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**THE ROLE OF LIBRARY INSTRUCTION ON EFFECTIVE UTILIZATION OF  
LIBRARY RESOURCES AND SERVICES BY POLYTECHNIC STUDENTS IN SOUTH  
WEST NIGERIA.**

**By**

**Adebisi, O. L [adebisichief@yahoo.com](mailto:adebisichief@yahoo.com).**

**and**

**Adegbite-Badmus, T.A.**

**[badmus.adegbite@federalpolyilaro.edu.ng](mailto:badmus.adegbite@federalpolyilaro.edu.ng)**

**[funmi4badmus@gmail.com](mailto:funmi4badmus@gmail.com) 08060154012**

**The Library, Federal Polytechnic, P.M.B. 50, Ilaro, Ogun State, Nigeria.**

### **Abstract**

The study focused on the effect of the use of Library Course on the Utilization of Library Services and Resources by the students of the Federal Polytechnic Ilaro Ogun State, in carrying on this study five research questions were posed. The study sample population were 160 students in the four schools of the Polytechnic. The instrument used for the data capturing in this study was questionnaire, research questions were answered using frequency and percentages. The main findings of the study showed the majority of the students represented by 90.8% participated in the use of Library course. It also revealed that the Use of Library instructional course made the students aware of the services and resources rendered by the Library. Books were frequently used more than other resources rendered by the Library. Books were frequently used more than other resources in the Library. 25% of the total respondents rated the services of the Library as in effective. Based with the findings, the following recommendations were made. The period for teaching the course should be extended, it should be taught throughout the students' course period. Students should be taught throughout the students' course period. Students should be taught how to effectively use the Library Catalogue to avert going directly to the shelves to

browse when looking for materials in the Library. The Library authority should try to render adequate and efficient services.

**Keywords:** Library, Instruction, Resources, Utilization, Services, Indexes, Abstracts, Audio-Visual Aid, Polytechnic.

## **Introduction**

The Polytechnic Library's image is a true reflection of how good or bad the academic programmes in a particular polytechnic are. The Library as a common knowledge is the academic nerve centre of every institution of learning.

The use of library and inculcating reading habits are vital to education. Students are encouraged to individual learning to the subjects of their study. For this to be achieved they are taught to be independent in learning and need good knowledge and skills to navigate library resources for academic benefits.

This paper is timely to inform the Polytechnic regulatory authority or body, the National Board for Technical Education (NBTE) the right thing to do in relation to the place of Polytechnic Libraries. Polytechnic Librarians in Library services accreditation evaluation and Library user instructional course curriculum in Nigeria Polytechnics.

Abu (2005) asserted that the recent development in learning process have adopted the ways to assist library user's education. He expressed that importance is more placed on self-education, independent, learning, tutorials, guided teaching methods, better ways of curriculum delivery, projects, seminars and workshops while placing less emphasis on formal lectures teaching and lessons. It is imperative that a learner must be able to find resources relevant to his course of study. Though the learner must acquire the ability of self-discovery of resources. Though the learner must acquire the ability of self-discovery of resources. It is then that a learner would be ready for active and full participation in the new methods of learning and teaching.

Library user education is an inter-disciplinary course particularly in the tertiary institutions which cut across all the departments. It familiarizes library users to the location, selection of library resources, organizations of knowledge and resources for their studies.

Therefore, it is essential that library users should wade is way through diverse formats and resources to be able to effectively use the information resources in the library.

Universities and colleges of education with the exception of the Polytechnics, offer compulsory course in “Use of Library”. The National Board for Technical Education (NBTE) has not realized the rationale for the course. There are strategies and skills for the maximum exploitation of libraries and their collection that should be taught and learnt.

### **Research Questions**

- What are the benefits derived from the user education programme?
- What are the library materials the users often consulted in the Library?
- How effective are the quality of services of the library?
- What problems do users always confronted in retrieving information materials in the Library?
- What are users, level precision of the library instruction programme?

### **Objectives of the Study**

The main objectives of the study are as follows:

- Find out what impact the user education/library instruction has on the students of Federal Polytechnic.
- Find out how effective is the library materials and the services provided.
- What is the users’ level of precision?
- Find out the problems being encountered in using the Library.

### **Significance of the Study**

This research work revealed low participation of students in the use of library course. It also revealed that students were unable to effectively use the retrieval tools in locating materials in the library.

The result of this work will assist the library to render effective services and provide more current materials for the users other than books.

It will create awareness for the users on retrieval tools and how to use them.

It will also assist the management of the institutions in extending the period for teaching the use of library course throughout the students' course period.

### **Literature Review**

Polytechnic libraries are normally established, funded and own by the institutions authority which serves as its parent organization. It is a meeting point where students go to complement what they are taught and learned in the classroom and also search for more information to upgrade their knowledge. The library as a centre for information is a fundamental as energy and also as a link that brings all academic activities in one place. It is considered as the life wire of any academic institution because it provides all the necessary resources needed for learning, teaching, research and general information through books, periodicals, internet resources and non-print materials.

Aigbiremoh (2004) posited that the library is regarded as the heart of life-line of the parent institutions. Abdullah (2009) stated that the central role of libraries in any educational institutions particularly at the tertiary level is only as good as the library, because all information relevant to all the disciplines pursued in the institutions are contained in various information sources in the library. The extent of such materials and their up to datedness will determine to a large extent the quality of products such institutions.

Susol (2009) agreed that the link between education and the library is well defined and logically rooted in the fact that both educational institutions and libraries work with knowledge. The former spread knowledge values, and benefits through a system of schools, whereas the latter provide individuals with access to information resources in publicly accessible archives of knowledge.

In a similar development, Bature (2010) remarked, that Libraries in tertiary/education have assumed actual roles as a teaching agency by providing the required information thereby promoting the development of education in the country. The extent of such materials and their currency determines to a large extent the quality of the grandaunts of such institutions who will later run the affairs of the nation. A well-established Polytechnic library is essential for any institutions. As a focal point for teaching, learning and research, it is to provide standard information resources.

Singh and Kaur (2009) corroborated this by stressing that the quality of higher institution is measured by the services provided by the Library because of its unique contributions in the overall goals of the institution. Since the 19<sup>th</sup> century, Librarians have engaged in teaching people how to use the library and its resources using various techniques such as Library orientation, bibliographic instruction, information research skills, user education etc. In the early years, emphasis was on bibliographic instruction. Later to user education and more recently to problem-based learning which has information literacy at its core.

Also, Akinbola (2007) opined that the resources and information services provided by school Library resources centres are essential to achievement of students' learning outcomes. Through resources based programmes, students develop the skills necessary for gaining intellectual access to information acquire knowledge and understanding and use resources for personal growth and fulfillment.

However, one of the ways of stimulating the active use of the resource/services is by teaching the library users how to search for and retrieve materials in the library to support learning/research. Hence, the library personnel must continuously demonstrate that the information products and services they offer to their users are fully utilized. If faculty and students are to make maximum use of library and information products and services and derive greater benefits from them, they must be taught how to sharpen their information handling skills.

The importance of user education cannot be undermined, this is because user education or library instruction prepares user to become effective and self-reliance user of the library resources; thereby smoothening the path of knowledge acquisition to user which is a lifelong phenomenon. User education as one of the functions of the library is meant to compliment the provision of information to users by way of breaking the communication barrier between the information resources of the library and the users.

It was observed by Ochogwu and Gwargzo (2001) that user education provides a “useful structured access” to selected high information resources within a given subject area in continuing education and professional development. While Abdullahi (2009) posited that there is need for user education programmes in our institutions of learning because most institutions libraries in Nigeria such as Universities, Polytechnics and Colleges of education face the problem of information explosion as well as profuse scholarly publications couple with the fact

that the average library users are desirous of retrieving information material accurately within the shortest period of time. It was further asserted that one of the ways of simulating the active use of books and other materials stored in our higher institution libraries is by teaching by Library user's education especially to the new students.

Association for College and Research Libraries (ACRL) Information hand book (2004) Chicago, explained that user educations forms the bases for life long learning which is common to all disciplines to all learning enlightenment and to all levels of education. It also enables learners to master content and extend their investigations and become more self-directed and assume greater control over their own learning. Ode and Omokaro (2007) agreed that education process depends on libraries as resources for intellectual development of students, staffs and entire academic community. The library provides resources which support teaching and the curriculum of the institution. The common objective of the Polytechnic library to its users therefore is the provision of information through effective and efficient services. Though, some students still have terrible experiences in academic library because of the large collections and the appearance of new technology. With this situation, library instruction is an important means of help to users to the quick changes in the information skills and help them use the library efficiently.

Inversely, Popoola and Zaid (2007) reiterated that information availability does not mean accessibility but rather good user education programme must be harnessed to help users in locating, retrieving, having access to and using the resources in the Library. An evaluation of user education programme revealed the importance of user education in academic libraries. It is believed that improving user's knowledge of their library's collection and services could be motivating factor for usage and more demands on the library.

Aina (2004) also affirmed that the library provides users education in other to equip users with enough knowledge on the use of library resources effectively and efficiently. Through user education, the users are able to get any information he/she deserves as well as developing the skills to use the resources of the library independently.

### **Research Methods.**

Survey research method was employed to carry out this research because of its large population. Nworgu (2006) led credence to this that a survey research in one in which a group of people or item studied by collecting and analyzing data from only a few people or items considered to be

representative of the entire group. At the time of gathering the data the student population for the study was five thousand (5,000) respondents, randomly selected from various HND levels in polytechnic in south west Nigeria. This added up to 160 respondents that were used.

### **Data Analysis and Discussions**

Out of the 160 copies of the questionnaire that were administered to the students, 160 (100%) were retrieved. The data from the retrieved questionnaire are hereby analyzed using simple statistics like frequency and percentages.

**Table 1: Respondents participation in Polytechnic Library Instruction Programme.**

Reponses	Frequency	Percentage
Yes	35	21.9
No	125	78.1
Total	160	100

On the participation in the Polytechnic Library instruction/orientation programme, 35 or 21.9% of the respondents participated in the programme while 125 (78.1%) did not participate in the Library Instruction Programme. The finding obtained implies that the Library Instruction/Orientation Programme is successfully implemented since majority of the respondents participated in the programme.

**Table 2: Benefits Derived from the Programme**

Benefits	Frequency	Percentage
The Library instruction course was very stimulating	60	37.5
I learnt more about the library resources and its services	45	28.1
I learnt how to locate and use library materials effectively	55	34.4
Total	160	100

Table 2 shows the benefits derived from the programme of the respondents. Majority of the respondents presents by 60 (37.5%) affirmed that the user education programme was very stimulating, while 45% (28.1%) of the respondents stated that they learnt more about the Library resources (print and non-print) and its services. And 55 (34.4%) confirmed that they learnt how to locate and use library materials effectively. The above listed benefits implied that the library instruction programme has made the students aware of the resources and services provided and accessible in the library.

**Table 3: Libraries Materials Consulted**

Materials Consulted	Frequency	Percentage
Books	70	44.1
Audio-Visual	0	0
Newspapers/Magazines	55	34.1
Journals	35	22
Totals	160	100

Books rank highest with 70(44%) out of the materials consulted by the respondents. None of the respondents used Audio-Visual materials. 55 respondents representing 34% admitted to have consulted Newspapers/Magazine while 35 (22%) have used journals. It was observed from that student consulted books more than other materials for their nonchalant attitude towards the Library instruction programme which made them to rely heavily on books rather than journals and newspapers which are more current. The non-usage of the audio-visual however due to the recent relocation of the Library to its permanent site which has not given room for arrangement of the audio-visual materials for usage.



**Table 4: Location of Materials**

<b>Ways of Locating Materials</b>	<b>Frequency</b>	<b>Percentage</b>
By checking the Catalogue before going to the shelf	30	19
By consulting the Library staff	55	34
By direct checking on the shelf	75	47
Total	160	100

From table 4 above, 30(19%) of the total respondents went through the Library Catalogue in locating materials in the Library, 55 representing 34% consult the Library staff while 75(47%) went directly to the shelves to browse when looking for materials. There is an implication here that only a few students can use retrieval device effectively. This is an indication why many of the students encountered problems in the use of library as revealed.

### **Level of Precision**

This study examined the level of precision and it is reported under: problem encountered, rating of library resources in respondents' subject areas, assessment of the library staff in their prompt attention to respondents needs and rating of the quality of services rendered by the library.

It was however discovered by the researchers that 95 respondents representing (59.4%) encountered problems when using the library services while 65 (40.6%) did not encounter any problem.

**Table 5: Problem Encountered**

<b>Problems encountered by users</b>	<b>Frequency</b>	<b>Percentage</b>
Not knowing how to check or locate books	55	34
Not knowing how to use serial section	40	25
Do not know how to request for inter-Library loan	05	3
Unable to use the reference section	35	22
Unable to use reserve section	25	16
<b>Total</b>	<b>160</b>	<b>100</b>

There are numerous problems encountered by the users from not knowing how to check books, use serials sections, references, reserve, request for inter-library loan. The table shows that 55 respondents of 34% did not know how to check or locate books, 40 (25%) did not know how to use serial section, 5(3%) did not know how to request for inter-library loan, 35(22%) were unable to use the reference section while 25 (16%) were unable to use the reserve section of the library. However, none of the respondents attributed their problems to inadequate staff at service points. This implies that the library under study has enough and adequate staff for effective service delivery.

**Table 6: Rating of the Quality of Services in the Library**

<b>Category of responses</b>	<b>Frequency</b>	<b>Percentage</b>
Very effective	30	19
Effective	20	12
Fairly effective	40	25
Not effective	70	44
<b>Total</b>	<b>160</b>	<b>100</b>

In rating the quality of the services in the library under study 70 (44%) of the respondents agreed that the services were not effective. 40 representing 25% respondents said that the library services were fairly effective. While 30 (19%) and 20 (12%) confirmed that the services were very effective and effective respectively. Because majority of the respondents indicated that the services were not effective, it implies that the usefulness of the Library Instructional Programme was not felt. Hence it is supposed to have been the instrument or measure that would introduce the students to use of the resources before assessing the services rendered by the library and since table 5 also proved that they are not aware of the services rendered by the library, it is not surprising that the majority of the respondents rated the services of the library as ineffective.

**Table 7: Summary of Level of Precision**

Category of Responses	Frequency	Percentage
Successful	40	25
Unsuccessful	120	75
Total	160	100

Table 7 above, which shows the distribution of responses on whether the Library Instruction Programme was successful or not in helping students to located information using information retrieval devices. It reveals that 40(25%) agreed that it was successful while the majority respondents of 120(75%) stated that it was unsuccessful, this could be as a result of the low participation of student during the Library Instruction Programme because of late admission and the time allotted to the library instruction which was not enough for the programme.

### **Summary of Major Research Findings**

The major findings of the study showed that

- Majority of the students representing 78% participated in the Library Instruction Programme
- The Library Instruction Programme has made the students aware of the services by provided by the Library.

- Majority of the students represented by 47% went directly to the shelves to browse when trying to locate materials in the library.
- 44% of the total respondents rated the services of the library as ineffective.
- 70 respondents of 44% consulted books more than any other materials in the library.

### **Conclusions**

Teaching in the classroom without references of the student to the library for further reading limits the students to only the lecturers' viewpoint. There is need, therefore for Lecturers and Librarians cooperation in teaching and learning process. Their cooperation should span through curriculum planning, designing, implementation and evaluation which are aspects of strategic planning in an institution of higher learning should be applied.

There is now a monster in the name of Departmental Library now being evaluated by the subject experts. There is nothing at present like "Departmental Libraries" in any Polytechnics in Nigeria in the real sense of it. The books and journals were not processed or catalogued, no reading and borrowing facilities. No staff, whether a clerk or library assistant was appointed to be solely in charge of the books. Shortly after the departure of NBTE Accreditors, the books find their ways to the offices and personal collections of the lecturers without any trace or record of their locations.

The resultant effect of this trend is that both Polytechnic academic staff and students do not know and will not know the relevance of a well-organized library collections and services in knowledge pursuit. Many students graduate without knowing what are available in the Library for them and how to exploit them for maximum academic benefit. Subject experts should play their defined roles in any accreditation exercise while the Librarians should be saddled with the responsibility of looking into the entire library set up, collections, operations and services.

The Librarians should make it a point of duty to train the library users in maximal usage of the library resources. It is a wasteful exercise acquiring library resources without adequate use. Therefore, any amount of money and efforts spent in educating and training the library users would be a veritable investment and plausible venture

### **Recommendations.**

The outcome of this research findings concluded that the Library Instruction Programme in the

Federal Polytechnic Ilaro is unsuccessful because despite that the students were taught the use of library course; they cannot use the information retrieval devices in the library to locate their information needs.

From the above findings, the following recommendations are made:

- The period for teaching the Library Instruction course should be extended, it should be taught throughout the student's course period be made a compulsory course and a unit carrying course that stands on its own.
- Students should be taught how to use the library catalogue to avoid going directly to shelves to browse when looking for materials in the library.
- The Polytechnic and the library authority should try as much as possible to provide effective and adequate services.
- The Library Instruction Programme should be made attractive. The students should be taught the practical aspect of the work than theory to enable them apply the knowledge gained from the theory learnt in the class to practice it in using the library. Prizes should be given to the best students to make them develop interest in the course.
- The library staff should try to render the maximum range of assistance and guides to students so that they will not rely so much on them when trying to locate materials in the library.

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