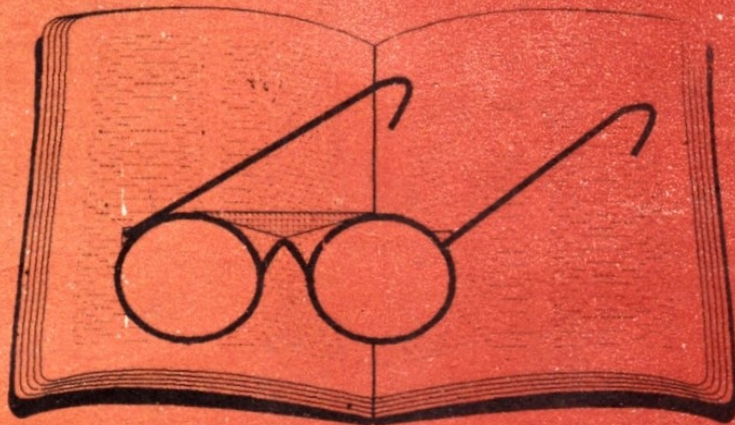


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**STUDENTS AND TEACHERS PREFERENCE OF METHODS
OF LIBRARY USER EDUCATION PROGRAMME (LUEP)
IN NIGERIAN UNIVERSITIES : A CASE STUDY OF THE
UNIVERSITY OF UYO**

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ABSTRACT

Lack of proper orientation of university freshmen to available information resources generates frustration and eventual poor attitude to resource utilization. This paper establishes the need for a systematic organised orientation programme for all university freshmen. It attempts to give an overview of various forms of orientation programme offered by some Nigerian Universities. In conclusion, an examinable, credit earning compulsory library User Education Programme (LUEP) is proposed for freshmen to the University of Uyo and other universities in the country.

INTRODUCTION

Over the past few years, there has been a lot of emphasis on self education. This has led to an increased use of tutorials, seminars, projects etc as components of professional teaching methods. In this trend, there is an implicit assumption that students can find materials relevant to their needs. This present shift of emphasis in higher education from complete reliance on the lecture notes to increasing independent study implies that every student is expected to be able to consult authorities and compare results. Thus students in academic institutions require help to make sufficient use of all the materials available for their use. The academic library's role in university education has therefore become paramount and the student who is unable to use its resources properly will be highly handicapped.

Instructing undergraduates in the use of the library in the most persistent problems of academic librarianship. This is because the exponential growth of literature in various fields of knowledge

requires that users of the various literatures should have a systematic, rather than haphazard approach to their use.

There is a general agreement among Nigerian academic librarians that some kind of library orientation/instruction be given to fresh undergraduates. An impressive body of literature has been developed reporting the various experiments undertaken in many Nigerian university libraries. The first reported case of library instruction programme was made by Nwonye and Anafulu (1973) who described the programme as practised at the university of Nigeria, Nsukka. They observed that what was hitherto in practice in most universities was a kind of library orientation best described as "the near worthless one or two hours tour of the library by students during the week of their general orientation. This view was supported by Soyinka (1976) when she remarked:-

"Like the other University Libraries, Ibadan had for a long time been worried about the inadequacy of its orientation programme which in its traditional form was little better than what Nwoye and Anafulu described as the near worthless one."

The Kashim Ibrahim Library of the Ahmadu Bello University, Zaria introduced a programme which was incorporated into the university's Learn - to - Learn Programme in 1964. This was made compulsory for every undergraduate. Olaniyan (1975) reported that the University of Lagos library had operated a library orientation programme since 1970, but by the 1973/74 session, the usual orientation programme had given way for the running of formal courses in the effective use of the library.

Thus over the years, education for academic library users evolved under various names. They are:-

- (a) Library Instruction Programme organised into examination course to be taken by all fresh students.
- (b) Library Instruction Programme organised as part of the institution's General Studies Programme.
- (c) Library User Education - Bibhographic Instruction organised as examinable courses according to each academic discipline in the university.
- (d) Library Orientation - a series of lectures on library activities supported with slide projections and commentaries.

The broad goals of User Education therefore vary according to beliefs of both lecturers and students and reflect variations in

understanding of the uses of information retrieval skills. This in turn influences the approach to content of lessons for students and lecturers. Against this background therefore this study investigates out if students and lecturers differ in their preferences to the method of Library User Education Programme (LUEP) implemented in Nigerian Universities. The study also tests if there is a significant relationship between students and lecturers with regard to their preference of methods of LUEP: Specifically, the null hypothesis "There is no significant difference between lecturers and students preference of the method of LUEP used in Nigerian Universities" will be tested.

University of Uyo : A Survey of Methods of LUEP Preferences

Like other university libraries, the University of Uyo (formerly the University of Cross River State) has been practising the traditional library orientation programme, organised two hours in one day of the orientation week for freshmen. Usually the orientation features the University librarian's address, a guided tour of the library and the distribution of library guide to students.

A survey of records of students admission and attendance at library orientation from 1984/85 session shows clearly that the programme is poorly attended (Table I).

TABLE 1
STUDENTS ADMISSION AND ATTENDANCE AT LIBRARY
ORIENTATION 1984/85 - 1991/92

| YEAR | STUDENT ADMISSION | ATTENDANCE AT LIBRARY ORIENTATION | PERCENTAGE ATTENDANCE AT LIBRARY ORIENTATION |
|---------|-------------------|-----------------------------------|--|
| 1984/85 | 1,461 | 210 | 14% |
| 1985/86 | 1,481 | 305 | 20% |
| 1986/87 | 2,470 | 572 | 23% |
| 1987/88 | 2,731 | 520 | 19% |
| 1988/89 | 3,740 | 621 | 17% |
| 1989/90 | 2,788 | 500 | 21% |
| 1990/91 | 3,856 | 700 | 18% |
| 1991/92 | 4,960 | 600 | 14% |
| 1992/93 | 4,027 | 680 | 15% |
| 1993/94 | 4,297 | 800 | 16% |

SOURCE: UNIUYO ACADEMIC RECORDS

A "use of library" questionnaire was administered to a random sample population of 300 students and 50 lecturers to find out how they consulted the university library, the nature of reference enquires they make, the standard of readership decorum exhibited and their preference of the method of LUEP implemented in Nigerian Universities.

Percentage frequency analysis was used to determine the proportion of total sample which gave responses to direct questions relating to preferences of method of LUEP, perceived importance of and reasons for non attendance of LUEP. Chi-square statistics was used to test the significant relationship between students and lecturers preferences to methods of LUEP.

Results

Analysis of the questionnaires showed that students and lecturers surveyed were spread across the seven faculties of the university and the post graduate school namely Arts, Science, Social Sciences, Law, Pharmacy, Business Administration and the Post Graduate School. Student respondents also showed a spread from year I to year IV in all the universities faculties. Lecturers who were surveyed had an average teaching experience of 5 - 10 years within the university system. Results deduced can therefore be said to be truly representative of the university community.

Perceived Importance of LUEP

Table 2 shows students perceived importance of LUEP to their academic progress. Table 3 shows students reasons for not participating in the usual orientation programme organised by the university library at the beginning of each session.

Table 2
Perceived Importance of LUEP

| Response | No. of students N = 300 | % of response |
|-----------------------|----------------------------|------------------|
| LUEP is important | 240 | 80% |
| LUEP is not important | 56 | 18.7% |
| No idea | 4 | 1.3% |
| Total | 300 | 100 |

Table 3
Reasons for non attendance of LUEP

| Response | No. of students N = 300 | % of response |
|-------------------|----------------------------|------------------|
| Not aware | 180 | 60% |
| Not interested | 30 | 10% |
| Time not suitable | 90 | 30% |
| Total | 300 | 100 |

Tables 2 and 3 show that while 80% of student respondent consider LUEP important, they did not participate in the yearly library orientation for various reasons as shown in Table 3. This result corroborates what Nwonye and Anafulu (1973), Soyinka (1976) describe as the worthless traditional library orientation in University libraries.

Table 4 shows the preferences of student and lecturers of the method of LUEP implemented in Nigerian universities. While 35% of student respondents preferred LUEP taught as a separate examinable course, 50% of lecturers opted for LUEP being incorporated into the University General Studies Programme.

Table 4
Respondents Preferences of Method of LUEP

| LUEP Method | No. of students N = 300 | No. of Lecturers N = 50 |
|---------------------------------|-------------------------------|-------------------------------|
| (a) GST | 75 (25%) | 25 (50%) |
| (b) Separate Course | 105 (35%) | 15 (30%) |
| (d) Extension of Orientation | 94 (31%) | 10 (20%) |
| (d) Not Specific | 26 (9%) | 0 (0%) |
| Total | 300 (100) | 50 (100) |

Apparently, while library instruction programme organised into examinable course to be taken by all fresh students is popular with students, the library instruction programme organised as part of the institution's General Studies programme appeals more to the lecturers. Reasons for this disparity may be varied. But it is important to note that the orientation programme is not popular with both lecturers and students.

Table 5 shows the observed and expected frequency of students and lecturers preferences of methods of LUEP.

Table 5
Observed and Expected frequency of Students and Lecturers Preferences of Method of LUEP

| Method of LUEP. | No of students N = 300 | No of Lecturers N = 50 | Total |
|--------------------------|---------------------------|---------------------------|------------|
| GST | 75 (85.7) | 25 (14.3) | 100 |
| Separate Course | 105 (102.8) | 15 (17.1) | 120 |
| Extension of Orientation | 94 (89.1) | 10 (14.9) | 104 |
| Not Specific | 26 (22.3) | 0 (3.7) | 26 |
| Total | 300 | 50 | 350 |

*Expected frequencies are in parenthesis

Since the observed chi square of 9.1 is less than the critical value of 9.49 at 0.05 level of significance and the degree of freedom of 4, then the null hypothesis is accepted hence students and lecturers do not differ in their preference of method of LUEP to be implemented in Nigeria Universities.

From the above findings, it is clear that in terms of content and scope, time and duration, awareness and attendance of students, effectiveness of orientation, that the yearly library orientation programme for fresh students in Uniuyo has failed to provide students with an intensive integrated library instruction and adequate preparation for successful bibliographic search.

Below is an outline for a proposed LUEP examinable course for Nigerian Universities. The course could span for a semester being an average of 13 weeks.

7. Reference Tools/Resource II
 1. Abstract
 2. Handbooks
 3. Year books
 4. Gazetters
 5. Gazettes
 6. Atlases
 7. Manuals

8. Research Projects and Information Search
 1. How to use a library effectively
 2. Examples of reference sources in specific subject areas
 3. Bibliographic citation, footnotes, bibliographies

9. Readers and the Library
 1. Library regulations and etiquette
 2. How to borrow a book and other materials
 3. Anti-social acts e.g mutilation of books, underlining etc.
 4. Tour of the Library

10. Practicals

Conclusion

Though examinable, credit earning method of LUEP has been criticised by teachers as recorded by Ishola (1980). He argues that professional librarians as distinct from university teachers may not be accustomed to teaching and may not reach out to students. The criticisms notwithstanding, most universities already using the separate course method have found that there is more intensive use of the reference room by students collections with more confidence, often less dependent of the library staff after one year of the programme.

It is expected that the proposed LUEP, if implemented, could help students, tackle the problem of the exponential growth of literature in the ever increasing fields of knowledge. They would then have a more systematic, rather than a haphazard, approach to their use. The knowledge so acquired will be of a life time benefit i.e beyond the year 2000. Further research could evaluate the performance of freshmen after exposure to the proposed outline for LUEP at the University of Uyo and other Nigerian Universities.

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