

Library Literacy: Its role on the Usage of Libraries and Information Resources.

by

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Abstract

The paper highlights the dearth of library usage as a result of a lacking library literacy particularly amongst second year business education students. To examine and better understand the problem, the paper adopted three research questions; the study adopted a survey research design. The population for the study comprised of second year business education students of the faculty of education which was randomly sampled. A questionnaire was chosen as the research instrument and used to solicit answers to the research questions. The findings indicate that the level of library literacy obtained by these second-year University students indeed attributed to the low use of libraries.

Keywords: Library Literacy, Library Use, Information literacy, Information resources.

Introduction

Right from unknown antiquity, libraries have served as the memory of the human race but in recent times, it has continually seen a significant fall as first point of call whenever information is needed by information seekers (Irenea et al., 2018). And the support roles that libraries in academic settings for students' information needs revolves around providing relevant resources and services (Abusin & Zainab, 2010). As an information channel, it provides convenience in the use of information resources, effective training and development opportunities for library users in the use of information technologies, products and services. Training on new information resources, technology and services ensure that users have knowledge on how best to utilize them, as usage leads to cognitive expansion (Manuel 2004; Kumar & Sanaman 2013). The roles however of libraries and librarians as frontline partners in the attainment of self-development, and memory of the society is still very crucial today, as it was millennia ago.

The desire to bridge this gap influenced the need to educate the users on benefits accruing to using library services. The need to highlight a less seen role of librarians and libraries led to the emergence of library literacy (Farmer, 2019), this trend made academic librarians increasingly influential as instructional partners in the scholarly pursuit of learning and research in academic environments. This new role was however predicted by Melvin Dewey as far back as 1905 when he described librarians as "teachers in the highest sense" (Wright, 2014). Library literacy includes knowledge of the services available through a library, an understanding of the array of resources available, knowledge of how information is organized and an understanding of the best means of finding it. Students therefore require adequate library literacy skills to make effective use of the library and its resources.

In the academic settings, Gross and Latham (2012) opined that the level of library literacy skills of students has been of great concern to educators, librarians, employers and policy makers because many students enter institutions of higher learning without acquiring these skills (Obasuyi and Fedrick, 2015). Thus, many university authorities have made frantic efforts to teach undergraduate students library literacy skills through formal library instruction programmes (Obasuyi and Fedrick, 2015). Various terms such as library literacy, library user education, use of library, reader instruction, user instruction, user education, library skills, bibliographic instruction and

information skills etc. have been used to refer to education of library users (Coravu, 2010; Ogunmodede and Emeahara, 2010; McAdoo, 2012 and Igwe and Ndubuisi-Okoh, 2014). Various methods such as library tour, library orientation, orientation lectures, library instruction, individual instruction, class instruction etc. have also been used to teach library literacy instructions in many universities worldwide (Akor, 2009).

Ahmadu Bello University is one of many universities who engage in library literacy programs, the literacy program in the university is done during a general freshman orientation which last for a week. In the course of this orientation the university librarian is given a day to talk to the students about the library, different units within the library and resource contained. This process is supposedly compulsory for all first-year undergraduate students. The program is expected to teach them the required library literacy skills to make them effective library users. However, statistics show that library visits and the use of its resources over the past decade, has experienced a steady decline (Onuoha and Subair, 2013; Chanchinmawia & Verma, 2018; Tait, Martzoukou, and Reid, 2016; Barclay, 2018; Yabanet, Gbaje and Odigie 2020). The aim of this study therefore is to determine the role of library literacy on the usage of libraries and information resources by business education students.

Problem

In 21st century librarianship, value added services; usage and satisfaction of the library users are key for any library's success. To effectively and adequately satisfy users' it is necessary to acquaint them with the library system and its functions. Acquaintance with the library allows users to search a library's collections thus, providing them with the knowledge of a variety of information sources and new ways to source for the library content. Library literacy or information literacy on library programs is a key means of informing student on the library systems and improving the use of the resources contained within. Such actions will easily get them conversant with necessary skills needed on how best to navigate the library and basic database searching techniques. Users' literacy on card catalogues and library software for instance, teaches them on how to search the catalogue and locate and access a wide array of information sources. Currently, libraries and librarians have become more obsessed with the provision of information resources, systems, and services in the library and information centre without same passion attached to the age-long role predicted by Dewey regarding to librarians as "teachers" on library and information literacy to patrons. Studies have shown that adequate library literacy program is beneficial to the use and information seeking abilities of students (Krysiewski & College, 2018). However, at the Ahmadu Bello University library there is a dwindling use of library resources. The researcher investigated the problem from the perspective of library literacy given to the students and preferred sources or means for information literacy. To achieve these, the following questions were asked;

Research questions

1. What is the level of library Literacy amongst Second year Business Education students at Ahmadu Bello University?
2. What sources of library Literacy do the Second Year Business Education Students at the Ahmadu Bello University prefer?
3. What challenges are faced by second year Business Education students in using the Library resources at Ahmadu Bello University?

Review of Related Literature

Library Literacy – Library literacy in general terms means adjustment or a familiarization with the working and organizational structure of the library. Library literacy is a form of orientation, Kumar & Sanaman (2013) defined library it as a means of educating an individual, newly joined students, faculty, research scholars

and the library users on the workings of the library, use of the library resources, and so on. This is often the tool optimized by the library, for first time students to get a complete picture on the intricate workings of the library, and it therefore plays a pivotal role in student success and impression. At most universities, library literacy is often undertaken for all first-year students during the course of this program they get informed and oriented on what the library is, the use or uses of libraries, departments and units of the library and where to get resources to serve their information needs. Some universities go as far as testing the understandings of these students on all they have been taught. While this may seem as a daunting task, at the university it serves as indoctrination into the use, rules and regulations of the library. Some of the aspects students are introduced in the course of the literacy program are; Introductions to the library premises, the Library's holdings, Tools in the library (catalogs, shelving, databases, searching etc.) and departments/units within the library. Library literacy provided can make a difference in the life of a student. Students are more likely to remember how to use the library resources if they are shown how and allowed to "practice" searching the databases and collections (Hadlock 2000).

Library Literacy has long been researched worldwide it includes any effort or programme which will guide and instruct existing and potential users in the recognition of their needs, and the effective and efficient use of information services. The recognition of these information services is very crucial to students of higher institutions. Studies (Kumar, 2009; Lamptey, 2010; Bhati, 2010) have stressed the importance of Literacy of users (particularly new users) on the basic searching skills to reduce their burden and aid easy access and retrieval or information sources. Thus, library Literacy can be seen as various programmes of instruction, education (formal and informal) and exploration provided by libraries to users of information sources and services (Shukla et al., 2013). Naser (2004) viewed the role of educational bibliographic programmes in academic libraries he came up with levels on the purpose of students Literacy programmes; a.) To support their research b.) To develop their skills in information organizing c.) To provide them with good ideas about variety of information sources d.) To ensure understanding of ethical and legal matters on authorship and publishing rights. These levels are essential to the success of every student. A study by Nwokocha (2012), on assessment of library orientation, enlist lectures, demonstrations, tours and exhibition on the different sections and services of the library as some of the sources or methods employed during library Literacy exercises. Rockman (2002) submitted that library Literacy programmes at college and University libraries provide course related instructions and other methods to enhance student's development of information literacy and search skills which is essential for student's academic performance. However, Larson and Acheaw (2014), in a study about students' benefits of library Literacy, revealed that though majority of the students make themselves available for library Literacy they still have difficulty locating books on the shelves. Aziagba and Uzoeki (2010) also found that library skill instruction courses taught in most tertiary institutions in Nigeria have not attained a firm footing although there are visible and encouraging benefits of the instruction on library users. This raises the question on the impact library literacy programmes are having on students.

Library anxiety

Library Anxiety is an uncomfortable feeling or emotional disposition, experienced in a library setting, with cognitive, affective, physiological, and behavioral ramifications. It is characterized by rumination, tension, fear, feelings of uncertainty and helplessness, negative self-defeating thoughts, and mental disorganization, which debilitate information literacy and the symptoms only appear when students are in or are contemplating a visit to the library (Jiao, & Onwuegbuzie 1999; Jiao, & Onwuegbuzie, 2004). Users who experience library anxiety undergo either emotional or physical discomfort when faced with any library or library related task, whether a routine responsibility such as returning a library book or a more complex task such as conducting an extensive library search. Library anxiety arises from a lack of self-confidence in conducting research, lack of prior exposure to academic libraries, and the inability to see the relevance of libraries in ones' field of interest or career path and

this manifest into a disdain and dislike for the library.

Bostick (1992) identified five components of Library anxiety: barriers with staff, affective barriers, comfort with the library, knowledge of the library and the mechanic barriers. Barriers with the staff involve the student's perception that library staffs are intimidating and aloof as well as the extent to which librarians are perceived to be too busy to attend to students. Affective barriers measure students' feelings of inadequacy with the use of library. Comfort with the library deals with students' feelings about how safe, welcoming and non-intimidating the library is. Knowledge of the library refers to how familiar students feel they are with the library. Mechanical barriers are concerned with feelings that emerge as a result of the students over dependence with library equipment. The first and most important component is barrier with the reference librarian.

Information Literacy

Information literacy skills enable individuals to recognize not only when information is needed, but also when different kinds of information are needed. With the dynamic changes in our information environment, information literacy skills have become fundamental competencies in the 21st century, most especially for the undergraduate students (Issa, Amusa, Olarongbe, Igwe & Oguntayo, 2015). The United States Workforce Investment Act of 1998 defined literacy as 'an individual's ability to read, write, speak in English, compute, and solve problems at levels of proficiency necessary to function on the job, in the family of the individual, and in society'. Similarly, the American Library Association (ALA) 1989 presidential report, stressed the importance of information literacy as 'increasingly important in the contemporary environment of rapid technological change and proliferating information resources. Information literacy is a skill that can be taught and is usually taught by librarians, studies have shown that this skill can be taught and assessed. Research conducted by CIBER (Centre for Information Behaviour and Evaluation of Research at University College London) indicates that while the perception is that teens are very techno-savvy, they tend to be shallow in their information-seeking behaviour: Online searching by teens tends to be, shallow information-skimming, not in-depth searching. Sixty percent visit a site once only and view each web page only for a few seconds. This shows poor information literacy on how to search for information, researches have tried to assess the information literacy of individuals. One means is through the use of Marshall's instrument called the information competency assessment (Marshall 2006). This instrument has been used as a pre- and post-test for an undergraduate information literacy course at the University of Southern Mississippi, the results indicated a measurable improvement in the evaluation of information and information sources.

Information Seeking Behavior

Case, D. O., Andrews, J. E., Johnson, J. D., & Allard, S. L. (2005) noted that widespread literature that could be included under the rubric of information seeking, there is a genre of empirical work that is larger than any other: studies of people finding information in libraries. Most of the publications in this genre focus on "information as a thing" (Buckland, 1991), that is, use of books, journals, and other "packages" of information.

Information seeking behavior is a totality of conscious, intentional, passive behaviors that form an effort to acquire information in response to a need or gap in knowledge. Information seeking has been termed as common place in human life, but not deemed active till such behavior is bound by the pressure of "time". Wilson (1997) in his article on information behavior: an interdisciplinary perspective looked at the term and how it had been investigated in different fields; he surmised that a person can experience a block or barrier to his information seeking, and further itemized three situations in which a person may experience this block;

- i. Person barriers
- ii. Social or role related barriers
- iii. Environmental barriers

Methodology

The study adopted a quantitative research methodology and a survey study research design. The survey design was chosen for its ability to provide a quantitative or numeric description of trends (level, sources and challenges of Literacy) in the study. The population for this study comprised of Second year Business education students of the faculty of education Ahmadu bello university. The total population size was about 184 persons. The sampling technique adopted for this study was the random sampling which is a probability sampling technique which allows the researcher to select individuals at random from a group or population. The sampled population size was fifty, the research instrument for the study was questionnaire. Questionnaires were administered and collected by the researchers this was done to avoid any ambiguity of terms. However, only forty (40) were fully completed and deemed fit for the study. The data collected was analyzed using the statistical package for social sciences, and presented with the use of frequencies and percentages. Analysis of these questionnaires provides insights into the level, sources and challenges of library Literacy available to students in the University.

Discussion of Results

From the sample data collected the researchers sought to identify the students' level of literacy below is a table of the results;

Table 1

Level of Library Literacy	SA	A	D	SD
I know my way around the library complex	8(20.0%)	20(50.0%)	9(22.5%)	3(7.5%)
I find it difficult to locate and retrieve information resources without help in the library	7(17.5%)	17(42.5%)	16(40.0%)	0(0%)
I experience difficulty searching materials myself in the library despite Literacy	7(17.5%)	19(47.5%)	11(27.5%)	3(7.5%)
I do not understand the shelving system	8(20.0%)	19(47.5%)	4(10.0%)	9(22.5%)
I am not aware of how to utilize the OPAC effectively	6(15.0%)	15(37.5%)	14(35.0%)	5(12.5%)

Key: SA= Strongly Agree, A= Agree, D= Disagree, SD= Strongly Disagree

The study through the use of questionnaires sought to ascertain the level to which Second year business education students were oriented Table 1 above shows the level of library Literacy; the data shows that 70% against 30%, of students who were assessed knew their way around the library complex, this reveals that they were familiar with the library building and had no anxiety navigating its premises. Knowing how to navigate the library complex however did not translate to knowing where and how to locate and retrieve information sources as 60% of the students' revealed that they still needed help locating information in the library despite Literacy in conformation with Acheaw and Larson (2014). The design of many library Literacy programs entails a tour of the library highlighting its sections and aiding understanding on the arrangement of information sources on the shelves. The data however showed that 67.5% of users indicated a lack of understanding of the shelving arrangement while more than the half (52.5%) of the responses show an inability to effectively utilise the Online Public Access Catalogue (OPAC). Such high percentages are indicative of problems in library Literacy as all library Literacy should entail a demonstration of how materials or resources are arranged (Kumar 2009, Lamptey 2010, Bhati 2010).

Table 2 itemizes sources of library literacy the students were asked to select which means of library literacy the preferred. Below is a listing of most preferred library literacy sources.

Sources of Library Literacy	SA	A	D	SD
Documentation	4(10.0%)	16(40.0%)	12(30.0%)	8(20.0%)
Courses on Library education	10(25.0%)	8(20.0%)	17(42.5%)	5(12.5%)
Presentations	8(20.0%)	16(40.0%)	6(15.0%)	10(25.0%)
Current awareness services	8(20.0%)	14(35.0%)	11(27.5%)	7(17.5%)
Information literacy programs	8(20.0%)	13(32.5%)	12(30.0%)	7(17.5%)
Live Library Tours	7(17.5%)	14(35.0%)	12(30.0%)	7(17.5%)

Key: SA= Strongly Agree, A= Agree, D= Disagree, SD= Strongly Disagree

Sources of Library Literacy: The study further sought to discern the preferred or favored means of orienting these students on the library. This section indicates the sources of library Literacy as preferred by the business education students of the university. Table 2 highlights the various sources of Literacy. From the data collected the use of documentation as a source on library Literacy was average with a 50% response rating. The responses further illustrate that courses on library education was not amongst the preferred means of orienting students on how to use the library as indicated by 55%. These high percentages are indicative that library appreciation and learning about libraries could also be undertaken outside of the classroom experience. and is in line with Naser (2004) argument on the role of educational bibliographic programmes in academic libraries. However, analysis of the data reveals that presentations, current awareness services, information literacy programs and live library tours have very clear indications as being a preferred means of orientating students. This finding is in line with the argument of Nwokocha (2012) who identified a variety of ways libraries could orient their users.

Table 3 shows challenges faced by students of business education in the course of utilizing the library resources.

Challenges to Utilization	VHE	HE	LE	VLE
Library anxiety	14(35.0%)	11(27.5%)	5(12.5%)	10(25.0%)
Librarians attitude	14(35.0%)	16(40.0%)	8(20.0%)	2(5.0%)
Poor orientation	10(25.0%)	13(32.5%)	8(20.0%)	9(22.5%)
Lack of awareness	13(32.5%)	10(25.0%)	10(25.0%)	7(17.5%)
Lack of skills	5(12.5%)	17(42.5%)	8(20.0%)	10(25.0%)
Inadequate time for library user education	11(27.5%)	10(30.0%)	9(22.5%)	8(20.0%)
Unfamiliarity with library holdings placement	12(30%)	12(30%)	5(12.5%)	12(27.5%)
Non conducive environment	10(25.0%)	6(15.0%)	8(20.0%)	16(40.0%)
Outdated and irrelevant resources	15(37.5%)	15(37.5%)	5(12.5%)	5(12.5%)

Key: VHE= Very High Extent, HE= High Extent, LE= Low Extent, VLE= Very Low Extent

Challenges to Utilization: Amongst the challenges faced by the second-year business education students was Library anxiety with a combined percentile of 62.5%, another similar challenge with a high extent highlighted was librarians' attitude which was 75% as against 25%. These findings are in line with Yabanet, Gbaje and Odigie

(2020) who identified unfriendly behavior of librarians as a barrier to clientele reusing the library facilities and Bostick (1992) whom identified components of library anxiety, one of which was barriers with staff. Poor orientation was another challenge that was highlighted to hinder the utilization of the library and its resources with 57.5% and 42.5% respectively. Another challenge closely related was time allotted to teach the library user education with a percentage of 57.5 as well. the library's atmosphere can be seen as a barrier to utilization of its resources and the library's holdings placement was seen as a challenge by the students. The resources contained in a library is a major factor to its utilization, the study found that the resources contained in the library were another challenge identified with a combined high extent of 75% and low extent of 25% however the library conduciveness was not seen as a challenge with a 60%. This meant that despite the library holdings being seen as a challenge the students still felt the library was a good place to study and learn as it was conducive. The researchers went further to enquire resources in the library that were being highly utilized. Table 4 indicates their responses;

Table 4: Utilization of Library Resources

Library Resources	VHE	HE	LE	VLE
Books	8(20.0%)	8(20.0%)	14(35.0%)	10(25.0%)
Journals/Serial Publications	3(7.5%)	8(20.0%)	16(40.0%)	13(32.5%)
Electronic Resources/Media Resources	8(20.0%)	13(32.5%)	8(20.0%)	11(27.5%)
Databases	7(17.5%)	18(45.0%)	5(12.5%)	10(25.0%)
Internet	21(52.5%)	8(20.0%)	3(7.5%)	8(20.0%)

From the table it is evident that paper-based resources/materials were not highly sought after, like the resources that of the online resources such as databases and the internet. It can then be deduced that second year students prefer the online resources as this posed them with little to no challenge in their use. A position that agrees with (Irenoa et al., 2018) who posit that the inadequacies of traditional librarianship in the face of increased technological demands, current realities, and the need to improve on services in the libraries has become more evident than it was in previous years.

Summary of major findings

The following are the major findings of this study;

1. The study found that students could navigate the library building but had difficulty finding or locating library holdings for their subject area. This was especially evident in their inability to utilize the OPAC.
2. The study found that current awareness services and live library tours were the preferred source of library literacy and not classroom experiences.
3. The research identified librarians' attitude, anxiety and resources as challenges to the utilization of resources in the library however, the library was still deemed ass conducive signifying hope for the library.

Recommendations

The following are the recommendation based on the research questions and findings drawn from them:

1. The study recommends library literacy should focus on informing users on how to locate the various holdings in the library especially in their areas of specialization. Bold indications showcasing the various subject holdings could also be made available where not present.
2. Current Awareness Services on library literacy should also be carried out all round the year, the library could make use of social media platforms for this particularly.

3. The study recommends training and work retreats for librarians aimed at improving their work attitude and lessening anxiety of the students. Also, paper-based resources should be kept updated since they probably got less use as a result of being outdated.

Conclusion

Librarians have for years struggled with dwindling use of their libraries with no end in sight, this study sought to provide answers to the problem by looking at the degree to which Second year business education students were library literate, what sources of library Literacy were preferred and the challenges to the utilization of library resources. It found that users were not really aware of how to properly navigate the library and mostly preferred live library tours, information literacy programs and awareness services and some form of documentation as sources of library Literacy. Library literacy obviously had a role to play in the utilization of libraries and information resources mainly because it highlighted the degree to which students were capable of identifying and meeting their information needs without much help. It is necessary that libraries go back to the drawing board on Literacy programs in their libraries. A new design or remodelling of library Literacy programs for new students should endeavor to be more engaging, fun and lively to thoroughly engage their users.

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