USER EDUCATION AND UTILIZATION OF RESOURCES BY LIBRARY AND INFORMATION SCIENCE UNDERGRADUATES IN POLYTECHNIC LIBRARIES, NIGERIA

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ABSTRACT

The study investigated User Education and Utilization of Resources by Library and Information Science Undergraduates in Polytechnic Libraries, Nigeria. The study uses three research questions. And covered undergraduates drawn from 7 state owned polytechnics in Ondo. Osun and Ogun states, Nigeria. The study employed a correlational research design. The population of the study was 2,030 undergraduates, from which a sample of 325 was selected employing the multi-stage sampling technique. The questionnaire was the only instrument used for the collection of data. A total of 325 copies of the questionnaire were administered to the respondents, while 268 (82%) copies were retrieved and used to carry out the study. The findings of the study revealed that the user education programmes organised for undergraduates are library orientation sessions (268, 100%) and subject specific instruction (215, 80%). The extent to which user education programmes influence undergraduates' use of information resources is low (Agg. $\bar{x} = 2.25$, Crit. $\bar{x} = 2.50$). The extent to which undergraduates use information resources is low (Agg. $\bar{x} = 2.09$, Crit. $\bar{x} = 2.50$). Learning preferences positively influence $[(r = .907, P = 0.000); p<0.05)]$ undergraduates' utilisation of information resources. User education programmes positively influence $[(r = .979, P = 0.000); p<0.05)]$ undergraduates' utilisation of information resources. It was recommended among other things that universities and faculties should adapt teaching methods to suit diverse learning preferences.

Keywords: *User Education, Utilization of Resources, library orientation*

INTRODUCTION

Polytechnic libraries are integral components of the academic infrastructure, supporting the teaching, learning, and research missions of polytechnics. They provide access to a wealth of information resources, promote information literacy, and foster a culture of inquiry and discovery. As universities continue to evolve and embrace new paradigms of teaching and learning, Polytechnic libraries will play a vital role in shaping the future of education and scholarship, serving as dynamic hubs of knowledge and innovation in the digital age. Libraries serve as repositories of knowledge and information, offering a wide array of resources that support education, research, and lifelong learning. According to Murray (2017), libraries play a vital role in providing equitable access to information for diverse communities, serving as hubs of intellectual exploration and cultural enrichment. Central to the mission of libraries are their collections, which encompass various formats and subjects, ranging from books and periodicals to digital resources and multimedia materials.

Library information resources can be conceptualized as a diverse and curated collection of materials, both print and electronic, along with associated services, designed to meet the informational needs of library users and support their information-seeking endeavours. Thus, the curated nature of library collections highlights the role of librarians and information professionals in selecting, acquiring, and organizing materials to meet library users' specific needs and interests. It also emphasizes the provision of services by libraries to enhance access to and utilisation of information resources, including reference assistance, information literacy instruction, and interlibrary loan services (Chu, 2018). According to Law Insider (2023), library resources encompass a wide range of materials, including books, periodicals, audio and video recordings, projected media, closed format materials, artwork, photographs, micro-materials, toys and games, kits, software, electronic databases, and any other items owned or borrowed by the library. These resources serve as essential sources of information, historically consisting primarily of books, journals, newspapers, and encyclopedias. However, with the advent of the internet, digital sources of information have become prevalent, including online libraries, journals, encyclopedias like Wikipedia, blogs, video logs such as YouTube, and more.

Moreover, movie clippings, particularly from older films, are increasingly included in library collections.

In another perspective, Popoola and Haliso (2009) defined library information resources as encompassing "information-bearing materials in both print and electronic formats". This definition emphasizes the broad range of materials available in libraries that contain information, including traditional print resources like books and journals

as well as digital resources such as databases, e-books, and online journals. Library information resources serve as the foundation of library collections and play a vital role in meeting the information needs of patrons for research, education, and personal enrichment. They are actively acquired, organised, and made accessible by libraries to facilitate the discovery and retrieval of information by patrons. Utilisation of library information resources by undergraduates refers to the process through which students access, interact with, and derive value from the diverse range of materials and services offered by libraries to support their academic pursuits. This includes both traditional print resources such as books and journals, as well as electronic resources like databases, e-books, and online journals. Understanding how undergraduates utilise these resources is essential for assessing the effectiveness of library services and the impact of information literacy initiatives on student learning outcomes.

The way students learn and user education should complement in influencing use of library information resources in Polytechnic environment. This paper fills a gap in the literature because knowledge and consideration of students' learning styles can greatly improve the design and implementation of user education programmes hence optimising utilisation of library resources. For instance, Fleming (2010) rightly pointed out that there is a display of student's learning style including the Visual-Spatial, Aural-Auditory, Physical-Kinesthetic, and Logic-Mathematical/Word-Text. By developing the programmes that can teach users focusing on the instructional modes, such as the videos for the visual learners, the workshops for the kinesthetic learners, and the guidelines for reading/writing learners, libraries are able to make their services useful and attractive to all the students. Smith (2015) agrees with this assertion as he conducted a study that established that user education programs whereby students are trained according to their modality to learn enhanced their information literacy and gave them more confident in their interaction with the library.

Furthermore, user-oriented training in the educational process increases students' understanding and interest as well as improves their ability to independently and effectively work with pertaining information. Mews (2012) reveals that, in the process of considering the different need of student's craft, individualized instruction that is based on the learning preferences supports client understanding of library services as well as research tenacity. Such an organisation leads to higher user satisfaction and library resource utilisation because students are given the assurance that navigating through the library systems and in searching for relevant information is something they are capable of doing on their own (Osagie, 2013). Also, the application of technology in

user education like, online tutorials and other learning modules enable individualism for different kind of learners and flexibility and ease to access (Bello, 2013). Therefore, this combination of learning preferences and user education not only enhances students' academic performance but also enhances the efficiency of library information resources in universities. Based on this, this paper wants to investigate User Education and Utilization of Resources by Library and Information Science Undergraduates in Polytechnic Libraries, Nigeria

Objectives of the Study
Specifically, this study seeks to:
1. Ascertain the user education programmes organised for undergraduates in universities;
2. Establish the extent to which user education programmes influence the utilisation of resources;
3. Determine the extent to which undergraduates utilise library resources

Research Questions
The following research questions guided this study.
1. What are the user education programmes organised for undergraduates in universities?
2. To what extent do user education programmes influence the utilisation of resources?
3. To what extent do undergraduates utilise library resources?

Methods

The study investigated User Education and Utilization of Resources by Library and Information Science Undergraduates in Polytechnic Libraries, Nigeria. Three research questions guided the study. The study covered undergraduates' users, drawn from State universities in Ondo, Osun and Ogun states, Nigeria. The study employed a correlational research design. The population of the study was 2,030 undergraduates, from which a sample of 325 was selected employing the multi-stage sampling technique. The questionnaire was the only instrument used for the collection of data. A total of 325 copies of the questionnaire were administered to the respondents. The data collected were analysed using descriptive (frequency, percentage and mean).

Research Question 2: What are the user education programmes organised for undergraduates in universities? The data in Table 2 provide an answer to this research question.

Table 2: User Education Programmes Organised for Undergraduates in **Universities**

Learning Preferences	Agree		Disagree	
	Freq.	**%**	**Freq.**	**%**
Library Orientation Sessions	268	100	-	-
Research Skills Workshops	72	27	196	73
Information Literacy Programmes	66	25	202	75
Subject-Specific Instruction	215	80	53	20
Digital Literacy Workshops	73	27	195	73
Academic Writing and Communication Workshops	93	35	175	65
Tutorials on use of library	102	38	166	62
Online training modules	112	42	156	58
Workshops on Open Educational Resources (OER)	56	21	212	79
Workshops on Systematic Reviews and Meta-Analyses	32	12	236	88

As shown in Table 2, the majority of the respondents indicated that: library orientation session is (268, 100%) while subject specific instruction sum to (215, 80%) which are the user education programmes organised for undergraduates in the universities sample.

Research Question 2: To what extent do user education programmes influence the utilisation of resources?

Table 2: Extent to which User Education Programmes Influence the Utilisation of Resources

Statement	VHE	HE	LE	VLE	x̄
user education programmes have increased my awareness of the information resources available through the Polytechnic library.	33	105	70	60	2.41
I use information resources provided by the library more frequently after attending user education programmes.	51	62	72	83	2.30
I feel more confident in utilizing information resources as a result of participating in user education programmes.	56	33	113	66	2.29
My ability to conduct research has improved due to the skills acquired from user education programmes.	11	30	175	52	2.00
I now utilise a wider range of information resources because of the user education programmes.	62	68	117	57	2.24
The user education programmes have enhanced my skills in searching academic databases effectively.	52	19	100	97	2.10
I am better at selecting the most appropriate information resources for my academic work due to the user education programmes.	78	5	117	68	2.35
I make more effective use of digital resources after participating in user education programmes.	24	5	161	78	1.91
The user education programmes have improved my proficiency in using library technologies	83	38	119	28	2.66
I am more skilled in using citation management tools due to the user education programmes.	65	29	73	101	2.22

N   268   Criterion Mean   2.50
Aggregate Mean   2.25

Table 2 revealed the extent to which user education influence undergraduates' use of information resources. As revealed in the Table, the aggregate mean (2.25) is lower than the criterion mean (2.50). Therefore, the conclusion was reached that the extent to which user education programmes influence undergraduates' use of information resources is low.

Research Question 3: To what extent do undergraduates utilise library resources?

Statement	VHE	HE	LE	VLE	x̄
I often borrow physical books or materials from the library for academic studies	45	33	115	75	2.18
I download e-books or academic articles from the library's online databases	90	62	73	43	2.74
I utilise search tools and databases to find relevant academic resources	93	87	53	35	2.89
I regularly seek assistance from library staff for research guidance or locating materials	15	33	28	192	1.52
I often utilise reference assistance services provided by the library for assignments or projects	16	16	67	169	1.55
I frequently watch educational videos or multimedia resources available in the library	25	33	33	177	1.65
I attended library-sponsored programmes or workshops in the past semester	-	-	36	232	1.13
I often times consult librarians or library staff for help for academic research	39	52	61	116	2.05
I use library's resources for group study sessions or collaborative projects	11	19	68	170	1.52
I use the study spaces in the library for academic work	193	52	23	-	3.63

268   Criterion Mean 2.50   Aggregate Mean   2.09

As revealed in Table 3, the aggregate mean of 2.09 is lower than the criterion mean 2.50, which signifies that the extent to which undergraduates' use of information resources is low.

Discussion of the Findings

User Education Programmes Organised for Undergraduates in Polytechnics

Findings from research question three revealed that library orientation sessions and subject-specific instruction are user education programmes organised for undergraduates in universities. Library orientation helps students learn to use library resources and tools, while subject-specific instruction provides detailed guidance on resources and methods for particular academic disciplines. These programmes aim to equip students with the skills needed to effectively use

Polytechnic information resources, enhancing their academic experience. The finding supports that of Anunobi and Udem (2014) which found that in Nigerian universities, user education programmes have been widely implemented to address the challenges students face in accessing and utilizing library resources. The researchers further buttressed the importance of library orientation sessions at the Federal Polytechnic of Technology, Owerri, noting that these sessions help new students become familiar with the

library's layout, services, and resources. The finding agrees with that of Ugwu and Ezema (2010) which showed the effectiveness of bibliographic instruction at the Polytechnic of Nigeria, Nsukka, in improving students' research skills. Their study found that students who participated in these sessions were better able to identify and utilise relevant academic resources, leading to higher-quality research outputs. This finding underscores the value of targeted instructional programmes that address specific aspects of information literacy, such as citation management and database searching.

Extent to which User Education Programmes Influence the Utilisation of Resources

The finding shows that the extent to which user education programmes influence undergraduates' use of information resources is to a low extent. Despite universities organizing programmes like library orientations and subject-specific instructions, these initiatives seem to have less influence on students' actual use of information resources. This could imply that while students attend these sessions to understand library services and academic research methods, their everyday choices in accessing and utilizing information may not significantly change as a result. This finding underscores the need for universities to reassess

and potentially enhance these programmes to better align with students' needs and improve their effectiveness in supporting academic success.

The finding disagrees with that of Baro and Keboh (2014) which showed the impact of information literacy workshops at Benson Idahosa Polytechnic, revealing that students who participated in these workshops demonstrated improved skills in locating and utilizing academic resources. The study noted a marked increase in the frequency and efficiency with which these students accessed library databases and other digital resources. The finding equally does not support that of Akporhonor and Olise (2015) who conducted a similar study at Delta State Polytechnic, which corroborated the positive impact of information literacy programmes. Their research showed that students who underwent user education were more adept at navigating electronic resources and had a higher level of satisfaction with the library services. They pointed out that well-structured user education programmes could bridge the gap between students' existing knowledge and the demands of academic research, ultimately leading to better academic outcomes.

Extent to which Undergraduates Utilise Library Resources

The finding from research question three revealed that the extent to which undergraduates use information resources is low extent. This means that, despite having access to various information resources such as books, journals, online databases, and other educational materials, students do not use them frequently or effectively. Several factors could contribute to this low usage, such as a lack of awareness about available resources, insufficient training on how to use them, or perhaps even a preference for alternative sources of information like internet searches or peer discussions. This finding highlights a potential gap in students' academic engagement and suggests a need for universities to improve their strategies in promoting and facilitating the effective use of information resources. The finding does not corroborate that of Tenopir *et al.* (2017) which revealed that undergraduates frequently engage in acquiring digital resources, such as scholarly articles and e-books, from library databases and repositories This form of utilisation reflects students' increasing reliance on electronic materials to access relevant information for their coursework, research projects, and academic pursuits, highlighting the evolving nature of scholarly communication in the digital age. The finding equally disagrees with that of Du *et al.* (2018) which found that searching serves as a cornerstone of students' utilisation of library resources. Their study highlighted that undergraduates often leverage library search engines and databases to conduct comprehensive searches for literature, sources, and materials pertinent to their academic inquiries.

Conclusion and Recommendations

Based on the comprehensive findings of the study, it was concluded that undergraduates in the mention universities, Nigeria, have diverse learning preferences, including verbal presentations, hands-on interaction, educational videos, recorded lectures, visuals, PowerPoint presentations, discussions with peers, and various learning formats. These preferences strongly affect how they use information resources. While universities offer user education programmes like library orientations and subject-specific instructions, their impact on students' resource utilisation is limited. Summarily, both students' learning preferences and the effectiveness of educational programmes significantly influence how undergraduates utilise information resources in their academic pursuits. Based on the findings from the study on learning preferences, user education, and resource utilisation among library and information science undergraduates in the sample universities, therefore this call for the following recommendations:

1. Librarians and Library Staff should enhance user education programmes beyond library orientation sessions and subject-specific instruction by integrating other forms of user education programmes such as research skills workshops, information literacy programmes, digital literacy workshops, tutorials on the use of the library, etc. This can be achieved through the development and delivery of hands-on workshops and tutorials that emphasize advanced research skills, information literacy, and the effective use of electronic resources. Close collaboration with faculty to embed library resources into curriculum and assignments will further support students' academic success.

2. Polytechnic Administrators should enhance the effectiveness of user education initiatives by expanding beyond conventional methods to incorporate innovative approaches that resonate with undergraduates. This requires allocating resources and providing support for the development and implementation of comprehensive user education programmes. These programmes should be designed to address the specific needs and preferences of students, thereby fostering a more inclusive and supportive learning environment.

3. Polytechnic and library administrators should organise Student Support Services to enhance

awareness and accessibility of information resources among undergraduates by hosting regular information sessions, webinars, and online tutorials. These sessions should focus on navigating library databases, utilizing citation tools, and critically evaluating sources. Additionally, creating user-friendly guides and resources accessible through Polytechnic portals or learning management systems will empower students to make effective use of available information resources.

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