

Library Awareness of part-time Students in the University of Benin, Benin City

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Abstract *This study was on library awareness and use by part-time students in the University of Benin, Benin City, Edo State, Nigeria. The study was conducted on with 300 level undergraduate part-time students in department of Local Government Management in the 2010/2011 session. The study adopted a random survey method in the distribution of questionnaire. 50 questionnaires were distributed but thirty nine (78%) was retrieved and analyzed. The study found that 24 respondents (61.53%) are more aware of the library outside library sources and 33 respondents (84.61%) do not participate in library orientation for students. The study recommends that library orientation be made a criterion for admission and actual visit to the library be a part of the course on use of the library for part-time students.*

Keywords: *Library, awareness, Part-time Students, University, Benin.*

1. Introduction

A library attached to a university, college or any educational institution is known as an academic library and plays what Nwalo (2000) called "behind the scenes" activity. Academic Libraries play educational roles with a primary objective to meet the academic needs of the particular institution for which it is created to serve. The purpose of a University Library is to enhance research projects apart from the curricular needs of students and the institution. University libraries propel their services to improve the teaching and research missions of the institutions, particularly for students. However, student location dictates their awareness and use of library services.

Part-time students fall into the category Mclean and Dew (2004) call "off-campus students". According to Adeyemi and Osunde (2005):

Two types of part-time degree programmes are offered by Nigerian universities: on-campus and those offered via outreach programmes. The on-campus, part-time programmes are offered at main campuses; outreach programmes are offered at satellite outreach centres..., in theory part-time students must meet the same admissions requirements as their full-time student counterparts. On-campus students studying part-time are taught by regular faculty, use the same facilities, and attend lectures during the evenings, weekends or vacations, as fulltime students studying on-campus.

It is the former viz: on campus part-time students that the scope of this study covers. The rise in part-time University education is attributable to increasing quest for knowledge, and growing societal-demands by school leavers and adult workers for greater opportunity to enhance their education (Adeyemi, 2001; Nwadiani, 1993). This study examines the level of library awareness of part-time students of the University of Benin, Benin City.

2. Literature Review

An academic library according to Islam (2004) is an institution operated for knowledge and run by trained personnel with a goal for education and self improvement. The library is the centre of intellectual and academic activities provides resources to enhance teaching and learning for both students and faculty (Mabawonku, 2004). Omojuwa (1993) described the library as a citadel of spiritual, inspirational, and recreational activities through reading. This is where awareness of library services becomes important to students in any institution of learning. Metzger, (1991) opined that Library services help each individual widen their scope of leaning and perception. Authors like Fowowe (1998) observed frequency in use of library services is a product of awareness of the role the library plays in educational development. Goje (1995) noted that students must have access to all resources available in the library. Ajibero (1998), and Aguolu and Aguolu (2002) find that Nigerian university libraries do not meet user expectations. As a result, most students do not learn how to use the library and are not aware of the relationship of the library to their studies. Rathinasabapathy (2005) noted

that an academic library fulfills the curriculum requirements of an institution and seeks to promote studies and research. This is why Whitmaire (2002) noted that an academic library should thoroughly be equipped like a one stop shop to meet the needs of the patrons. Payne (1983) concluded that part-time students' level of library awareness was moderate. Oluwadare, I. B. (2006) noted that part-time Polytechnic awareness of the library was more of a reading place. Ajibero (1998), and Aguolu and Aguolu (2002) found out that most University students are not aware of the correlation between the library to their education. Adesoye and Amusa (2011) observed that part-time students are quite aware of library and its resources, as such, they make use of their institutional libraries to meet their information needs. Oladokun and Aina (2009) examined among others the library awareness and use of part-time students at the University of Botswana. Their study found out that major areas of library use of respondents are related to course of study; job opportunities; career development and further education.

3. Objectives

This study set out to achieve the following objectives:

- i. To find out if part-time students are aware there is a University Library
- ii. To discover the level of awareness of part-time students of the University Library
- iii. To find out if part-time students participate in Library orientation programs

4. Discussion

Library Awareness

Awareness has to do with consciousness and responsiveness. This section was intended to discover the level of consciousness of the existence of the main University library among the respondents.

Table 1: Awareness of Existence of University Library

Question 1 Are you aware there is a main University Library?	Answer		
	Yes	No	I don't Know
	36	1	2

Source – Fieldwork, 2012

The table above show that of the 39 respondents 36 (92.30%) were aware of the existence of the University main library while 3 respondents did not. This figure therefore might establish a possible responsiveness to library use

Table 1.1: Reason for Awareness of Existence of University Library

Question 4 How did you become aware there is a University Library	Answer			
	Friends	Library Orientation	Lecturers	I don't know
	15	14	9	1

Source – Fieldwork, 2012

15 (38.46%) of the 39 respondents were aware about the existence of the University library through friends while 14 (35.89%) were aware because of library orientation. Library orientation would cover both the annual library orientation carried out for students (new and old) and the course on use of the library. Furthermore, 9 respondents (23.97%) were aware through lecturers while 1 respondent was not aware from any source about the existence of the library. Though 14 respondents (35.89%) who became aware of library orientation is slightly at par with those who became aware through

friends is 15 (38.46%), it reveals that library orientation must be re-focused and re-programmed to reach this group of students to be more effective.

Table 1.2: Location of University Library

Question 2 Where is the main University library located?	Answer		
	Ugbowo Campus	Ekehuan Campus	I don't know
	36	2	1

Source – Fieldwork, 2012

In table 1.2 above 36 respondents (92.30%) were aware of the location of the University of Benin library. The correct location is Ugbowo campus. The University of Benin runs two campuses at Ugbowo and Ekehuan respectively. However, Ugbowo is the main campus as the administrative nerve centre of the University. 3 respondents (7.70%) were not aware of the correct location of the University main library. The reason for the lack of awareness of location of the University library by the 3 respondents is not stated.

Table 1.3: Name of University Library

Question 3 What is the name of the University of Benin main Library?	Answer		
	John Harris	John Harry	I don't know
	28	2	9

Source – Fieldwork, 2012

As part of the correct of awareness of the existence of the University library, this question sought to discover if the respondents knew the name. Of the 39 respondents 28 (71.79%) gave the right answer as John Harris while 11 respondents (28.21%) could not.

Library Orientation

This section on library orientation covers both the course on use of library and orientation carried out annually for students and those for fresh students. These two channels are intended to get students acquainted with the library and use of its resources.

Table 2: Library Orientation Programme

Question 5 Was Library orientation carried out for you on resumption?	Answer		
	Yes	No	I don't know
	15	20	5

Source – Fieldwork, 2012

Library orientation serves as a compass guide or direction for students to become aware and familiarize with the library. In table 2 of the 39 respondents 15 (38.46%) accepted going through the officially prescribed library orientation for fresh

students. However, 20 respondents (51.28%) claimed it was not carried out while 5 respondents (12.82%) do not know if it was done. While the number of those who claimed it was not done is higher, however, since 15 (38.46%) of the respondents underwent the exercise show that it was legitimately carried out. Why 25 respondents (64.10%) were not aware of the exercise is outside the scope of this work.

Table 2.1: Participation in Library Orientation Programme

Question 6 Have you ever taken part in the annual Library orientation for students?	Answer		
	Yes	No	I don't know
	6	28	5

The University of Benin annual library orientation is carried out at the beginning of each academic session. This gives both the fresh and new students the opportunity to familiarize and acquaint themselves with the activities and resources of the library. In the table above only 6 respondents (15.38%) have ever participated in the annual library orientation exercise. 28 respondents (71.79%) had not ever participated while 5 respondents (12.82%) do not know about the exercise. While reasons for this downside figure cannot be readily accounted for, the library management information dissemination system in this regard should be examined and reinvigorated.

Table 2.2: Participation in Course on Use of Library

Question 7 Did you do the course on use of library?	Answer		
	Yes	No	I don't know
	30	8	1

Source – Fieldwork, 2012

In the above table, 30 (76.92%) of the 39 respondents accept took the course on use of the library. If this number of respondents (30) did take the course, it is startling that 15 respondents (38.46%) as shown in table 1.1 became aware of the library through friends and 9 (23.07%) through lecturers. The total number of those who became aware of the University library outside library orientation is 24 (61.53%). The reason for such high number might be because the course on use of library is more theoretical than practical. It does not involve actual visit to the library.

4. Findings

This study has found out the following:

- i. Part-time students are aware of the University library
- ii. Part-time students are not aware of library orientation program for students
- iii. Several part-time students do not take part in library orientation for either fresh or old students at the beginning of each academic session
- iv. Part-time students take the course on use of library but are more aware about the library from friends.

5. Recommendation

- i. The Library management should be more proactive in getting part-time students to become aware of the library through use of fliers and other information driven platforms
- ii. Part-time students should be given more reading assignments in reference section of the library that will compel them to actually visit and use the library.
- iii. Library orientation should be made compulsory as a criterion for permanent admission into school after period of probation for all part-time students

- iv. The course on use of library should involve actual visit to the University main library and on site assessment.

6. Conclusion

Part-time students like all other on-campus students are expected to fulfill the same academic criteria necessary for award of University degrees. Since the library plays a great role in realizing this dream, the extent of awareness of the library will propel its use. This study has found that part-time students' awareness of the library is below par. In the context of this study, the library should adopt renewed strategies to woo part-time students for greater awareness of her existence and services.

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