

# Library Orientation as Promotional Strategy for New Entrants in Polymer and Textile Science Department, Ahmadu Bello University Zaria

By

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## **Abstract:**

*The paper emphasizes the indispensability of an academic library and the promotional strategies of a library through library orientation which aid in the utilization of information resources for learning. It is focused on the impact of the library orientation to new entrants which is reflected in the literature reviewed. Library orientation is perceived as various programmes of instruction, education and exploration produced by librarians to users to enable them make effective, efficient and independent use of information resources and services to which the libraries provide access. The research method was quantitative using structured questionnaire. The total population was 544 students and 163 was drawn as sample using 30%, response rate was 153(94%). Research findings revealed how library orientation can be conducted and the efficiency of providing quality services to the users. Library orientation is seen not to be effective as not all students are aware of it, which has led to an urgent need on improvement to enhance maximum utilization of resources in the libraries. The study revealed that Majority of students of polymer and textile science have not undergone a library orientation and yet endowed with a departmental library, and as well not aware of strategies to library orientation which could be through the lecture methods, printed sources, bulletin and electronic bill boards.*

*Recommendations were made to ensure that librarians pick the challenge and change the perception and attitude of students towards the library positively, which is also a core duty of the librarians who are liaison officers to each faculty.*

**Keywords:** *Library orientation, promotional strategy, new entrants, polymer and textile science, Ahmadu Bello University.*

## **Introduction:**

Academic libraries serve a complementary purpose to support the universities curriculum, resources of academic faculties and students. Madukoma, Onuoha, Omeluzor and Ogbuiyi (2013) as cited by Omeluzor, Alarape and Dika (2017) libraries were introduced in academic institutions to ensure that students have the intellectual ability and skill to access and retrieve information and as well a place of construct and framework for learning. According to Maitaouthong, Tuamsuk and Tachamanee (2012) pursuits that an academic library has four major roles which are:

- a. Preparation of resource and learning sources
- b. Supporting teaching of information literacy of educators and Librarians
- c. Organizing learning and teaching activities to develop students information literacy
- d. Organizing activities to develop educator's information literacy.

The essential objective of the librarians is to disseminate information and to ensure effective use of its resources by the library users. Odu and Edam-Agbor (2018) concluded that the essence of a library is to guarantee proper use of the library, thereby reducing the prevalence of juvenile delinquencies to the minimum, to ensure safety of available resources and services and further stated that the worth of a library is determined by the extent of utilization. Therefore the library has to perform its fundamental role in providing library orientation programme to users (Nurfaezah, Moh'd and Adnan 2014)

The library is a service and people oriented agency. Uwakwe, Oyeneke and Njoku (2016) were of the opinion that user education is a process whereby potential users to the library are made to learn how to make efficient and effective use of the library and its resources through acquisition of knowledge and skills in identification, location, retrieval

and exploitation of information. Caintic (2007) is also of the opinion that library orientation is a part of library promotion which is an integral part of library administration and management. Library orientation is perceived as a channel through which new library users get acquainted with the operations and services of a library. According to Fleming, 1990 (as cited in Shamma, 2012), library or user orientation as various programmes of instruction, education and exploration provided by libraries to users to enable them make effective, efficient and independent use of information resources and services to which the libraries provide access.

### **Statement of the Problem**

In as much as the library users are important in the context of the library services, there is need for proper orientation which in turn leads to optimal utilization of library resources and services.

It is noted from observation that students especially new entrants do not possess the adequate knowledge about the library and its resources. Mudhusudhan and Singh (2010) reported that majority of students have problem in the use of searching library Online Public Access Catalogue (OPAC) and internet services. This reason is because students do not understand and are unaware of the function of OPAC as a library service rendered to library users.

Kutu and Olabode (2018), were of the view that information technology has created new gateway for information services due to the fact that information products and services now come in a multiplicity of formats which have made libraries and information centres competitive and alert subjecting libraries to pressure and professionals are now been forced to adopt marketing strategies to improve the management of the library and information centres due to competition from database vendors, networking demands and rapid growth and cost of materials.

Library orientation was initially conducted between 1970-1974 by professional librarians in the Kashim Ibrahim Library of the Ahmadu Bello University which was a compulsory course for all students even though it was a zero credit unit as at then, Due to the introduction of the General study course, GENS 101 English and communication skills, the use of the library became a unit course under GENS 101 and is been taught by lecturers of the English department of the institution who are non-professionals in the field of librarianship.

Many libraries in Ahmadu Bello University (ABU) in the time past has failed in the area of conducting library orientation to new entrants. Library orientation was conducted formerly by the customer service

division of the main library but has been suspended for some unknown reasons, it is perceived that the non-utilization of library resource by new entrants could be as a result of lack of proper or no orientation. Previous research shows that student who partook in library orientation and make use of the library resources tend to perform better. Gilbert,2009 (as cited in Luke,2015) said students who had multiple library instruction session during the first semester reported higher level of confidence and greater use of library resources than students who had single instruction. Vance, Kirk and Gardner (2012) concluded that library instruction have an impact on students' performance because students who receive instruction had higher grade point than those who did not. Akalumhe (2016) opined that library instruction in Lagos State University, Ojo is coded as GNS 101 which is a two (2) credit unit core course for all students and usually taught by a professional librarian on which the use of library catalogue, Compact Disc Read Only Memory (CD-ROM) searches, modes of accessing the library collections are taught. The Ahmadu Bello University is mapping out strategy which would be put in place to ensure that the use of library becomes a standalone course and not a unit course taught by non-professionals who are not trained in the field of librarianship. Library orientation has been conducted in the past by lecturers of polymer and textile science belittling the role of the departmental librarian; it is against this, that the paper seeks to give an insight of library orientation as a promotional strategy for new entrants in textile and polymer science department ABU Zaria.

### **Objectives of the Study**

1. To ascertain if polymer and textile science department conduct library orientation for new entrants
2. To determine if students are aware of any library orientation
3. To determine whether students have participated in any library orientation programme
4. To ascertain strategies on creating awareness.

### **Review of Related Literature**

#### **Library Orientation**

Library orientation is a synonymous term used as library/reader instruction, use of library and user education. Library orientation is seen as a programme for marketing, prompting and a welcoming activity for

new entrants. Fleming, 1990 (as cited in Shamma, 2012) perceived user orientation as various programmes of instruction, education and exploration produced by librarians to users which enable them make effective, efficient and independent use of information resources and services to which the libraries provide access. User education is an academic programme that is designed by universities and other higher institutions to educate library users on the effective utilization of library resources and services (Akalumhe,2016).

### **Reasons for Library Orientation**

The library service should be also planned and organized in such that a user is able to get information/ information resources required by him or her promptly. This has brought the need and importance of the library orientation.

- a. Libraries are no longer the only information service industries, cafes, internet communication, free web access producers will not hesitate to market the potential library users
- b. Libraries have to market and promote it resources and services so as to improve the images of the libraries and librarians, thereby changing the perception of users towards them as information experts.
- c. To maintain relevance and remain connected to the community
- d. To increase the usage of services, library funds, educate customers, change perception and enhance the clout and reputation of the library and its staff
- e. To provide an idea opportunity among new entrants so as to be more innovative and proactive in creating first impression of library resource and services (Adekunmisi,2013)
- f. Orientation is often the first tune to which students get a complete picture of the university and it therefore plays a pivotal role in the successes of students Hadlock,2000 (as cited in Rhoades,2008)
- g. Through library orientation librarians makes a different in the lives of the students, this will benefit not only the library and students but also the institutions with its retention efforts. Orientation help students adjust to the university life and ultimately improve retention rates, graduation rates and grade point rates Tenofsky,2007(as cited by Rhoades,2008).

## **Library Orientation as a Promotional Strategy**

Promotion enables the librarians to know the needs of its users and how best to meet those needs. Promotion is informing users on what the librarians do and what librarians can do in the academic environment. It involves the mechanisms that inform the targeted groups about the resources available, services and products offered by the libraries. It is noted that those who promote library services increase the usage and change users' perception (Nicholas 1998).

The library orientations as a promotional strategy are steps and opportunities gripped by the librarian to ensure optimal patronage and use of library resources and services. Bamidele (2015) asserted that librarians can develop reading and library use plans by delving into a series of lectures under user education programmes and categorically stating focus areas as bibliographic instructions as the catalogue and index, use of electronic information resources, information evaluation, access and retrieval, use of library websites, use of OPAC, electronic databases, search strategies, referencing and citation techniques. According to IFLA (2008), promotional strategies for libraries as a means of communication is used to inform, persuade and or remind people about an organization or individual's good, services, images, ideas, community involvement or impact on society. This helps the library users to know the available resource and services.

The promotional strategy is done through the initiations of librarians, through library orientation which are essential programmes and activities through which the library provides quality and smooth delivery of library services to meet clients' needs. The promotional strategy through library orientation is a way for librarians to continue to exist because the library cannot continue to assume it's the only service provider. Kaane (2006) reported that new information providers like cyber cafes, mega bookstores, online book dealers, internet communication consultants and other web-based operators are also part of information providers therefore libraries should not assume it's the only source of information. Promotion of library resources can only be achieved through proper orientation which has to be functional and also a continuous programme. It is incomplete for the library to promote its services and resources without considering the library orientation methods.

## **Library Orientation Methods**

This is perceived as a medium through which the new entrants are located to inform them about the services offered by the academic libraries to help them in the course of their studies. Maduako (2013) cited

in Gbuushi and Ubwa (2018) explained that the methods of teaching user education consist of all types of activities designed to teach users about library facilities, services, organizations, resources and search strategies in order to equip with basic skills to enable them make optimal, effective, efficient and independent use of information resources and services available in the library. Librarians need technologies and strategies which aid in making the initial contact (Wenhong, 2006). It is paramount to note that the contact is between the Librarians and the new entrants.

The library orientation methods includes the following:

- a. **Lecture Method:** This is one of the effective ways of communication where a librarian addresses students /faculties about library collections, types of classification, arrangement of documents, general and specific services offered as well as library rules and regulations. This should be done at the university pre-matriculation lecture for new entrants, faculty and departmental orientation lecture. This method permits a face to face contact between the librarians, students and their lecturers. The library management should ensure that at the pre-convocation lecture a specified period of time is given to a librarian who stands as a representative from the university library.
- b. **Use of Printed Sources:** This consists of printed text giving instructions on the use of the library which are in the form of brochures, flyers, newsletters, and handbooks. The library should issue out at the orientation programme handbooks printed for students about the library and it resources.
- c. **Use of Bulletin board, exhibits, library guides**
- d. **Electronic Billboards:** The universities electronic bill boards can be used to display the library and its resources, location, operational hours and days as well as library signage. There is no library display on the electronic bill board of ABU, the library can use this as a way to make the university community aware of the library and it services.

### **Library Liaison Officers and Library Orientation**

Library orientation programme can be achieved as much as possible with the aid of library liaison officers to all the faculties in Ahmadu Bello University Zaria. The parent library of Ahmadu Bello University has assigned responsibilities to academic librarians who are

now liaison officers to all the twelve (12) faculties and through them the ninety (90) departments and departmental libraries could be reached. Polger and Okamoto, 2013 (cited by Yi, 2016) to meet challenges, overcome obstacles and win over competitors, librarians play a key role in effectively promoting services and resources and the role of the librarians is crucial to make this happen.

The liaison officers would be charged with the responsibility to assemble new entrants to the faculties or department they are liaising with, as well as having a comprehensive list of students, as this will enable the library management track and know the effectiveness of the programme and to improve in the areas that lapses may be noticed.

**Research Methodology**

The research method adopted for this study was the survey research design; the research is quantitative in nature. The total population of the study was 544 students of Polymer and Textile Science Department, ABU Zaria which was derived from the undergraduate student’s register of the Department. The sample size of thirty percent (30%) was used to represent the population which amounted to 163. According to Afolabi (1993) stated that 30% sample of the population is considered enough and appropriate for generalization of findings of a descriptive research. Questionnaires contained questions relating to the objectives of the study, questions ranging from Yes to No were used. Questionnaires that were duly filled and returned were 153 with the response rate of 94%, data collected were analyzed and interpreted descriptively using frequency and tables respectively.

**DATA ANALYSIS**

**Table 1: Response Rate**

Level	Questionnaire Distributed	Questionnaire Returned	Percentages
100	57	53	34.6
200	40	38	24.6
300	25	23	15
400	20	18	11.7
500	21	21	13.7
Total	163	153	100



Polymer and Textile Science department has a total population of 544 students from 100- 500 levels respectively and a sample size of 30% was used. The response rate of the total population is 94% of which 163 questionnaires were distributed and 153 were duly answered and used for the analysis.

**Table 2:**

Have you undergone any library orientation in your department before?

Level	Yes	Percentages	No	Percentages
100	30	20	18	12
200	30	20	5	3
300			22	14
400	2	1	16	10
500	3	2	18	12
Total	65	43	79	51

65(43%) have undergone library orientation at the department of polymer and textile science while 79(51%) have not. The implication of this report is that library instructions have been poorly conducted in the past this was because lecturers in the department of polymer and textile science were in charge of the library orientation instead of a librarian which is against the library ethics. In collaboration with Kaane (2006) who reported that new information providers like cyber cafes, mega bookstores, online book dealers, internet communication consultants and other web-based operators are also part of information providers therefore libraries should not assume it's the only source of information. Promotion of library resources can only be achieved through proper and functional orientation which is perceived as medium through which the new entrants are located to inform them about the services offered by the academic libraries to help them in the course of their studies. Librarians need technologies and strategies which aid in making the initial contact (Wenhong, 2006).

**Table 3a:**

Are you aware of library orientation?

Level	Yes	Percentages	No	Percentages
100	32	21	20	13
200	23	15	17	11
300	8	5	14	9
400	11	7	7	5
500	14	9	7	5
Total	88	57	65	43

88(57%) have been given instructions on how to use the library while 65(43%) have not received library instructions. The implication of this finding is that a good number of students were not given library instructions. It can be supported by Maduako (2013) cited in Gbuushi and Ubwa (2018) explained that the methods of teaching user education consist of all types of activities designed to teach users about library facilities, services, organizations, resources and search strategies in order to equip with basic skills to enable them make optimal, effective, efficient and independent use of information resources and services available in the library. Fleming, 1990 (as cited in Shamma, 2012) perceived user orientation as various programmes of instruction, education and exploration produced by librarians to users to enable them to make effective, efficient and independent use of information resources and services to which the libraries provide access.

Further more questions were asked on who made the awareness on library orientation.

**Table 3b:** If yes, By who?

Level	Option	Frequency	Percentages	Option	Frequency	Percentages
	Lecturers			Librarians		
100		42	27			
200		31	20		11	7
300		12	8		14	9
400		11	7			
500		13	8		12	8
Total		109	70		37	24

109(70%) of students were given library instructions by the lecturer and only 37(24%) were of the opinion that the instructions was done by the librarian. The implication here was that the librarian gave a one on one orientation to students who come into the library to make use of the resources, orientation was done by the lecturers as well as the Head of Department as at the time of study in mid 2017. The essential objective of the librarians is to disseminate information and to make effective use of its resources to the library users. Therefore the library has to perform its fundamental role in providing library orientation programme to users (Nurfaezah, Moh'd and Adnan 2014).According to IFLA (2008) promotional strategies for libraries as a means of communication is used to inform, persuade and or remind people about an organization or individual's good , services, images, idea, community involvement or impact on society. This helps the library users to know the available resource and services through the aid of the librarians.

**Table 4:**

Have you participated in any other library orientation elsewhere in ABU?

Level	Yes	Percentages	No	Percentages
100	37	24	15	10
200	20	13	18	12
300	4	3	13	8
400	7	5	11	7
500	8	5	13	8
Total	76	50	70	45

76(50%) have participated in other library orientation before in ABU and 75(45%) have never. The orientations available in the ABU community aside the departmental is that of the faculty, MTN Net library orientation on the use of the electronic information resources and the University Central orientation conducted for all new entrants.

**Table 5:**

What strategy do you feel should be best put in place to create awareness on library orientation?

Level	User education programme		Giving more time to user education		Creating awareness on library orientation		Through social interaction		Placing Notice on bill boards	
	F	%	F	%	F	%	F	%	F	%
100	18	11	6	4	25	16	5	3	15	10
200	5	3			16	10				
300	5	3	2	1	12	8	5	3	2	1
400	4	3			8	5			4	3
500	4	3			8	5	4	3	2	1
Total	36	23	8	5	69	45	14	9	23	15

It is worrisome that 69(45%) suggested that creating awareness is of great importance and 8(5%) perceived giving more time to user education as a good option, Awareness can be created through user education which is supported by Odu and Edam-Agbor (2018) who concluded that the essence of a library is to guarantee proper use of the library thereby reducing the prevalence of juvenildelinquencies to the minimum, ensure safety of available resources and services and further stated that the worth of a library is determined by the extent of utilization. Akalumhe, (2016) also viewed user education as an academic programme that is designed by universities and other higher institutions to educate library users on how effectively to utilize library resources and services.

## Conclusion

In as much as the library and librarians are positioned to serve the library clients, there is need for proper and continuous library orientation by academic librarians to help develop information literacy skill among students and to instill awareness among users. Studies in Nigeria by Iroaganachi (2011) on covenant university undergraduates recorded that due to the orientation, induction and information literacy programme organized for the new entrant students by the librarians made them

acquire knowledge and skills to search online reference materials. This also can be practical in Ahmadu Bello University if only librarians would pick up the challenges and face the reality on how to change the perceptions of students towards the library and what the library has to offer to them that other information services providers can not afford.

### **Recommendations**

The following recommendations were made

1. Students should be educated on the influence of library and library resources to their academic performances.
2. Librarians should ensure the use of library orientation programme as a tool to promote the library and this should be done by professionals in the field of librarianship.
3. Proper awareness should be created on libraries and its location through the use of departmental notice boards as well as mounting flyers at strategic locations in the department.
4. To ensure that majority of the students' pass through the orientation programme, there is need to have a schedule time table for effectiveness and the order in which it would be done based on faculty or departments should be scheduled by the main library.

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