

USER EDUCATION AND EFFECTIVE USE OF LIBRARY RESOURCES AND SERVICES AMONG STUDENTS IN UNIVERSITIES IN KWARA STATE, NIGERIA.

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Abstract

This study examined the role of user education in enhancing the effective use of library resources and services among undergraduate students in university libraries in Kwara State, Nigeria. A descriptive survey design was employed, targeting 68,026 undergraduates from the University of Ilorin and Kwara State University. Using Taro Yamane's formula, a sample of 400 was selected through proportional stratified random sampling. Data were collected through structured copies of questionnaires and observation checklist, with 342 valid responses analyzed using descriptive statistics and chi-square tests at a 0.05 significance level. Findings revealed that the two university libraries provide comprehensive resources and services, including books, electronic databases, reference materials, and reprographic services. User education programmes such as orientation, instruction, and bibliographic guidance were widely available but largely delivered through traditional methods. However, students' usage remained concentrated on core resources, with limited engagement in specialized collections and advanced services. Hypothesis testing showed no significant relationship between user education and effective use of library resources and services. The study concludes that while user education is important, factors such as accessibility, lecture schedules, and institutional support play a more decisive role. It recommends that university libraries integrate modern, technology-driven approaches into user education to increase engagement with both print and digital resources.

Keywords: User education, Use, Library resource, Library services, Undergraduate students, University libraries.

Introduction

Effective use of library resources and services is significant to the achievement of educational objectives in universities, as it enhances academic performance, promotes critical thinking, and supports lifelong learning among students. In higher education institutions, effective use goes beyond mere access and involves deliberate, informed, and purposeful engagement with available information resources and support services. Scoulas and De Groote (2024) described effective use of library resources and services as a focused and knowledgeable interaction with both print and electronic collections, including scholarly books, peer-reviewed journals, electronic databases, and archival materials, supported by professional guidance. Similarly, Monu, Bamgbose, and Okunnu (2020) noted that students who effectively utilize library resources and services demonstrate improved academic outcomes due to increased access to authoritative information and enhanced information literacy skills.

Library resources constitute the core information collections of the university library and are essential for supporting teaching, learning, and research activities. These resources include print materials such as textbooks, reference sources, and journals, as well as electronic resources such as online databases, e-books, e-journals, multimedia resources, and institutional repositories. Ajiboye, Bokoh, and Bello (2023) defined library resources as organized collections of print and electronic information materials assembled to meet the scholarly and informational needs of a defined academic community. The availability and diversity of these resources are critical; however, their academic value is realized only when students possess the requisite skills to identify, access, and apply them effectively.

Complementing library resources are library services, which facilitate users' interaction with information materials and enhance the overall library experience. Library services include reference and research assistance, user education programmes, circulation services, reprographic services, interlibrary loan, current awareness services, and digital access support. These services are designed to guide users in navigating the entire library systems, evaluating information sources, and applying information ethically and efficiently. According to Ajiboye et al. (2023), library services represent the professional and technological assistance that enable users to discover, retrieve, and utilize library resources to support academic work. Without effective service delivery, even well-resourced libraries may remain underutilized.

User education serves as a strategic link between library resources, library services, and their effective use by students. It refers to planned and systematic instructional programmes provided by libraries to equip users with the knowledge and skills required to locate, evaluate, and use information resources and services efficiently. Ashikuzzaman (2023) described user education as an initiative that empowers users to competently engage with both print and digital resources, thereby improving independent learning and critical inquiry. User education programmes typically include library orientation, information literacy instruction, bibliographic guidance, and digital skills training, all of which are aimed at improving students' familiarity with library resources and services (Ademola, Kuranga, & Rasaan, 2025). Through

these programmes, students are expected to develop the competencies necessary for effective utilization of both basic and advanced library resources.

University libraries play a pivotal role in integrating library resources, library services, and user education to enhance students' academic engagement. As central academic support units, university libraries are responsible not only for providing diverse information resources but also for delivering services and instructional programmes that promote effective use. In the context of universities in Kwara State, Nigeria, where expanding library collections coexist with varying levels of student utilization, it becomes necessary to examine how user education affects students' effective use of library resources and services.

Statement of the Problem

University libraries provide access to diverse print and digital resources, as well as professional services that support learning, teaching, and research activities. When properly utilized, these resources and services enhance students' ability to retrieve credible information, engage in independent inquiry, and produce academically sound work. However, despite the increasing availability, digitization, and diversification of library resources and services in universities in Kwara State, Nigeria, students' engagement with these facilities has remained minimal. This underutilization is reflected in students' limited information retrieval skills, minimal use of electronic databases, and overreliance on informal or non-scholarly information sources, which may negatively affect academic performance and research quality. The phenomenon is further complicated by inadequate and inconsistently implemented user education programmes, insufficient skilled personnel, and limited evaluation of instructional outcomes. These challenges highlight the need for a more structured, continuous, and accessible approach to user education. Consequently, this study examines user education as a strategy for improving undergraduate students' effective use of library resources and services in university libraries in Kwara State, Nigeria.

Objectives of the Study

1. Examine the extent to which user education programmes are provided in university libraries in Kwara State, Nigeria.
2. Assess the extent of use of library resources and services by undergraduate students in university libraries in Kwara State, Nigeria.

Research Questions

1. To what extent are user education programmes provided in university libraries in Kwara State, Nigeria?
2. To what extent do undergraduate students utilize library resources and services in university libraries in Kwara State, Nigeria?

Hypothesis

The following hypothesis will be tested for this study at a significance level of 0.05:

H₁. There is no significant relationship between user education and effective use of library resources and services among undergraduate students in Kwara State, Nigeria.

Literature Review

User education also known as library instruction or library orientation aim to cultivate independent, proficient library users by equipping them with the skills necessary to identify information needs, navigate catalogs and databases. User education in university libraries encompasses structured activities designed to empower students to locate, evaluate and use information resources effectively. Rooted in bibliographic instruction, these programmes have evolved to incorporate broader information literacy competencies, reflecting changes in higher education and technology environments (Adeyemo, 2018). A study by Wiche and Oluchukwu (2023) found that user education programmes in public university libraries in Rivers State are most effective when aligned with disciplinary contexts, delivered by qualified librarians and supported by ICT tools such as video conferencing and YouTube tutorials. Similarly, Omeluzor, Molokwu, and Izuakolam (2020) noted that adequate manpower and technological infrastructure are critical for guiding users through a wide array of resources, recommending targeted staff training and investment in ICT support.

Agada, Ugannaya, and Asen (2019) carried out a study on assessment of types of user education programmes in universities in Nasarawa State, Nigeria. They identified five principal initiatives including library orientation, library tours, bibliographic instruction, one-on-one consultations with librarians and user-awareness programmes. These programmes are supported by five resources such as financial, human, information, material/equipment and Information and Communication Technology (ICT) resources. These programmes are facilitated by support services, including lending, referral, inter-library loan, selective dissemination of information (SDI), and service-transaction services. Another study conducted by Ukwueze, Osuagwu and Ani (2022) on library education and its impact on students' library use at Coal City University, Enugu, Nigeria revealed that the students are more familiar with the use of library courses as a form of library education. The findings also showed that library education helped to improve the interpersonal relationship between library users and librarians, students are familiar with library services and resources which made them to be more comfortable while using the library.

In another study by Igere (2020), on the impact of user education on library use among undergraduate students at the Federal University of Petroleum Resources Effurun, it was revealed that most students acquired their knowledge of the library through the user education programme delivered via library tours, new students' orientation and bibliographic instruction. Respondents strongly agreed that user education provided clear guidelines for effective library use and improved their ease of accessing both print and electronic resources. The study emphasized that user education is essential for enhancing students' ability to utilize the diverse resources within university libraries. Similarly, Manuwa, Agboola, and Aduku (2018) examined the effect of library orientation on patron use in two academic libraries in Gashua, Yobe State, identifying classroom instruction (100%), group orientation sessions (73%), one-on-one guidance (33%), and social media outreach (30%) as predominant approaches. Participants assessed the effectiveness of these orientations, with 196 respondents (32.6%) strongly affirming their positive impact and 121 (20.2%) agreeing. Conversely, only 23 (3.9%) strongly disagreed and 20 (3.3%) disagreed, indicating a generally high level of satisfaction with library orientation programmes and their role in promoting effective use of library resources.

Equipping students with essential information literacy skills enables more purposeful engagement with both print and digital library resources. Ogundiran, Ogundiran, and Otoayele (2025) found that effective resource utilization is strongly linked to academic success, with digital access and personalized services playing a crucial role in modern learning environments. Similarly, Ani et al. (2022) observed that students mostly used libraries for textbooks and reference materials, showing limited engagement with advanced research databases. This indicates that availability alone is insufficient, effective use depends on students' literacy skills and institutional support. Ojo and Olaniyan (2018) reported a positive correlation between frequent library use and improved grades, critical thinking and research productivity, highlighting libraries' role in encouraging independent learning and supporting curriculum delivery. However, Muhammad et al. (2024) noted that students with special needs often encounter access barriers due to poor facility design and lack of inclusive services. Factors such as accessibility, digital literacy and academic relevance significantly influence library resource utilization.

Tom-George (2022) emphasized that high-quality library services including reference assistance, circulation and abstracting significantly boost resource usage among undergraduates in South-South Nigeria. Nevertheless, persistent challenges, including inadequate ICT infrastructure, outdated collections and insufficient staff training, remain prevalent in developing regions. The study shows that universities investing in user education and digital tools record higher levels of engagement and user satisfaction. As Adeyemo (2018) noted, university libraries have evolved into hybrid spaces, blending physical collections with electronic databases, institutional repositories and self-service kiosks. This transition from traditional print-based systems to multifaceted digital environments has expanded access and improved functionality. Over the past decade, empirical studies consistently confirm that library services ranging from circulation and reference consultations to interlibrary loans and current-awareness services are important to supporting teaching, learning and research in higher education institutions. Alongside traditional outreach, ICT-enabled services have been increasingly integrated though the pace and depth of adoption remain uneven across institutions.

Furthermore, Wiche and Oluchukwu (2023) found that Rivers State libraries using video conferencing and YouTube tutorials, tailored to specific academic disciplines, recorded a 30% increase in electronic database consultations. Similarly, Patience, Asifor, and Ogbomo (2024) reported that adopting integrated library systems and cloud-based cataloguing reduced cataloguing backlogs by 40%, although progress was hindered by limited technical training. Ogwo, Ojobor, and Babarinde (2025) observed high staff awareness of emerging tools such as RFID, AI-powered discovery layers, and virtual reality tours, but only moderate utilization, highlighting challenges in effective implementation. The quality of library services directly influences user satisfaction and academic success, with Rani and Sharma (2024) revealing that 78% of engineering students rated textbook availability and circulation efficiency as "very satisfactory," while 52% considered personalized reference consultations essential for research completion. Ukwueze, Osuagwu, and Ani (2022) further documented that structured library education strengthened librarian-user relationships, increasing daily visits by 25%. In addition, Ani et al. (2022) found a significant positive correlation ($r = .62, p < .01$) between targeted information literacy instruction and postgraduate research productivity. Despite these gains, persistent challenges continue to limit service effectiveness.

Methodology

This study adopted a descriptive survey design to investigate the role of user education in promoting the effective use of library resources and services among undergraduate students in university libraries in Kwara State, Nigeria. The design was considered suitable as it allowed for the collection of detailed empirical data on the availability of user education programmes, the utilization of library resources and services, and the relationship between these variables. The target population comprised 68,026 undergraduate students from the University of Ilorin (48,018) and Kwara State University (20,008). A sample size of 400 respondents was determined using Taro Yamane's (1967) formula to ensure statistical adequacy. Proportional stratified random sampling was employed to ensure representation from both universities, followed by simple random sampling to select individual participants, minimizing selection bias. Data were collected using structured questionnaires administered by the researchers. Out of 400 questionnaires distributed, 342 valid responses were retrieved, yielding an 85.5% response rate. Instrument validity was ensured through a review by a panel of three experts in Library and Information Science, confirming that the items adequately addressed the study objectives. Reliability was determined via a pilot study, which yielded a Cronbach's alpha coefficient of 0.82, indicating good internal consistency. The relationship between user education programmes and students' effective use of library resources and services was tested using the chi-square (χ^2) statistical test at a 0.05 significance level. This test was chosen because it is appropriate for assessing relationships between categorical variables and determining whether variations in one variable correspond to variations in another. Data analysis also included descriptive statistics, such as frequencies, percentages, means, and standard deviations. All analyses were conducted using SPSS, enabling accurate and organized interpretation of the empirical data. Ethical considerations were observed throughout the study. Participants were informed of the study objectives, and consent was obtained prior to participation. Measures were taken to ensure confidentiality and anonymity, and respondents were assured that their responses would be used solely for research purposes.

Results of Analysis

Objective 1: Examine the extent to which user education programmes are provided in university libraries in Kwara State, Nigeria.

N=342

S/N	ITEMS	VHE	HE	LE	VLE	$\bar{X}$	S.D.	DECISION	RANK
1.	Library orientation	187	108	36	11	3.38	.800	HE	2 nd
2.	Library instruction.	191	111	29	11	3.41	.779	HE	1 st
3.	Bibliographic instruction	159	105	66	12	3.20	.872	HE	3 rd
4.	Library tour.	143	106	68	25	3.07	.952	HE	6 th
5.	Lecture method.	148	117	53	24	3.14	.923	HE	4 th
6.	Audio-visual method	126	110	62	44	2.93	1.031	HE	9 th
7.	Library guides.	146	110	55	31	3.08	.973	HE	5 th

8.	Workshops	133	104	66	39	2.97	1.020	HE	8 th
9.	Tutorials.	101	103	99	39	2.78	.997	HE	10 th
10.	Seminars.	145	97	56	44	3.00	1.051	HE	7 th
11.									

Keys: VHE= Very High Extent; HE= High Extent; LE= Less Extent; VLE= Very less Extent; $\bar{x}$ = Mean; S.D.= Standard Deviation.

Based on table 1, the results reveals that library instruction ($\bar{x}$ = 3.41) and orientation sessions ($\bar{x}$ = 3.38) are the most extensively provided user-education programmes, followed by bibliographic instruction ($\bar{x}$ = 3.20). Lecture methods ($\bar{x}$ = 3.14), library guides ($\bar{x}$ = 3.08) and library tours ($\bar{x}$ = 3.07) also provided to a high extent, while seminars ($\bar{x}$ = 3.00), workshops ($\bar{x}$ = 2.97), audio-visual methods ($\bar{x}$ = 2.93) and tutorials ($\bar{x}$ = 2.78) although still rated at a high extent, lag behind. This pattern indicates a predominant reliance on traditional, instructor-led approaches and suggests potential gains in learner engagement through the expanded use of participatory and technology-rich instructional strategies.

Objective 2: Assess the extent of use of library resources and services by undergraduate students in university libraries in Kwara State, Nigeria

N=342

S/N	RESOURCES	VHE	HE	LE	VLE	Mean	Std. Dev.
1	What extent do you use books	154	120	51	17	3.20	0.80
2	What extent do you use periodicals	68	137	103	34	2.70	0.85
3	What extent do you use reference materials	103	154	51	34	2.95	0.88
4	What extent do you use grey literature	34	68	154	86	2.15	0.91
5	What extent do you use audio-visual materials	26	51	137	128	1.95	0.87
6	What extent do you use electronic resources	111	145	51	34	2.98	0.80
7	What extent do you use online databases	77	103	86	77	2.55	0.93
Weighted mean = 2.64 Criterion mean = 2.50							
SERVICES							
8	What extent do you use reader services	145	137	43	17	3.20	0.75
9	What extent do you use reference service	120	145	60	17	3.08	0.78
10	What extent do you use current awareness services	51	103	120	68	2.40	0.88
11	What extent do you use reprographic services	86	137	86	34	2.80	0.82
12	What extent do you use bindery service	77	111	94	60	2.60	0.85
13	What extent do you use extension/ community services	34	68	120	120	2.05	0.90
14	What extent do you use inter-library lending	26	60	128	128	1.95	0.89
15	What extent do you use selective dissemination of information	43	68	120	111	2.10	0.88
Weighted mean = 2.52 Criterion mean = 2.50							

Keys: VHE= Very High Extent; HE= High Extent; LE= Less Extent; VLE= Very less Extent; $\bar{x}$ = Mean; S.D.= Standard Deviation.

Based on the table 2, the findings indicate that undergraduate students in Kwara State universities use some library resources and services at a relatively high extent, particularly books ($\bar{x}$ = 3.20), reference materials ($\bar{x}$ = 2.95) and electronic resources ($\bar{x}$ = 2.98), while

resources such as grey literature ($\bar{x} = 2.15$) and audio-visual materials ($\bar{x} = 1.95$) are used far less. Similarly, among services, reader services ($\bar{x} = 3.20$) and reference services ($\bar{x} = 3.08$) recorded the highest usage, whereas inter-library lending ($\bar{x} = 1.95$) and extension/community services ($\bar{x} = 2.05$) had the lowest patronage. The weighted mean scores (resources = 2.64; services = 2.52) both slightly exceeded the criterion mean of 2.50, suggesting an overall moderate level of library resources and services utilization.

Test of hypothesis

There is no significant relationship between user education programmes and effective use of library resources and services by undergraduate students in Kwara State, Nigeria.

Variables	N	Mean	Std. Dev.	r	P	Remark
User Education Programmes	342	3.10	0.21			
Use of Library Resources and Services	342	2.62	0.39	.063	.863	Not Sig.

Table 3 presents the relationship between user education programmes and the use of library resources and services. The results indicate that there is no significant relationship between user education programmes and the use of library resources and services ($r = 0.63$, $p > 0.05$). This leads to the acceptance of the null hypothesis, suggesting that user education programmes alone do not determine the effective use of library resources and services. Other factors, such as the proximity of the library to students, flexible lecture schedules, and individual reading habits, may play a more substantial role in shaping the effective utilization of library resources and services.

Discussion of Findings

The result from table 1 revealed that library instruction and orientation sessions are the most extensively provided user education programmes, closely followed by bibliographic instruction. Other traditional methods such as lectures, library guides, and library tours are also provided to a high extent, reflecting the continued dominance of instructor-led delivery models in academic libraries. This aligns Igere's (2020) finding that orientation, tours, and bibliographic instruction remain primary channels for introducing students to library resources. More interactive and technology-driven formats, including seminars, workshops, audio-visual methods, and tutorials, though still rated high, are less utilized, indicating underexplored opportunities for enhancing user engagement. Wiche and Oluchukwu (2023) showed that integrating ICT tools such as video conferencing and YouTube tutorials into user education significantly increases resource consultations, emphasizing the value of diversifying delivery modes.

The results from table 2 showed that undergraduate students in Kwara State universities make relatively high use of core resources such as books, reference materials, and electronic resources, supporting Ani et al.'s (2022) finding that students rely more on textbooks and reference tools than

on specialized databases. In contrast, grey literature and audio-visual materials are less utilized, reflecting Ojo and Olaniyan's (2018) observation that availability alone does not ensure usage without adequate awareness and literacy skills. For services, reader services and reference services recorded the highest usage, aligning with Tom-George's (2022) view that these functions are central to students' engagement. Conversely, inter-library lending and extension/community services attracted the least patronage, consistent with Muhammad et al.'s (2024) report on service access gaps for certain user groups.

The results from table 3 reveal no significant relationship between user education programmes and the use of library resources and services, leading to the acceptance of the null hypothesis. This suggests that while user education is valuable, it does not independently ensure effective utilization of resources. The finding aligns partly with Ani et al.'s (2022) view that resource use depends not only on literacy training but also on institutional support and user motivation. Factors such as library proximity, flexible lecture schedules, and personal reading habits may exert greater effect on usage patterns, echoing Ojo and Olaniyan's (2018) assertion that convenience and study routines shape library visits.

Conclusion

The study concludes that while university libraries in Kwara State provide a comprehensive range of library resources and services, undergraduate students' usage remains concentrated on traditional resources such as books, reference and electronic resources, with limited engagement in specialized collections and advanced services. User education programmes are well established and delivered predominantly through traditional methods such as orientation, instruction, and bibliographic guidance. However, their relationship with resource utilization was discovered to be insignificant. This shows that user education alone does not guarantee effective use of library resources and services. Instead, other factors such as accessibility, students' reading culture, lecture schedules, and institutional support play a decisive role in shaping usage patterns.

Recommendations

The followings are recommended based on the findings of the study

1. University management should prioritize sustained user education programmes to ensure that students can effectively locate, access and utilize these resources to their fullest potential
2. University libraries should adopt a balanced service enhancement strategy to improve on the less provided services
3. University libraries should integrate modern approaches with existing traditional methods to provide a more balanced and flexible user education programme, improve students' ability to use digital resources and ultimately increase the overall effectiveness of library services.
4. University libraries should intensify awareness campaigns and targeted training to promote these underutilized library resources.

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