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The Roles of Library and Information Science Education and the 21st Century Information Users in Nigeria

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ABSTRACT

This study adopted a correlational research design to find out the relationship between the roles of Library and Information Science (LIS) Education and the 21st Century Information Users in Nigeria. The study covered six higher institutions with twelve Departments and a population of 2, 400 year 1 and National Diploma I students. A researcher-designed instrument and four point scale was used. 331 was the sample size using Krejcie and Morgan sampling method of determining the sample of a known population. Mean statistics was used to answer the research question and Pearson Product Moment Correlation adopted in analysing the hypothesis. The study discovered that LIS education played high level of roles for the 21st century information users in Nigeria. Among other things, it was recommended that government should formulate a workable policy that will see that students are introduced to the use of library education from the Nursery, Primary and Secondary school levels.

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Introduction

The user is very important in the practice of librarianship since library processes revolve around them. Over the years, there have been various terms referring to teaching effective use of the library and its resources. These terms include “library use education” “reader instruction”, “user instruction” “library orientation”, “library user education” and “LIS education” (Ogunmodede, Adio, & Odunola, 2011). All these terms refer to organized programmes of practices across various types of libraries to enable library user acquire skills that enable them use the library resources effectively (Lwehabura, 1999). The library provides library use education to equip users with knowledge. This will enable the user to use the library resources effectively and efficiently. Library processes may be so complex that the average user may not easily comprehend how to use available resources let alone a novice. As a result of the era of information explosion in which we are in, information is expanding at a very fast rate and new resources are being introduced into the library (Aina, 2004). With the advent of Information Technology (IT), which has permeated almost all the activities of libraries, it is important to explain the working of a library to new users in detail. The ultimate objective is to enable users exploit the resources of a library to the fullest. Fjallbrant (1990) defined the concept LIS education as: “the teaching of those skills that will enable students to locate and use materials effectively, and feel confident in using the library. Also, its aim is to acquaint users with the use of materials in the libraries”.

Fleming (1990) defined library user education as various programmes of instruction, education and exploration provided by libraries to users to enable them make effective, efficient and independent use of information sources and services to which these libraries provide access.

Bello (2003) corroborated the view of Fjallbrant, by stating that library use education is a device by the librarians to educate users on how to use the resources available in the library in a result oriented way. Thus, it is concerned with information management. The objectives of the library use education according to Osagie (2003) are as follows:

1. To enable users to know how to use the library catalogues independently in any library with particular references to the Author/Title and Subject catalogues.
2. To enable users to understand the classification schemes in any library so as to be able to locate materials (books, journals, audio visual materials etc.) with little or no problem;
3. To be able to see library catalogues as indexes to the entire collection and use them, and
4. To enable users see the library as a repository of knowledge that determines the success of the students’ academic programme.

Statement of the Problem

Every new academic session, higher institutions in Nigeria experience influx of new students during admission. The use-of-library is an essential element in students’ academic activities that will enable them perform maximally in their academic pursuit. The question is: how can a novice use the library and its facilities effectively without good knowledge of how the library and the facilities work? It is on this ground that this study “The Roles of Library and Information Science Education and the 21st Century Information Users in Nigeria” is carried out to know the roles LIS education play among the 21st century information users.

Purpose of the Study

The purpose of this study is to investigate the roles of LIS education for the 21st century information users in Nigeria. The study specifically sought to:

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1. Find out the roles of LIS education for the 21st century information users in Nigeria.

Research Question

The under stated research question was posed to guide this study:

1. What are the roles of LIS Education for the 21st Century Information Users in Nigeria?

Hypothesis

One null hypothesis was formulated and tested at 0.05 level of significance'

1. There is no significant relationship between the roles of LIS education and the 21st century information users in Nigeria.

Review of Related Literatures

Brief History of Library Education

The instruction in the use of library has its roots as far back as the library profession itself. The origin of library user education can be traced back more than 170 years ago. The earliest evidence of instruction was seen in a librarian lecturing undergraduates as founded at Harvard College in the 1820s. It was reported that most academic librarians were professors with part-time library appointments who taught the use of library for academic purposes (Ogunmodede, Adio, & Odunola, 2011). It was in early 1900s that William Warner Bishop and William Fredrick Pole espoused the concept of library instruction that are still valid today, with the aim of making students independent learners and to clarify the role of the library in the university. Adio, (2006) stated that the history of development of user education is not recent and that it has been traced to 1960s, particularly the use of academic libraries. This was in line with the view of Akande (2002) that library instruction movement as we know it today and the controversies which surround it came to maturity in 1960s.

Why User Education? / Reasons / Benefits of LIS User Education

Libraries in educational institutions provide library orientation in both marketing and welcoming activity and often form part of the university's orientation programme for first year students. Fidzani (1995) outlined the objectives of orientation and user education as:

- To introduce students to facilities and resources in the library
- To develop library skills
- To make students independent users and learners in the library
- To develop capabilities as self-sufficient users.
- To establish the library as the centre of academic activity
- To provide basic understanding of the library so that users can make efficient use of library materials and services
- To educate users about information sources and resources and how to effectively and efficiently exploit such resources.

Every year it is expected that Library organises user education for all new students, in the form of lectures followed by demonstrations and guided tours of the various departments in the library such as Lending, Law, Photocopying, Collection, Reference and Research, the United Nations, Theses, Women's Collection, Serials, and Electronic Information. The major problem facing the library is how to organise user education more effectively given the rise in student numbers, the limited number of professional staff and the advent of electronic resources for teaching, learning, and research. Academic libraries recognise that students need to be able to obtain, use, and apply information

to be successful. Organizations that offer goods or services for sale recognize the importance of making the customers aware of opportunities for spending money. Similarly, an academic library should make its users aware of the resources and services that are offered, where to find them, and how to exploit what is available.

Hooks (2007) remarked that, "teaching students how to use the university library resources had been a challenge for academic librarians for most of the twentieth century and has emerged as a high priority for academic librarians in the twenty-first century as well." Alimohammadi and Sajjadi (2006) added that, "library and information professionals have experienced the information seeking challenges of newcomers for many years, and have planned a wide range of instructional programmes to tackle this problem." User education provides a platform where librarians introduce new students to the complexities of university library facilities; familiarize users, who have little or no information seeking skills at all with a broad range of library resources in order to develop library skills; and educate them on how to find materials using library catalogues, subject indexes, CD-ROMs, and the Internet. User education as encompassing all types of activities designed to teach users about library services, facilities and organization, library resources, and search strategies. A survey of the literature reveals the importance of user education in academic libraries. It is believed that improving user skills in exploiting library resources and services can lead to greater use of the library. According to Behrens (1993), library skills include using the catalogue and other bibliographic tools, selecting information from these resources, and physically locating them on the shelves. According to Gericke (1996), user education refers to teaching the use of libraries and information sources. It includes instruction in the use of one or more reference sources as a part of reference transactions, library use presentations and bibliographic instruction.

Methodology

The study adopted a correlational research design to find out the relationship between the roles of LIS Education and the 21st Century Information Users in Nigeria. The study covered Ignatius Ajuru University of Education (IAUE) with Departments of (Economics and Biology), University of Port Harcourt (UNIPORT) with Departments of (Economics and Sociology), National Open University of Nigeria (NOUN) with the Department of Law and Mathematics, Captain Elechi Amadi Polytechnic (CEAPOLY) with the Departments of Office Technology & Management and Science & Laboratories Technology (SLT), University of Uyo (UNIUYO) with Departments of Business Education and Mass Communication, University of Calabar (UNICAL) with Departments of Sociology, English and Literary Studies, Rivers State University (RSU) with Departments of Business Education and Mass Communication. 2,400 students from twelve Departments of the six universities and polytechnics were carefully selected to form the population. The population comprised Year 1 and National Diploma I students only. The reason for using these classes of respondents is because they are the most novices in the use of libraries services and materials.

The instrument used was tagged "Roles of LIS Education and the 21st Century Information Users" with a scale of Very High Level of Roles (VHLR; 4 Points), High Level of Roles (HLR; 3 Points), Moderate Level of Roles (MLR; 2 Points) and Very Low Level of Roles (VLLR; 1 Point).

Table 1. Computed Mean on the Roles of LIS Education for the 21st Century Information Users in Nigeria.

SN	N = 210, TNR = Total Number of Response							
	Items statements	VHLR 4	HLR 3	MLR 2	VLLR 1	TNR	X	Remark
1	To develop library skills	200(800)	10(30)	0(0)	0(0)	830	3.95	HLR
2	To make students independent users and learners in the library	190(760)	20(60)	0(0)	0(0)	820	3.90	HLR
3	To develop capabilities as self-sufficient users	200(800)	10(30)	0(0)	0(0)	830	3.95	HLR
4	To make library the centre of academic activity	195(780)	15(45)	0(0)	0(0)	825	3.93	HLR
5	Give basic understanding of library so that users can efficient use of library material and services	200(800)	10(30)	0(0)	0(0)	830	3.95	HLR
6	Users know catalogues independently in any library with particular references to the Author/Title and subjects.	205(820)	5(15)	0(0)	0(0)	835	3.98	HLR
7	Users to understand the classification schemes in locating (books, journals, audio visual materials etc.) with little or no problem	190(760)	20(60)	0(0)	0(0)	820	3.90	HLR
8	Users to see the library as a repository of knowledge that determines students' academic programme success	185(740)	25(75)	0(0)	0(0)	815	3.88	HLR
	Grand mean						3.93	HLR

Researcher's Field Survey, 2019.

Table 2. Computed (r) between the roles of LIS Education and the 21st Century Information Users in Nigeria.

	Variable	N	X	Df	Alpha level	r-cal.	r-crit.	Remark	Decision
1	The roles of LIS Education	210	3.93						
				208	0.05	1.667	0.113	Significant	Rejected
2	The 21 st Century Information Users in Nigeria	210	3.93						

Researcher's Field Survey, 2019.

The instrument was validated by five experts and a field trial of test retest was done to know the internal consistency which yielded 0.88 co-efficient. 331 was the sample size using Krejcie and Morgan (1970) sampling method of determining the sample of a known population. The 331 copies of questionnaire items were face-to-face administered to the respondents and 210 successfully retrieved. Mean statistics was used to analyse the research question and Pearson Product Moment Correlation (r) was adopted to test the only hypothesis. The decision point was that any calculated grand mean from 2.5 and above was accepted and any grand mean below 2.5 was rejected. Also, any calculated value of (r) that was greater than > the critical table value of 0.113 at 0.05 significant levels, such null hypothesis will be rejected and vice versa.

Results

Research Question 1: What are the roles of LI Education for the 21st Century Information Users in Nigeria?

The grand mean in Table 1 showed 3.93, representing high level of roles. This means that LIS education plays high level of roles for the 21st century information users in Nigeria.

The result in Table 2 revealed that the (r) calculated value is greater than r-critical value. Since the r-calculated value of 1.667 is greater than the r-critical value of 0.113. Therefore, the null hypothesis which stated there is no significant relationship between the roles of LIS Education and the 21st Century Information Users in Nigeria is rejected. This means that there is significant relationship between the roles of LIS education and the 21st century information users in Nigeria.

Discussion of the Findings

From the analysis of research question 1, respondents agreed that LIS education played high level of roles for the 21st century information users in Nigeria. The views of the respondents are same with Fidzani (1995) and Osagie (2003) who outlined the objectives of users education and orientation of LIS as to introduce students to facilities and resources in the library, develop library skills, make students independent

users and learners in the library, develop capabilities as self-sufficient users, establish the library as the centre of academic activity, provide basic understanding of the library so that users can make efficient use of library resources and services, enable users to know how to use the library catalogues independently in any library with particular references to the Author/Title and subject catalogues, enable users to understand the classification schemes in any library so as to be able to locate materials (books, journals, audio visual materials etc.) with little or no problem, be able to see library catalogues as indexes to the entire collection and finally enable users to see the library as a repository of knowledge that determines the success of the students' academic programme because it is not possible for an individual to have the collection of a library.

Recommendations

Based on the findings of this study, the following recommendations are made for the improvement of user education in academic libraries in Nigeria:

1. Government should formulate a workable policy that will see to it that students are introduced to the use of library from the Nursery, Primary and Secondary school levels. If students are introduced to library use education from the Nursery School level, the knowledge of the library and its resources would be part of them before they get to tertiary education level.
2. Higher institutions Librarian and library staff should map out strategies for user education for the incoming students before the commencement of a new academic year. Staff should be regularly trained and retrained for effective services delivery
3. All professional librarians should be involved in the user education programme. This will not only reduce the stress that colleagues in the main institution library go through but also make it less burdensome and more effective.

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