
THE STATE OF USER EDUCATION AT IBRAHIM BABANGIDA LIBRARY MODIBBO ADAMA UNIVERSITY OF TECHNOLOGY YOLA: CHALLENGES AND THE WAY FORWARD

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ABSTRACT

This paper discuss the state of user education at Ibrahim Babangida Library Modibbo Adama University of Technology Yola: challenges and the way forward, it also covered The Ibrahim Babangida library a brief historical background, the challenges on user education in the library, literature were reviewed, the essence of user education, user education programme (lecture/ library orientation) in the library, the state of information technology in user education at I B library, factors that inhibits user education in I B library include among others non students participation and lack of cooperation. And the study concluded that training in using electronic information resources should be integrated into the curriculum and it is also recommended among others that the library management should map out strategies to educate newly admitted students in the institution before the commencement of a new academic year; also all professional librarians are to be involved in the user education programme in the library

Key words: *User Education, Challenges and Way Forward*

INTRODUCTION

Libraries in tertiary institutions provide quality library and information resources and services and relevant information in support of the teaching, learning and research and creative work. This is achieved through the liberalization of access to recorded knowledge in print and electronic formats as well as on the internet to meet broad and varying needs of users for their information research knowledge and recreation. With wider internet connectivity, libraries in tertiary institutions are beginning to tap the opportunities offered by the information society. Currently many e-journals and e-books and print resources are available to many users and they need knowledge and skills on how to use these resource Thus, users must be educated on how to optimally utilize these library resources by a competent librarian. Mcmillan (2000) noted that within the university environment, undergraduate students can be seduced by the convenience of information available through both print and non-print (internet) with intervention of the librarian. User education is a much more complex practice in academic library settings than in other types of libraries in the present information society. (Wickramanayake, 2015). This is in line with this Hooks, (2007) remarked that, "teaching students how to use the university resources had been a challenge for academic librarians for most of the twentieth century. Information Technology (IT) aid has emerged as a highly priority for academic librarians in the twenty first century as well. Therefore, there is a need for a competent librarian who has knowledge of ICT to educate the library user to

acquire skills on how to utilize the available resource Therefore, user education is the process that is concerned mainly with teaching and guiding library user on how to navigate through vast information resources independently with the help competent/skillful librarian. Joan, (2004), defined user education as encompassing all types of activities designed to teach users about library services, facilities and organization, library resources and search strategies. User education also refers to teaching the use of libraries and information sources. This study was conceived to explore the status of user education challenges and the way forward at Ibrahim Babangida library MAUTECH, Yola

The Ibrahim Babangida Library a Brief Historical Background

Ibrahim Babangida Library Federal University of Technology Yola(now MAUTECH) was established by law in 1981 as one of the seven universities of technology was established in 1981 along with other institutions by the civilian administration of Alh. Shehu Shagari the then president of federal republic of Nigeria. It has started a fresh because it did not inherit any materials. The library began providing its services to the university community from its temporary building around 1983 when the university was merged with the University of Maiduguri in 1984. The library became a college library under the authority, supervision and control of Ramat Library, University of Maiduguri. When the university granted autonomy in 1988, the library became full-fledge university library under regime of former president Ibrahim Badamasi Babangida, the library has now a commodious building donated bythe former governor of Central Bank of Nigeria (CBN)Sanusi Lamaido Sanusi. The library building was completed and commissioned on 14 august 2015 by President Muhammadu Buhari represented by National University Commission (NUC) Secretary Prof. Okojie, during the joint 18th and 19th convocation ceremony of the institution. Currently the library has a stock of 35981 volumes of books and subscribes to 26877 volumes of both foreign and local journal on all the disciplines taught in MAUTECH, Yola

The Essence of User Education in the Library

The purpose of user education is therefore to assist user become familiar with various information sources and to explore them to the best advantages in their academic pursuits. it is also enable users to make maximum and effective use of the library, enlighten users on what the library is meant for , how it is organizes , how best to utilize its resources and explain the various facilities provided by the library. User education has become imperative in academic libraries why because of the rapid growth of published materials, change in methods of teaching and course content, lack of awareness of library services and facilities. Also student comes from diverse background and culture. (Osagie, 2003)

Academic libraries recognize that students need to be able to obtain, use, and apply information to be successful. Also to give instructions that will transform a library user who required the assistance of a librarian to find information into a self-sufficient user and be able to access his/her own information with very little assistance from the librarian. Akinbola (2007) in his study recommends that user education programme in our tertiary institutions should be overhauled to make more standard, adequate qualified personnel should be recruited to undertake the teaching of courses effectively organizations that offer goods or services for sale recognize the importance of making the customer 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. The re-introduction of GST course at MAUTECH has necessitated to enhancement of user education in the university and the library in particular for the following reasons:

- To create awareness about the existence of the library;
- To enlighten student where to visit on assignments, self study, etc.
- To make clientele aware the amount of available resources both print and non-print in the library
- To make student understand that libraries are not just a reading halls or archives but as a foyer of a living ideas

User Education Programme (Lecture/ Library Orientation) in I B Library

At Ibrahim Babangida Library MAUTECH part of the user education programme is centrally coordinated at the main library by the University Librarian. The programmes are segmented in to two parts: a lecture followed by orientation/guided tours.

Lecture Programme

The lecture is given by the university librarian only during matriculation ceremony at matriculation ground of the institution. The librarian highlights the importance of the library in the university setting its goals and objectives and discusses different information formats and how they are organized in the library, explains library rules and regulations, opening hours, borrowing rights and procedures, penalties and gives a brief introduction to the classification scheme.

Library Orientation Programme

Library orientation is both marketing and welcoming activity and often forms part of the university's orientation programme for the first year students both UME and D E. Agyan-Gyasin (2008) cited Fidzani (1995) outlines the objectives of orientation and user education:

- a. to introduce students to facilities and resources in the library;
- b. to develop library skills;

- c. to make students independent users and learners in the library;
- d. to develop capabilities as self-sufficient users;
- e. to establish the library as the centre of academic activity;
- f. to provide basic understanding of the library so that users can make efficient use of library material and services;
- g. To educate users about information sources and resources and how to exploit such resources effectively and efficiently.

The orientation is offered primarily to new students, both UME and Direct Entry (DE) but continuing students and other groups of users may be considered on request from their heads of department. During orientation, the librarians try to present an image of the library as a pleasant, friendly institution where help can be obtained. The goal of the orientation process is to make students confident and able to ask for assistance from the library staff whenever they need arises. As rightly pointed out by Audu (2006) suggests that orientation could be conducted after all students have registered and settled down; increment of duration of orientation; the courses be taught for more than one semester and content less technical, he added that the course should be taught by qualified librarians and the use of relevant bibliographic aid and guides should be included. After the lecture, senior members of the library staff take the new students on a guided tour to various divisions of the library. For instance, at the Reference unit users are shown reference materials such as encyclopedias, dictionaries, almanacs, yearbooks, and other reference publications. At the media unit, users are taught how to access internet, subject gateways and databases, also how to download e-books and e-journals. In circulation area students are introduced to basic services such as how to use the catalogue by author, title and subject. Also they are introduced to reserve unit where rare books are stock and they are meant to be borrowed just as short term loan. Students are also taught the borrowing procedures for staff, post graduate, and undergraduate. Finally, at the end of the exercise copies of the library users guide will be given and register those students that are interested to patronize the library resources and provide them with borrowers tickets since the library is still operating at manual level its uses brown ark method of charging and discharging

The State of Information Technology in User Education at IB Library

Information and Communication Technology (ICT) has changed the way libraries and librarians handle their services including how to educate library users. Agboola (2000) observes that serious application of information technology to library processes started in Nigerian university libraries in the year 1990s. Individual efforts of library automation such as the one by the University of Lagos, University of Ibadan and Ahmadu Bello University Zaria in the midst of 1970s and 1980s. In 1994 the National Universities Commission (NUC)

spearheaded the proper implementation and use of ICTs in the Nigerian universities. This giant effort starts with National Universities Network (NUNet) project and back by the commission directive that all the universities are to set aside twenty percent (20%) of the teaching and research equipment fund to NUNet project. The NUNet in every university was to provide backbone for networking the campuses. With wider Internet connectivity, educational institutions in this country are beginning to tap the opportunities offered by the information society. Currently, many e-journals and e-books are available to library users. Ibrahim Babangida library has benefited from free subscription of databases from EBSCO HOST initiated by the National University Commission (NUC) to all Federal Universities in the country, which offers free access to online journals to both faculty and students. Also student accesses e-journals and e-books on line as well as off line within the media section of the Ibrahim Babangida library. The library also has a VISAT, and subscribed to Science Direct data base. Many libraries in Nigeria now embraced ICT including Ibrahim Babangida library MAUTCH, also the library used CD ROM as a medium of user education, and library instruction and demonstration are done on CD-ROM which is shown in the library at instruction room after the library tour. Ibrahim Babangida library the library has replaced the traditional methods of library services with Online Public Access Catalogues (OPAC) the library is currently using software Management Systems (KOHA) all its divisions were fully automated.

Related Literature Reviewed on User Education Skills of Librarians

Many scholars have reviewed literature concerning user education in various areas. Alimohammadi and Sujjadi (2006) observed that user education has been defined as instruction which equips library users with the skills to enable them to be independent and sophisticated users of libraries and their resources. All the activities involved in teaching users how to make the best possible use of library resources, services and facilities, including formal and informal instruction delivered by a librarian or other staff member one-on-one- or in a group are part of user education. They added that "librarians have experienced the information seeking challenges of new comers for many years and have planned a wide range of instructional programs and skills to tackle this problem". Gosling (2000) also reported on a user education study that was conducted at the University of Michigan. The research focused on the findings of a library user instruction initiative in which the users were trained to use electronic resources. It was thought that this type of instruction would transform a person who required the assistance of a librarian to find information into a self-sufficient user and be able to access his/her own information with very little assistance from the librarian. It was concluded that although the initial transformation was positive. This is a clear indication that ongoing instruction and learning will be required for both the

student and the librarian-teacher. Therefore, it is safe to say that although the duties of librarians are changing, librarians are indeed needed more than ever to assist library users in these new endeavors. Fidzani (2011) outlined the objectives of user education services 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 material and services and to educate users about information sources and resources and how to exploit such resources effectively and efficiently.

He further added that user training in libraries is offering tools to use new information techniques when searching for information in book catalogues, databases, CD ROMs, on Internet, e-books and other new media demanding technical skills of ordinary citizens. The user trainings should be developed to meet the demands of all target groups in need of reading information gathered at the libraries as supported by Scherrer (2004) when she affirms that "Librarians reported that they were teaching more, leaving the library to serve patrons at their point of need, designing Web pages, developing liaison programs, providing consumers with information and engaging in many creative activities." Yeboah (1999) described how librarians in the University of Botswana collaborated with lecturers in the Biological Science Department and planned the syllabus, timetable and logistics for making courses on information literacy skills for 3rd and 4th year students. User education therefore, provides a platform where librarians acquire competencies to introduce new students to the complexities of library facilities, e-resources as well as familiarize users who have little or no information seeking competencies 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 online catalogues, subject indexes, CD-ROMs and the internet. Agyan-Gyasi (2008) stressed that, user education aims to equip user with needed competencies to enable them use of libraries and their resources in a user friendly manner. It often includes library orientation, induction and information skills training. Librarians require competencies to use wide variety of method to help users in information through lectures, practical 'hand-on' sessions, work book, printed guides, videos and demonstration as well as adapt approaches to use education which can teach nontraditional students such as part-time distance learners through information technology support via mediated communication. They should have knowledge of use Computer Assisted Learning (CAL) and hypertext in creating flexible learning packages for developing web library guides. Song (2005) reported that the changing educational environment in China requires new functions for university libraries and these functions demand that librarians possess different skills and talents to educate their users. Gulati and

Raina (2000) added that librarians need competencies in assisting users in a proper use of information technology to access available knowledge. for example, identification of new and emerging technologies to be stimulated and integrated in to the organization to impart competitiveness, ability to train user navigate the knowledge base competently themselves , competency in search skills i.e. linking catalogue searching and other databases to document delivery services. Similarly, Agye-gyasi (2008), in his article stressed that libraries including KNUST have started replacing the traditional card catalogues with Online Public Access Catalogue (OPAC) He further states that in 2006/2007 the KNUST library introduced computer into user education with a recorded version of the orientation programme for new students in the form of Compact Disc (CD) that replaces the lecture. He said that librarians in both public and private organization would increasingly be called upon to acquire necessary competencies on user education and knowledge management projects and initiative in their organizations. As rightly pointed out by Ashcroft (2004) information professionals are increasingly playing the role of the teacher and IT trainer, providing workshops and short courses on the use of new technologies and information products as well as internet and technology oriented topics.

Mcmillan (2000) noted that within the university environment, undergraduate students can be seduced by the convenience of information available through the internet and the intervention of the librarian. Librarians can teach the difference between intellectual access and electronic access. It was further observed that librarians teach information dissemination through personalized research assistance, guidance and instruction as well as helping students to understand their needs. This is in line with Steinmueller's, (2001) observation that many users are self-taught which might be as a result of availability of e-resources on internet and website (available from various websites).on his part, Scherrer (2004) reported a study of the reference librarians from academic health sciences libraries to examine how their roles changed over the past years librarians strived to meet their patrons' needs by developing Web pages to facilitate patrons' finding the resources they needed as easily as possible. He stressed areas for further training in specialized databases, resources needed by researchers and other modern technologies.

Chifwepa (2003) conducted a study at the University of Zambia to determine usage of the campus internet and the internet among academic staff revealed that those who were not using the facility among other reasons are lack of guidance on how to use the internet and lack of technical know-how. Goulding (2000) asserted that teaching departments have a responsibility to support the development of appropriate competencies to deliver modern information service by incorporating new competencies requirement in to syllabi. One solution is to encourage

information professionals from developing countries to spend time learning and acquiring competencies in user education services. Also Witler (2001) rightly pointed out by Stubbings and McNob (2001) that some group of users lack the necessary skills to obtain quality information. They further ascertained that librarians will be called upon to act as both educators and intermediaries. Sharp (2001) also added that given these circumstances librarians are required to have increased teaching and communication competencies to provide user education services electronically

The Challenges of User Education in the Library

Ibrahim Babangida Library of Modibbo Adama University of Technology University of Technology (MAUTECH) Yola library is currently faced with a numerous challenges among these includes inadequate resources to meet the information need of the users. It is the libraries responsibility to ensure that the use of its information sources, resources and services are maximized to benefits its users, hence the necessity for user education programme (Dhanakar and Rajasekar 2006). Secondly there is great shortage of academic staff to teach and to enlighten students on how to properly utilize the library resources because the quality of the services offered by any organization depends on the quality and the quantity of the staff, therefore, there is need for adequate personnel more especially academic cadre to manned instructional programmes (user education) as library is the nerve center of all academic programmes of the university. This has corroborated with Adu (2006) in his study pointed out that library user education in Plateau and Nasarawa states suffered among others from inadequate staff and poorly motivated. Based on the interaction made by the researcher with students who participated in the library orientation programme of 2017/2018 and after their first semester in the institution it was found that they have problems using the catalogue, locating books on the shelves, and going through borrowing procedures. This could be attributed poor comprehensiveness during the orientation and inadequate staff to attain to the student for guidance. Another major challenge is introduction of Information and Communication Technologies (ICT) in the libraries more especially at the tertiary institutions and the collegiate system adopted by the university have brought about many changes in the academic programmes as rightly stated by Hiller (2009) due to the escalating complexity of the environment student are faced with abundance of choice in their academic studies and their personal endeavors. Seeking, managing and assessing information from multiple sources offer them a foundation for continued growth in both their faculties and beyond.

Moreover, one of the challenges is there has also been a phenomenal growth in student numbers over the past decade. Student enrollment at MAUTECH, for example had seriously increased, the university matriculated a total of ten

thousand five hundred and twenty three (10523) students in 2013/2014 academic session (MAUTECH in focus 2009-20014) by the end of 2015/2016 session it had increased to 15,4426 students, an increase of more than 50 percent this is due to emergence of new accredited departments in the institution and with prevalence of insurgency in the north eastern of the country most especially the neighboring state University of Maiduguri, this has necessitate many student to relocate and seek admission into MAUTECH, Yola, more departments are still coming up. Another scenario is that the impact on library resources includes overuse of library books and journals and the consequent deterioration of the collection this have left the library with obsoletes collection on shelve almost all of the books and journals about 70% were more than ten years. Also library instructions course offered by academic librarians to teach use of library in School of General Studies (SGS) has been stopped for a quiet period of time since in the year 2009 until of recent the course has been re-introduced and taken by lecturers of the department of Library and Information Science, now the course title Use of Library, Study Skills and Information Communication Technology (GST 107&108) is allocated to few academic librarians from Ibrahim Babangida Library to teach. Audu(2006) who rightly recommends that use of library courses should be taught by qualified librarians. This implies that librarians are in the better position to teach and educate their users on how to effectively use the library because they are more conversant with services.

Eventually, poor coordination and organization of user education programme in the library has always remained the big challenge. Every year the I B library organizes user education for all new students, in the form of lectures followed by demonstrations and guided tours within the various departments and units in the library: Open access, special collection, reference unit, archives collection, serials department, and electronic information (media unit). The major problem facing the library is how to organize user education more effectively given the rise in student numbers, the limited number of professional staff and the advent of electronic resources which has changed the information landscape. This study examines the constraints facing the I B library in its attempt to provide effective user education, especially in this era of increased student numbers. It takes a critical look at how user education programmes are planned, organized, and implemented in I B library MAUTECH; and how Information Technology (IT) could lessen the burden on librarians carrying out these programmes.

Factors that Inhibits User Education in I B library

User education is introduced to encourage library clientele to reading, for pleasure, teaching them how to use the resources both print and non print without interference of librarian, it has been observed that user education is tied to various factors which includes;

1. Non students participation; Students from schools and departments do not participate fully in user education programmes only few students had attended library orientation in 2013/2014 session in the library of more than 724 students from the School Management And Information Technology (SMIT), only 250 students attended the user education programme in 2014/2015, and only 35 students from the School of Engineering And Engineering Technology (SEET) attended during the same period. Also School Of Pure and Applied Sciences (SPAS) 50, school of agric and agricultural technology (SAAT) and School of Technology and Science Education (STSE) 65 School of Environmental Science (SES). This apathy is mainly attributed to a lack of cooperation from the university faculty and central administration. User education can only be successfully carried out if there is cooperation between the library and other key stakeholders. This requires provision of information about the curriculum so that user instruction is relevant to students' work.
2. Lack of cooperation; Faculty cooperation is also required to arrange for students to attend the library orientation. There must be coordination from the university administration and the faculties to ensure that the exercise is carried out early and effectively. McCarthy (1985) states that lack of faculty cooperation from the faculty is mainly due to lecturers' poor bibliographic skills, apprehension, and low use of the library. Only few lecturers visits Ibrahim Babangida library. It may also be because the library does not publicize its operations and services enough to convince both student and lecturers that the library can help them, and lack of awareness of the important of user education programmes within the institution, therefore faculty members and library management should strategizes and have a good synergy towards encouraging student to attend library orientation
3. Inadequate of man power; presently there are only sixteen senior staff members in the university library, three staff are currently on study fellowship, and one staff is at Center for Distance Learning (CDL) library as indicated earlier, user education is centrally coordinated at the main central e- library. This implies that only twelve senior staff members, including the University Librarian and one professor are involved in this important exercise at any point in time. The total enrollment for 2017/2018Session stood at 5250 students one can imagine the burden on ten librarians. this has corroborates with a study of Audu (2006) who opine that library user education in Plateau and Nasarawa states suffered from in adequate staff and poorly motivated. it's clearly indicated that under staffing measures should put in place and more professional cadre are to be employed to reduce the workload for effective user awareness services

4. Problem of ICT; Information technology also presents problems for user education. Full and effective exploitation of e-resources assumes that both library personnel and students possess computer literacy. Most of the staff are struggling to be ICT complaints they lack knowledge and skills required to intervene between the user and electronic resource, therefore staff should be sent for training, seminars and workshops to improve and acquire skills on ICTS in addition to that the library should have unrestricted internet connectivity, extend the bandwidth, and provide adequate workstations for its clientele, and access to databases online or on CD-ROM. Moreover, the library has low Internet connectivity and a number of computers that can be used by readers at media unit are very meager compare to number of students enrolled in to the university. It also has no permanent server it's linked to administrative information communication (ICT) center of the institution; this resulted to poor connectivity within the library. The library should have its internet server to avoid low connectivity so that user can be attracted
5. Lack of trained personnel: There is a need to retrain staff in modern computer literacy so that they can use these skills in their day-to day operations in the library as well as in educating both faculty and students. Presently there is low level of ICT skills among librarians in the library most of them have little or no knowledge skills to work with computer above browsing or surfing the internet to access and retrieve information not to talk of aiding library users.
6. Lack of finance; the library faces serious financial constraints and depends on various donors most especially Tetfund once the donor support ends the library would not be in a position to sustain these services. There is therefore the need to make adequate provision in the library budget to cover subscriptions to both e-journals and CD-ROM databases. for example the TETFUND free subscription to all federal universities from Elsevier that has been stop the present library budget allocation does not enable it to subscribe to these resources since the library is solely depend on the network of ICT centre of the institution. Therefore more finance should be allocated for the fully library automation and subsequent subscriptions of data bases, the library should provide adequate workstations for its clientele, and access to databases online or off line on (CD-ROM.)

The Way Forward

User education is one of the important services offered at Ibrahim Babangida library every year for newly admitted students into the university. It is designed to equip users with information skills that will enable them to make efficient use of library resources. The increase in student population, coupled with rapid

advances in ICT, has necessitated changes in user education. Lectures, tours, printed guides, displays, seminars and workshops, taped slides, and applications of audio-visual methods are some techniques that are employed in user education. Some of these are very useful in teaching information skills. Librarians need to team up with faculty members and other professionals to prepare audio-visual materials to supplement traditional methods of user education. Where formal training is given, there must be enough hands-on experience. Students must be shown electronic information resources that are relevant to the subject being researched or taught.

Training using electronic information resources should be integrated into the curriculum. User education programme has been recorded on CDS and shown to students prior to tours of the main library since the library has instruction and media room with instruction monitor as an instructional material which was donated by TET fund. Also copies of the CD ROM will be given to students along with library user guide. The university library must devise other user education methods for its new users at all levels.

RECOMMENDATION

The following recommendations are made:

1. The library management should map out strategies of user education for the newly admitted students in the institution before the commencement of a new academic year; also all professional librarians are to be involved in the user education programme. This will not only reduce the stress that colleagues in the Main University library go through but also make it less burdensome and more effective.
2. Retrain staff in the role of IT, this will enable them obtain an understanding of the technical issues, ask the right questions, and demand appropriate service from the student. This implies librarians will train library users how they will properly use of the Internet, especially in searching for needed information without wasting their time. This saves bandwidth and enables users to find resources more easily without too much waste of time. Provide assistance for users who will potentially be affected by the new computer-oriented library system. This could be done through the preparation of a well-planned manual or handbook on computer applications in the library.
3. Library administration should ensure that a comprehensive programme is put in place and well qualified staffs are to be employed to take care of the GST courses on user education and from time to time the curriculum of the courses should be checked and be up dated to align with the frequent change of technological advancement

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