of their respondents were not aware that they could get help in their quest to obtain information from their university libraries. It equally supports the submission of Madu (2019) that, 'if there is no user education, library patrons may never be aware of the available resources and services; it will also be difficult for them to access those resources and services. If awareness and accessibility are hindered, utilization will automatically be affected'

Research Question Two

What are the impacts of user education on user's accessibility of information resources and services in Federal Polytechnic Ede Library?

Table 2: Summary of the Respondents' Mean Score on of the Impact of User Education on Users' Accessibility of Information resources and services.

S/N	Item	N	Mean	Remark
1.	It improved my ability to access information materials	517	2.20	Rejected
2.	It helped me to how to use the library catalogue very well	517	2.20	Rejected
3.	It helped me to retrieve information resources with ease	517	2.05	Rejected
4.	It helped me to acquire the required skills to access IRs	517	2.08	Rejected
5.	It helped me to know the right officer to meet for diff services	517	2.23	Rejected
6.	It helps to save my time in accessing resources and services	517	2.00	Rejected
7.	It helped me to access information in different formats	517	2.13	Rejected
Grand Mean			**2.12**	**Rejected**

*N-total number of respondents

Table 2 presents the item by item analysis of the impact of user education on users' accessibility of information resources and services in Federal Polytechnic Ede Library. The result indicates that, all the items in the table attracted mean scores less than 2.50 and are subsequently rejected. With a grand mean of 2.12, the user education activities of the library do not have any significant impact on the users' ability to access the collections and services of the library. Certainly, the absence of practical trainings on how to use the library catalogue and online databases hamper users' accessibility in many ways. This finding collaborates the opinion of Adeyemo (2018) who opines that, user education should enhance library skills of the new students and information seeking abilities. In order to utilize available resources in the library, a user must be able to go about his/her search without difficulty. Users ought to have adequate knowledge of retrieval tools and online search engines to enhance their access to library collections.

Research Question 3

What are the impacts of user education on users' utilization of information resources and services in Federal Polytechnic Ede Library??

Table 3: Summary of the Respondents' Mean Score on of the Impact of User Education on Users' Utilization of Information Resources and Services.

S/N	Item	N	Mean	Remark
1.	I enjoy using the library	517	2.61	Accepted
2.	It helped me to use information resources in printed formats	517	2.50	Accepted

3. I spend quality each time when I visit the library	517	2.51	Accepted
4. It helped me to be comfortable in using lib resources & services	517	2.70	Accepted
5. It helps me on how to use special materials	517	2.02	Rejected
6. It helped to improve my use of electronic information resources	517	2.00	Rejected
7. It enables me to know how to use AV materials in the library.	517	2.00	Rejected
Grand Mean		**2.33**	**Rejected**

N-total number of respondents

Table 3 shows the item by item analysis of the impact of user education on users' utilization of information resources and services in the Federal Polytechnic Ede Library. The result indicates that, although the user education enabled the respondents enjoy using the library (2.61); using printed materials in the library (2.50); spending quality time in the library (2.51), and being comfortable with using library resources and services (2.70), it has failed in imparting the requisite knowledge for the use of special library materials and electronic information resources. With a grand mean of 2.33, the use of library materials and services has equally not been helped by the user education programmes of the library. Where awareness and accessibility are low, it is natural that utilization will also be poor. This finding contradicts the report of Ahemba and Terwase (2018) that, user education positively impacted the undergraduate students' use of library resources and academic performance in Benue State University Makurdi.

Research Question 4

What are the problems that hinder effective user education in Federal Polytechnic Ede Library?

Table 4: Summary of the Respondents' Mean Score on the Problems that Hinder Effective User Education Programmes

S/N	Item	N	Mean	Remark
1.	Over dependence on one day orientation programme	517	2.94	Accepted
2.	Lack of examinable library instruction	517	2.92	Accepted
3.	Limited time allocated to user education	517	2.91	Accepted
4.	The use of unqualified personnel to teach library instruction	517	2.88	Accepted
5.	Overpopulation	517	2.87	Accepted
6.	Poor collaboration between relevant stakeholders	517	2.85	Accepted
7.	Unconducive environment	517	2.76	Accepted
Total			**2.87**	**Accepted**

N-total number of respondents

Table 4 presents the challenges that hinder effective user education in Federal Polytechnic Ede Library. The result indicates that all the items have mean scores above the cut off mean of 2.50. The result shows a grand mean of 2.87 which indicates that user education programmes of the library are facing serious challenges. The persistence of these challenges may be attributed to the inability of library management to pressure the Polytechnic management and other relevant stakeholders in to acknowledging the need for aggressive user education programme which will require the formulation of necessary policies, provision of needed infrastructures (material, men and money), and most fundamentally, attitudinal change on the issues relating services. This finding is in tandem with Moyane, Dube & Hoskins (2015); Uwakwe, Onyeneke and Njoku (2016), and Ahemba & Terwase (2018) who variously reported insufficient time allocated to training; insubstantial collaboration between relevant stakeholders; inadequate infrastructure, overpopulation, inadequacy of trained personnel, lack of instructional materials; poor monitoring of staff; inadequate accommodation among others as the challenges hindering effective user education in different academic libraries.

Conclusion

Awareness, accessibility, and utilization of library resources and service are a chain of processes that must never be broken if library collections and services are to be appreciated by their user communities. In order words, library managers must always put in place effective mechanisms to properly bridge the knowledge gap that may exist in terms of what is available, how to access it and actual utilization by library patrons. This study examined the impact of user education on users' awareness, accessibility and use of information resources and services in the Federal polytechnic Ede Library. The findings of the study show that the Library still needs to do much more in terms of user education programmes, as what presently obtains does not have any significant impact on the users' awareness, accessibility and utilization of the collections and services in the library due to several challenges. If this trend is allowed to continue, the Polytechnic and Library managements will continue to get less value from its investments in library which will ultimately reflect in low quality graduates from the institution.

Recommendations

It is common knowledge that there are no challenges without possible solutions. In line with the findings of the study and to ensure that the identified challenges facing user education in Federal Polytechnic Ede Library are addressed, the following recommendations are made:

1. The Polytechnic Librarian should liaise with the Management of the Polytechnic to ensure immediate commencement of "use of library" as a compulsory, credit-bearing examinable course for all ND I students of the institution. The responsibility to coordinate and supervise the programme should be given to the Library Unit and/or the Department of

Library and Information Science in order to ensure quality control in terms of content and personnel.

2. The library should adopt a blend of user education programmes instead of over relying on one day orientation programme that has not yielded the desired result. In this age and time, efforts to educate users about library resources and services must integrate the social media platforms in reaching out to them.

3. The Polytechnic Management should endeavour build more comfortable lecture auditoria to effectively accommodate the surge in the number of admitted students, as comfortable environment contributes to effective teaching and learning.

4. Trained and experienced librarians should be used packaging and extending quality user education programmes that will motivate the students to patronize the library in their quest for academic excellence.

5. Finally, the Government, the Polytechnic Management as well as other relevant stakeholders should ensure that adequate funds is available for library services, as efforts to offer quality user education programmes will amount to wishful thinking if there is no sufficient fund to execute them.

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