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Information Literacy Education among Faculty and Students: The Role of Laz Otti Memorial Library, Babcock University, Nigeria

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Abstract

The digital divide between the developed and developing world has widened due to lack of information literacy skills in developing countries. Library users within an academic environment have limited skills in the area of information literacy, as it is not discussed extensively in their academic course curriculum which has prompted library users with the challenges of searching, locating, identifying, recognizing, evaluating, using and applying the knowledge gained from the array of information resources; synthesizing new and old information to improve research output and productivity. This paper intends to identify the various strategies deployed by Laz Otti Memorial Library to investigate the various Information Literacy Education programmes deployed by Laz Otti Memorial Library, determine the role of Laz Otti Library Memorial in Information Literacy Education Programme and find out the various information Resources available in Laz Otti Memorial Library. The findings of this study will serve as a Blue-prints to boast Library managers/university administrators that information literacy education is a fundamental right for both students and staff and will bridge the digital divide between the library clientele and the information through Information Literacy Education.

Keywords: Information Literacy, Information Resources, User Education, Staff, Students, University Library.

INTRODUCTION

The convergence of Information Communication Technology (ICT) and the various changes in the format and medium of information resources, has led to the change in information generation, creation, storage, retrieval and dissemination Popoola (2008) affirmed that the information resources available in institutional information systems must be capable of supporting the research out- put of students and faculty of the institution. According to Ishola and Obadare (2014) Academic library use studies have evolved over the years. The problem of underutilization of library resources is a global one. Various user researches have probed user attitudes as well as the characteristics of use, reasons for library visits, and factors related to the use of the different types of library materials.

In general it was found that library users within an academic environment had limited skills in the area of information literacy, as it is not discussed extensively in their academic course curriculum which has prompted library users with the challenges of searching, locating, identifying, recognizing, evaluating, using and applying the knowledge gained from the array of information resources; synthesizing new and old information to improve research output and productivity. Thus, users tend to spend more time searching for information resources when the material is located in the library or the various information access points available in the library. However, without the ability to use information resources effectively, investments in both print and electronic resources may be a waste (Pejova, 2002) Scholars have opined that the digital divide between the developed and developing world has widened due to lack of information literacy skills in developing countries (Dewan, Ganley and Kraemer, 2005).

Laz Otti Memorial Library

Babcock University emanated from the Adventist College of West Africa (ACWA), which was established on September 17, 1959. And Adventist Seminary of West Africa (ASWA) in 1975. It became known as Babcock University by virtue of Decree 9, of 1993 when the government of the Federal Republic of Nigeria in 1999 issued it the certificate of registration as a private university. Laz Otti Memorial Library has evolved through the

years from 1959 as Adekunle Alalade Library serving as a College, Seminary and now as Laz Otti Memorial Library. The library is centrally located with the aim of providing easy access to information resources. The library supports the University's educational programmes through a broad spectrum selection, collection, organization, preservation, conservation, and provision of access to information resources through retrieval tools and appropriate information services for transforming lives and impacting society positively. The library is made up of five service points, known as the Main Library (M.L.), Education and Humanities (E.A.H) Library, Science and Technology (S.A.T) Library, Law and Security Studies (L.S.S) Library which is Internet driven with high quality stock including Law Reports, Law Reviews, Judgments of the Supreme Court of Nigeria. The youngest of them all is the Babcock University Teaching Hospital (BUTH) Library which is situated on the second floor of the commodious Administrative block of the Babcock University Teaching Hospital (BUTH). Laz Otti Memorial Library (LOML) contains approximately over 70,519 volumes spread through all disciplines. Laz Otti Memorial Library subscribes to a host of electronic resources/databases and provides facilities to access them. The Library's Internet service is superb with over 100 computers connected to the library's server manned by the Systems Administrator. Some of the e-journals and books are EBSCOHOST, AGORA, DOAJ, AJOL, HINARI, LEXIS NEXIS, HEIN ONLINE, MEDLINE COMPLETE and Nigerian Virtual Library to mention just a few. Internet search is free for all registered staff, students and community users. The multimedia division contains electronic resources like CD-ROMs, DVDs, audio-visual materials, slides, filmstrips and the apparatuses for operating them. Aside a robust and well represented book holdings, the library subscribes to over 420 Journal titles (both foreign and local) making a total of 6,073 volumes. Several electronic resources which are accessible through the On-line Public Access Catalogue (OPAC) are available. Loan services, inter-library cooperation and fact finding tools are also on ground to aid users in their quest for information outside and within the university campus.

Statement of the Problem

As users of information resources, academic staff and students are faced with diverse, information needs during their quest for knowledge due to the convergence of Information Communication Technology (ICT) and complexity of information sources and formats. The challenges of accessing, evaluating and understanding the content of information resources have become conspicuous among the academic staff and student users and call for an urgent solution. This therefore investigates the need to examine the Information Literacy Education among Faculty and Students: The Role of Laz Otti Memorial Library, Babcock University, Nigeria.

Objectives of the Study

The broad objective of this study is to appraise the Role of Laz Otti Memorial Library, in Information Literacy Education Among faculty and Students in Babcock University, Nigeria.

The specific objectives of the study are to:

- I. Investigate the various Information Literacy Education programmes deployed by Laz Otti Memorial Library.
- II. Determine the role of Laz Otti Library Memorial in Information Literacy Education Programme.
- III. Find out the information Resources available in Laz Otti Memorial Library.

LITERATURE REVIEW

UNESCO (2008) defines Information Literacy as the set of skills, attitudes and knowledge necessary to know when information is needed to help solve a problem or make a decision, how to articulate that information need in searchable terms and language, then search efficiently for the information, retrieve it, interpret and understand it, organize it, evaluate its credibility and authenticity, assess its relevance, communicate it to others if necessary, then utilize it to accomplish bottom-line purposes. UNESCO (2008) further explained that "if it does not even occur to you when facing a problem or trying to make a decision that information could help you in formulating the problem or decision more accurately and completely, then, in a manner of speaking, you may be said to be information illiterate at the very beginning of the information literacy life cycle". In most scenarios the terms "Information Competency," or "Information Fluency" or even other terms, are used in different countries, cultures or languages, in preference to the term Information Literacy. Information literacy also includes possessing the skills to not only access information resources, but also to recognize its veracity, reliability, bias, timeliness, and context. Information literacy education is of great importance in today's contemporary environment due to the rapid technological change and proliferation of information resources. Nwalo (2013) in Ishola & Obadare (2014) observed that in recent times, however, the new modes of universal access have tended to challenge the claim of the library and the librarian to be the custodians of information and knowledge. The information technology revolution that gained prominence in the latter of the 20th Century culminated in the creation of new types of resources as well as new forms of communication all of which had serious effect on cataloguing, readers' services and user behaviour. He noted that the new information environment created a shift

of emphasis from print to electronic publishing especially on the web. The World Wide Web and the internet have created a new mode of universal access whereby information seekers, by mere click of the mouse on the computer or the button in other electronic devices can have access to a whole world of information.

It is paramount that staff and Students have access to in-class and out-of-class experiences in which they locate, evaluate, and use information. Having such opportunities will also provide skills that are also needed outside of the academic environment for their personal, professional and public engagements. Lack of such opportunities may however have negative effects on their activities and may cause frustration. Ajayi and Akinniyi (2004) in Ishola and Obadare (2014) found frustration among information seekers due to the non-availability of sources, in a study of information needs of library users.

Information Resources Accessibility and Use in University Libraries in Nigeria

Information resources are information bearing materials that are available in different formats in libraries and outside the libraries. These information resources are vital, important and essential for development of individual, organizations, societies, states, countries and the world at large. These resources are documented in different formats such as printed and electronic. They are categorized into different types. The quality of the information resources available and used by library users depends on their research output. University Libraries are expected to acquire, process, store, and disseminate the resources to meet the user's information needs at the appropriate time. Goodall, D., & Pattern, D. (2011). reported the findings of their research on discovering the impact of user's access, use and students performance thus:

“By providing access to information resources, academic libraries play a significant role in the student experience. To date, efforts to assess the impact of accessing library-owned or subscribed content have largely focused on satisfaction surveys, feedback, and "return on investment" projects such as contingent valuation. Although surveys and feedback systems provide data and information on a range of service elements, they are limited in their capacity to provide information and insight into the perceived value gained by engaging with the library — that is, on a client's return on effort for using library services and resources. They are also unable to identify non-users effectively. Faculty awareness and knowledge of student use of library information resources is equally limited”.

John (2012) in Carsell (1999) identifies four formats of information materials as follows; print, CD ROMs, online and the internet. Each of these formats leads to different uses. Library information resources are generally categorized into two main formats namely; Printed and None printed. Iyoro (2004) in his study identified accessibility as one of the pre-requisites of information resources use. Ugah (2008) opined that the more accessible information resources are, the more likely they are to be used and readers tend to use information sources that require the least effort to access which conglomerates with Lansen (2009) who observed that most users tend to begin information searches on the web, using popular search engine such as Google rather than in the library catalogue. For such users, a visit to their local is an unnecessary and burdensome pass time. This trend poses a major challenge to libraries and cataloguers who have the responsibility to manage the control and flow of information no matter the media.

According to Fadekemi and Samuel (2009) Over the past decade, most libraries in Nigeria have been experiencing much difficulty providing materials to the users on account of the alarming rate of inflation of the prices of books and journals as well as depreciation value of the Nigerian economy, which also further explained in his study that the problems of transmission, storage, and display of information have been combined with the problem of getting information to users quickly. Many university libraries in Nigeria have not been able to acquire collections comprehensive enough to meet the needs of their users due to inadequate funding of the universities and 10% of allocations meant for the library as stipulated by the National University Commission (NUC) has not been adhered to in many Nigerian universities. Popoola (2008) submits that the inability of university libraries to meet the information requirements of some library users might have forced them to use personal collections when conducting research.

Library Actions that Contributes to Information Literacy Education

The primary aim of academic libraries, according to Georgina U. O (2009). is to provide access to information”. To accomplish this task, Ochogwu (2007) affirmed that libraries and other information related organizations provide a variety of information to society in different physical formats. These range from printed sources such as audio-visual materials, film, computerized/machine readable materials, etc. Ishola, B. C and Obadare S. O, (2014) in Nwokedi and Ogundare (2005) maintained that the primary objectives of any library is to ensure that maximum use is made of its information resources and services. This is because no matter how rich a library collection may be, it is believed that if the users do not effectively make use of them, the library collection is regarded as a waste. For libraries to be able to increase Computer and Information Technology Literacy; Class instruction, workshops, and special support services will help students improve their technology-literacy skills Matacio and Robertson (2011). Furthermore, with the existence of university library, provision of adequate

library resources will attract students and staff who are usually the potential patrons of an academic libraries.

New students in Babcock University are to receive a mandatory Library/ICT induction session delivered by University Librarian during their orientation week, Ogunmodede, T.A. and Emeahara, E.N (2010) in Akande (2002) opined that library orientation involves taking fresh undergraduates on a guided tour of the library. Citing University of Ibadan as a case study, the author explained that the programme normally last for 3 – 4 days and it features events like talk, exhibition, demonstration and guided tour. An important aspect of the programme is the Talk which is always given by the University Librarian or his representative. Babcock University staff are oriented on the role of the library in information literacy during the annual staff colloquium and during the orientation for new staff. The primary aim of this introductory session is to welcome the students and staff to the library service provided by the University, to explain the facilities available in the library, demonstrate how to locate information resources via the OPAC using KOHA library software through the aid of the ICT/The system Librarian also creates slide and are been shared on slideshare.com on how to use the OPAC <http://www.slideshare.net/someluzor/how-to-use-babcock-university-library-opac> The use of projectors and slides for presentations are also covered as part of the induction session. Similarly, all new academic staff are informed to meet with the subject librarians/reference librarians as part of their overall University induction to learn about the Library's services and resources.

Information Literacy and University Education

In institution of higher learning, the library plays a fundamental role in the provision of information resources to enhance teaching and learning among students and staff. It is the duty and responsibility of the library to educate its users on how to get the very best of the resources available within and outside the library to promote academic performance and research output. With the increase in remote access to information, and a demand for more rapid, anytime-anyplace sharing of information, many academic libraries have started to offer information literacy instructions (ILI) via the Internet, Okiki O.C & Mabawonku IM (2013) citing the works of Bawden, Devon, & Sinclair, (2000). According to Ogunmodede, T.A. & Emeahara, E.N., (2010) in Adio (2006) outlines the information goals of university libraries as follows:

To contribute to the realization of the aims of the University with regard to teaching, learning and research, by acquisition of materials both print and non-print) necessary to cover present day and future information needs;

- ❖ To organize the materials acquired in such a way that it not only permits but actively stimulates the use of the materials;
- ❖ To adapt these information resources and services to the ever-changing needs of the University, and the society; and there are goals and objectives for library use education in any type of library.
- ❖ To contribute to the integration of both national and international information resources within the University.

Information Literacy Education Programme In Babcock University

There is a need to create a policy which recognizes the need for information literacy with theoretically framed research-based evidence which is linked to practical consequences (Weiner 2011). Integrating and contextualizing information literacy into the University curriculum is about building skills ('scaffolding') for independent and lifelong learning in a systematic way throughout a student's academic career. The organization of the Library's information literacy programme is arranged in consultation with academic staff of the university. Inskip C (2014) conglomerates with Bruce et al (2012) in supporting the need to create a policy on information literacy; identifies the importance of "using information to learn" or informed learning (2012:524), a process embedded in information literacy which widens and builds on the view from the functional skills-based approach and recognizes the challenges presented in the workplace. It is vitally important that Information literacy programme is organized and delivered strategically and timely. This will help to ensure that it is seen as relevant and valuable by students and staff in helping them to successfully complete their coursework and undertake research for dissertations at the point of need.

The Use of Library as a course to be taken by students in tertiary institutions is very vital to academic performance because library is the bedrock of academic excellence. The library applies User education programme as a tool to propel information literacy skills among students in the academic setting through the introduction of the course 'termed' The Use of Library GEDS 105 which is to be taken by 100 level students and diploma students. Postgraduate students are not left out in this great exercise; through the inclusion of a compulsory library instruction session during the orientation programme for the newly admitted students.

McQuilkin J (2014) opined that with the inclusion of this session within the curriculum; Information Literacy Education will benefit students and staff in the following ways;

- encourage use of a wider range of appropriate scholarly sources such as subject related databases, journals, textbooks

- improve the students' ability to devise effective search strategies
- improve the students' ability to critically evaluate content of journal articles, textbooks and other relevant materials
- raise awareness of plagiarism and how to reference correctly in order to avoid it
- improve the students' ability to synthesize and to effectively and ethically disseminate the results of their studies and research

Conclusion and Recommendation

This research indicates that the digital divide between the developed and developing world has widened due to lack of information literacy skills in developing countries. In general it was found that library users within an academic environment had limited skills in the area of information literacy, as it is not discussed extensively in their academic course curriculum which has prompted library users with the challenges of searching, locating, identifying, recognizing, evaluating, using and applying the knowledge gained from the array of information resources; synthesizing new and old information to improve research output and productivity. Information literacy education is of great importance in today's contemporary environment due to the rapid technological change and proliferation of information resources. It was also discovered that Laz Otti Memorial Library have been able to Integrate and contextualize information literacy into the University curriculum via Information Literacy Education programmes through the introduction of Library Orientation, Library Instruction, Online Resources and Library Tour.

Information resources are available and can be accessed within and outside the Library through the OPAC, and the libraries are also located in the schools and departments for both staff and students to access and use in information resources which will in effect student's in their coursework and staff to undertake research at the point of need. Based on the findings of this study, it could be recommended that information literacy educator should be trained in the area of information resources and ICT in other to enhance job performance. The Library staff in conjunction with the ICT unit of the University should create seminars and workshop for students and staff to teach them how to learn to learn for life long education to promote and sustain Adventist education.

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