

THE IMPACT OF LIBRARY STUDIES COURSE ON KOGI STATE COLLEGE OF EDUCATION STUDENTS, ANKPA, NIGERIA

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ABSTRACT

The study was to determine the impact of introduction to library studies course on the students' use of the library and how the librarians/library officers see such programme. A reliable and validated 13 item questionnaire of the yes/no type was administered on 2640 students and 8 librarians/library officers in the Kogi State College of Education, Ankpa. Results show that students have not derived much benefit from the introduction to library studies course and the librarians have also criticized the programme for improper coordination and the inadequacy of time for the programme. It is therefore recommended that the introduction to library studies course should stand on its own. That is it should be dissociated from the general studies in education and conducted by the library department. It should be four credit earning and taught for two semesters in NCE one. With the improvement in academic and professional librarians, this should be reliable.

Keywords: Library studies course, students, library, librarian

INTRODUCTION

Academic libraries are libraries found in institution of higher learning like colleges of Education, Polytechnics, Universities and research institutions. The major function of academic library is to serve the academic needs of the institution, especially in the area of provision of information resources to supplement the study and research programmes of the users. Academic libraries usually have large holdings covering a range of subjects. Students constitute greater percentage of the academic library users. The significance of the library in the academic life of the students lay on the degree of effective and efficient use of the library and its information resources to the maximum.

To achieve these laudable benefits, the librarians have to instruct the students on how to use the library. They have to familiarize the students with the techniques of library use and information retrieval. Aguolu (1982) opened that university library in Nigeria have not been giving adequate attention to the effective use of the materials already held by libraries but seem to focus attention on acquisition, processing, cataloguing and preservation of resources. He recommended that it is time for University libraries to shift emphasis to profitable ways on how students can maximize the use being made of the material acquired. It should be the concern of librarians to train the users to maximize the use of the library.

It is a known fact in many libraries that users left the library frustrated, possibly searching for information resources assumed to be in the library but could not be found. Brewer (2005) therefore point out that systematic instruction of the students in the techniques of library use and information retrieval is a very significant development both in higher education and academic librarianship. According to Akinyode (2006) library users have to be instructed to obtain information required by making use of the total resources and materials available in the library.

Library studies in Colleges of Education referred to as General Studies in education (GSE 110) of the National Commission for Colleges of Education (NCCE) minimum standard is a structured learning experience programme by the General Studies in Education department to achieve the following objectives.

1. Enable the students to explore and exploit the library resources and services more effectively;
2. Inculcate into the students the desirable skills and attitude for effective library usage;
3. Create reading habit among the students because it enables it enables them to retrieve information of value from a library, no matter the size and complexity, with minimum delay and difficulty. Thus, it has been observed that many students shy away from the library because of their inability to retrieve information resources from the library;
4. Remove the veil of ignorance among the students who see library as a mere book store.

Zaki (2006) is of the opinion that with the increasing complexity of academic library resources, current emphasis is individual study and research and the introduction of modern communication tools. User education is the only way that provides solution for easy, effective and efficient use of academic libraries.

In appreciation of the crucial roles library user education play in the effective use of library, the NCCE has incorporated introduction to library studies as a course of study in their academic programmes. Thus, Kogi State College of Education Ankpa (KSCOE) is not an exception. In KSCOE Ankpa, library study is titled GSE 110. The course is offered at NCE one as first semester course. However, it has become a tradition that majority of NCE one student are hardly settled for lectures before the first semester rolls off, due to inconveniences arising from payment of fees,

accommodation problems and registration of courses. The basic philosophy of the introduction to library studies programme is to impart skills of library use on the students to enable them identify, locate, retrieve and exploit information resources from the library. Has the KSCOE Ankpa library studies programme achieved this objective? This has been the motivating factor for this study. Therefore, the objectives are:

- i. To find out whether the introduction to library studies programme has improved the students' ability to use the library resources more effectively or not.
- ii. To assess whether the introduction to library studies programme has inculcated in the students the desired attitude toward library use;
- iii. To find out the efficiency of the introduction to library studies programme.

On the basis of the objectives of the study, the following research questions were used:

- i. Has the introduction to library studies programme improved the students' ability to use library resources more effectively and efficiently?
- ii. Has the introduction to library studies programme inculcated in the students' the desired attitude towards library use?
- iii. Is the introduction to library studies programme in KSCOE efficient?

RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

The design of this study is survey. The study population comprises all the full-time NCE students of the Kogi State College of Education, Ankpa. The NCE two and three students of the College 2007/2008 session were chosen as the sample size for the study. The reason that necessitated the choice of students at these levels is that, the NCE two students were taught the introduction

to library studies in their NCE one. In view of this, it is believed that the knowledge of the course is still fresh in their minds coupled with the fact that the NCE two students are now fully settled for their studies. On the other hand, the NCE three students were chosen for the fact that they are at the final year of their studies. They demand more information resources for their studies, assignments, and above all for their projects.

The main instrument for the study is a 13 item questionnaire. The items are of the yes/no type which makes for uniform pattern of response and analysis. The questionnaire was validated by some researchers/librarians from NCCE Abuja. For the reliability, Spearman Brown's proficiency formula using ten researchers/librarians and 30 students of Kogi State University Anyigba were used. This resulted to an index of 0.75. The final questionnaire was administered to NCE II, III students and 8 librarians/library officers in Kogi State College of Education, Ankpa. Data collected were analyzed using frequency count and simple percentages.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

Table 1 shows the evident that majority of students did not attend the programme often. The programme has not influenced student attitude to library use positively. The time allotted for the course is inadequate for students to have benefited in terms of facilitating their search for information resources and their resource use level is barely efficient. It was also observed that students cannot use the kardex in accessing any journal. The library rules and regulations have not sharpened the students' behaviour towards library use. Assessing the effectiveness of introduction to library studies programme on library use, the level of identification, location and retrieval of information resources by users cannot be over-emphasized. It is clear from this study that a larger percentage of students do not attend the introduction to library studies

programme and even those that attended, the lectures were not regular. This situation is rather unfortunate. The poor attendance of introduction to library studies programme may be said to be a result of poor timing by the college, because the course is taught only in the first semester when registration formalities make students' attendance to lectures difficult. This is confirmed by Ishola (2001) in his study "User Education in the Institution of Higher Learning in Nigeria" where he states that "Library user education is put on the time table by the decision making bodies as an after thought, as a result the period for courses are reduced.

Consequently, students boycott lectures due to lack of interest in the programme". In the same vein, Zaki (2006) has recommended the adoption of the library instruction programme at a credit level in all Nigerian Universities, while NCCE had directed that it be taught in the first semester for NCE one as two credits by General studies for education.

CONCLUSION AND RECOMMENDATIONS

The introduction to library studies programme aims at acquainting the users with library skills to enable them access library information resources independently. The idea is excellent and highly welcomed by many colleges of education in Nigeria, but procedures used in carrying out this laudable programme have a lot of deficiencies as revealed in this study. One of such deficiencies includes low level of attendance. With the complexity of library resources, students who do not have the library skill will not find it easy to retrieve materials from the library, thus they shy away from the use of library resources. Some of them who may still try get frustrated in the process.

To remedy these problems, the curriculum of introduction to library studies should be up graded to include user awareness, library orientation and bibliographic instruction. The study reveals

that the time for the teaching of the programme is so short and this brings about rushing. To meet with the time schedule, the teachers/librarians resort to just introducing the students to the course and not teaching the course. Hence it is recommended that user instruction programme should be conducted within the two semesters of NCE one.

The affiliation of the instruction (Introduction to library studies) to the General Studies in education is never in the interest of library instruction programme because most of the co-ordination and marks are hijacked by the GSE Department. It is therefore recommended that the library instruction should be a separate course entirely. This will make the programme more effective and efficient. It is also recommended that the course should be made four credit-loads so that the students can be serious with attendance in order to benefit from the programme tremendously.

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Table 1: Students response on items based on introduction to library studies programme in the Kogi State College of Education, Ankpa

ITEM	YES	NO
Do you attended the introduction to library studies programme frequently?	700(26.52)	1940(73.48)
Has the programme influenced your attitude to library use positively?	1250(47.35)	1390(52.65)
Is the time schedule for the programme adequate?	970(36.74)	1670(63.26)
Has the programme helped in facilitating your search for information resources in the library?	1500(56.82)	114(43.83)
Has the knowledge gained exposed you to more information resources?	1430(54.17)	1210(45.83)
Is your resource use level efficient?	1327(50.27)	1313(49.73)
Is your use of library card catalogue enhanced as a result of the programme?	1001(37.92)	1639(62.08)
Can you now identify, locate, access a journal through the use of Kardex?	530(20.08)	2110(79.92)
Has your knowledge of library rules and regulations sharpened your behaviours towards library use?	1490(56.44)	1150(43.56)
Is your information search pattern now appropriate?	1480(56.06)	1150(43.94)
Whether time table schedule is now convenient	2(25.00)	6(75.00)
Whether the programme is well	1(12.50)	7(87.50)
Whether teaching period is adequate	0(0.00)	8(100.00)

Source: Fieldwork, 2009