

EXPLORING LIBRARY ANXIETY FACED BY NEW STUDENTS IN FEDERAL UNIVERSITY OF TECHNOLOGY AKURE, ONDO STATE, NIGERIA

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ABSTRACT

This study investigated library anxiety faced by new students in Federal University of Technology Akure, Ondo State, Nigeria. The research was guided by the objectives on causes of library anxiety, strategies to reduce library anxiety. A Survey research method was adopted for the study while the population of the study was the seventy-six, (76) library staff. The instrument used for data collection for this study was interview. It was found out that absence of proper signage directing new users to the library may create tension for them. Reduction of library anxiety can be done through user education and introduction of new undergraduate students to various sections of the library during the yearly library orientation programme and to some new undergraduate students who are seeing a big library for the first time may find it uneasy to quickly adapt to the new environment among others. It is concluded that new students in Federal University of Technology Akure, Ondo State, Nigeria, faced anxiety in the course of using the library. It is recommended that provision of signage will help the new students to use the library, creation of a welcoming and conducive atmosphere for new undergraduate students by allowing them to freely ask questions on what is not clear to them, Students should be taught to have good knowledge of how to make good use of a standard library in such a way that those who may have initially abandoned the library because of the use of strange terminologies such as call numbers and notations may find pleasure to return and make good use of available information resources in the library of the Federal University of Technology Akure, Ondo State, Nigeria

Key words: Exploring, Library Anxiety, Federal University of Technology

BACKGROUND

Library is an important institution that helps new students to access information in the University. Access to information by the new students helps in reducing library anxiety they face. Crosta (2016) defined anxiety as the feeling of fear or panic. This fear is faced by the users of the library and it is called library anxiety. The term library anxiety was first used by Mellon in 1986 to describe the sense of fear and anxiety exhibited by students when using the library for their first research paper. An attempt to find a solutions to this problem led her to undertake a two-year qualitative

study involving the thematic analysis of the personal writings of 6000 undergraduate students at a Southern American University in the United States of America. Her study revealed that seventy five (75%) to eighty five (85%) percent of students expressed fear and anxiety when using the library. The findings from Mellon's research indicated the following causes of library anxiety: large size of the library, lack of knowledge about the location of materials, and not knowing how to start and continue their research. Mellon likened the library anxiety phobia described by the students to that of mathematics or test anxiety. The broad themes identified by Mellon were that students saw their library skills as inadequate and the skills of others as being adequate, and that the 'inadequacy' was seen as 'shameful'. This sense of inadequacy often leads to the fear that their ignorance would be revealed if they ask librarians for help. The outcome of the research by Mellon led to her formulation of grounded theory of library anxiety. Owens, Stevenson, Hadwin and Norgate (2012) submitted that anxiety can negatively affect academic performance of students. Charmaz (2009) stated that grounded theory is a way of thinking about data with the intent to conceptualize it. Hussein, Hirst, Salyers and Osuji (2014) observed that grounded theory allows a research to derive meaning from the collected data and analysis using creative and inductive processes. Grounded theory is the basis upon which a theory is built. This theory serves as a guide in understanding library anxiety of the users irrespective of the library environment.

STATEMENT OF THE PROBLEM

Libraries are needed by new students at any institution. Universities are among such institutions. Fraust (2007) described a university as a place of learning which molds a lifetime learning that transmits the heritage of millennia and helps to shape the future. Libraries in the universities are called academic libraries. Academic libraries have been described as the heart of any educational institution where diverse information resources both print and e-resources are acquired, processed and preserved for the advancement of human knowledge. It is indeed a storehouse of information and a record of human experience to which users especially students turn to for their information needs. Yusuf and Iwu (2010) described academic library as an indispensable store house of information for intellectual development. The information sources and resources of academic libraries which, before the advent of Information and Communication Technology (ICT), had predominantly been on printed materials such as books, newspapers, periodicals etc., have now become a combination of both print and electronic resources such as e-books, e-journals, databases etc. However, new students are among the users of the information sources and resources in the academic libraries. As such, there is need to explore library anxiety faced by new students in the Universities. Therefore, this study focused on 'Exploring Library Anxiety Faced by New Students in Federal University of Technology Akure, Ondo State, Nigeria.'

OBJECTIVES OF THE STUDY

The following objectives guided this study:

1. To find out the causes of library anxiety among new undergraduate students in the University Library in Federal University of Technology Akure, Ondo State, Nigeria.

2. To find out the strategies used to reduce library anxiety experienced by new undergraduate students in the library in Federal University of Technology Akure, Ondo State, Nigeria.
3. To determine the influence of structure of the university library on the library anxiety experienced by new undergraduate students in the library in Federal University of Technology Akure, Ondo State, Nigeria.
4. To identify the specific ways the library anxiety experienced by new undergraduate students can be reduced in the library in Federal University of Technology Akure, Ondo State, Nigeria.
5. To find out the importance of library orientation programme in reducing library anxiety experienced by new undergraduate students in the library in Federal University of Technology Akure, Ondo State, Nigeria.
6. To identify the resources needed in order to reduce library anxiety experienced by new undergraduate students in the library in Federal University of Technology Akure, Ondo State, Nigeria.

LITERATURE REVIEW

Psychologists believed that everyone experiences anxiety differently. Huberty (2009) said that everyone experiences some levels of anxiety about situations of life, such as examination, interview, project or thesis defense or when faced with a task which one has little or no knowledge about. The starting point for the identification of anxiety types is to list the different types of anxiety and associate them with their behavioural traits (Fajkowska, Domaradzka & Wytykowska, 2018) thus:

- Generalized Anxiety Disorder (GAD) or Trait Anxiety. This is excessive, uncontrollable worry about a range of ordinary situations like health, work, assignment, or finances. It is an individual's life experience.
- Social Phobia or Social Anxiety Disorder. This type of anxiety causes people to avoid social or performance situations for fear of being embarrassed or rejected.
- Panic Disorder. This has to do with irrational fear, shortness of breath, dizziness and other physical symptoms.
- Agoraphobia. This kind of anxiety involves avoiding certain situations due to fear of having a panic attack.
- Specific phobias or Anxiety. These are irrational fears that apply to a particular situation, such as a fear of people, places, animals or insects.
- Post-Traumatic Stress Disorder (PTSD). This happens when feelings of fear or avoidance do not fade after experiencing or witnessing a traumatic life event. It involves upsetting memories, flashbacks, nightmares and difficulties sleeping.
- Obsessive-Compulsive Disorder (OCD). This involves unwanted thoughts and impulses (obsessions), causing repetitive, routine behaviours.

Abdulkadir (2011) and Lee (2011) in their separate works agreed that there are different types of anxiety. Lee (2011) identified other anxieties like academic anxieties that include mathematics anxiety, test anxiety, computer anxiety, information anxiety, and library anxiety. No matter the type of anxiety someone may be experiencing it can be overcome either by counseling, change of lifestyle or through medical solution. The focus of this study is exploring library anxiety faced by new undergraduate students of the Federal University of Technology (FUTA) Library, Akure.

RESEARCH METHOD ADOPTED FOR THE STUDY

A survey research method was adopted for the study. The survey research method was adopted for the research because it was found to be appropriate because it allows the researcher to collect different opinions of the library staff on library anxiety faced by new undergraduate students at the Federal University of Technology, Akure, Ondo State. The population of the study was the seventy-six, 76 library staff. The researcher used fourteen 14, library staff as respondents of the study. The instrument used for data collection for this study was interview.

DATA PRESENTATION, ANALYSIS AND DISCUSSION

This section presents the data analyzed in this study. The data was analyzed, presented and discussed in order of the research questions used. The presentation is as follows:

For proper capturing of responses from respondents for each of the questions, a smart phone was used to record the conversations before being transcribed to papers. Responses to each of the six questions are as follows:

The first interview question respondents observed that absence of proper signage directing new users to the library may create tension for them. They agreed that if the lay-out of a library is complex it will make location of information resources cumbersome and thus provoke tension in the minds of new users. They also expressed those poor attitudes of library workers especially library porters who scare or put off new undergraduate students from coming to the library.

On the second interview question which was on the kind of strategies being used to reduce library anxiety among new undergraduate students in the library, respondents stated that this is done through user education and introduction of new undergraduate students to various sections of the library during the yearly library orientation programme. They also expressed that the library do create a welcoming and conducive atmosphere for new undergraduate students by allowing them to freely ask questions on what is not clear to them.

The third interview question had to do with the structure of the university library and how these can influence library anxiety among new undergraduate students in the library. Respondents observed that to some new undergraduate students who are seeing a big library for the first time may find it uneasy to quickly adapt to the new environment. They also expressed that students who don't have good understanding of a standard library may initially abandon the library because of the use of strange terminologies such as call numbers and notations.

Fourth question was on the specific ways library anxiety experienced by the new undergraduate students

can be reduced in the library. To this many novel ideas were offered. The respondents expressed that the use of social media such as WhatsApp, Facebook, etc., to post information on library programmes such as library registration, lecture hours and venue for the use of library course, orientation week, creation of awareness on new arrivals, etc., will greatly help to reduce library anxiety among new undergraduate students. Respondents also suggested that setting up of a counseling unit where new undergraduate students could be enlightened on how to make the best use of library resources and services, make enquiries from librarians on how to go about their challenges in the library, will go a long way in reducing library anxiety among the students. They expressed that librarians must readily be available to assist new students when they find it difficult to locate information resources in the library. They agreed that chances must be given to students to ask questions and be given appropriate answers. Through this according to the respondents, the library will be building strong confidence in new undergraduate students and dispel fear.

Fifth question was on library orientation programme used to reduce the library anxiety among new undergraduate students in the library; the respondents confirmed that library orientation programme will reduce library anxiety among new undergraduate students. They viewed that the import of organizing the yearly library orientation programme is essentially to bring to the knowledge of new undergraduate students what the library can offer them in terms of resources and services to assist them in their educational pursuits. They also stated that library orientation is an avenue where new undergraduate students are introduced to various sections of the library, the collections, the head of sections of the library and other library staff that would be of help to them. Through library orientation, new undergraduate students are acquainted with library collections and acquire new skill to access information resources with ease and confidence to use the Library.

The last question of the interview was on the resources needed in order to reduce library anxiety experienced by new undergraduate students in the library. Respondents expressed that the major resources needed is manpower for teaching the Use of Library as a course for new undergraduate students on how to make good use of library resources and services, the setup of e-library section where students, new undergraduate students inclusive, can interact with computers, use internet and other library services and facilities such as photocopies and scanners. They also emphasized that through innovative ideas that can help students overcome their fears while using the library, librarians teach students on how to search for information on databases, Online Public Access Catalogue (OPAC) and attend to their information needs. They expressed that the provisions of appropriate signage and directional guides and relaxation centre where students can watch television, listen to news and educational programmes will cause them to enjoy all the services and resources available in the library.

SUMMARY OF THE MAJOR FINDINGS

Based on the data collected and analyzed in this study, the following are the major findings.

- i. The respondents indicated that absence of proper signage directing new users to the library may create tension for them in Federal University of Technology Akure, Ondo State, Nigeria.

- ii. The respondents stated that reduction of library anxiety is done through user education and introduction of new undergraduate students to various sections of the library during the yearly library orientation programme in Federal University of Technology Akure, Ondo State, Nigeria.
- iii. The respondents observed that to some new undergraduate students who are seeing a big library for the first time may find it uneasy to quickly adapt to the new environment in Federal University of Technology Akure, Ondo State, Nigeria.
- iv. The respondents expressed that the use of social media such as WhatsApp, Facebook, etc., to post information on library programmes such as library registration, lecture hours and venue for the use of library course, orientation week, creation of awareness on new arrivals, etc; will greatly help to reduce library anxiety among new undergraduate students in Federal University of Technology Akure, Ondo State, Nigeria.
- v. The respondents confirmed that library orientation programme will reduce library anxiety among new undergraduate students in Federal University of Technology Akure, Ondo State, Nigeria.
- vi. Respondents expressed that the major resources needed are manpower for teaching the Use of Library as a course for new undergraduate students in Federal University of Technology Akure, Ondo State, Nigeria.

CONCLUSION

From the analysis and summary of findings of this research, it is concluded that new students in Federal University of Technology Akure, Ondo State, Nigeria, faced anxiety in the course of using the library. The fact that the students are new in the environment makes them find it difficult to use the library. This is especially if the technical process, availability of Internet, constant light, user relationship with library staff, user literacy, and adequate signs among other components of library environment were not in complete condition as required by the students to access the library. Therefore, the situation can make the new students to find it difficult to use the library, which can lead to anxiety.

RECOMMENDATIONS

Based on the findings of the study, the following recommendations are made:

- i. Provision of signage will help the new students to use the library in Federal University of Technology Akure, Ondo State, Nigeria.
- ii. Creation of a welcoming and conducive atmosphere for new undergraduate students by allowing them to freely ask questions on what is not clear to them in Federal University of Technology Akure, Ondo State, Nigeria.
- iii. Students should be taught to have good knowledge of how to make good use of a standard library in such a way that those who may have initially abandoned the library because of the use of strange terminologies such as call numbers and notations may find pleasure to return and make good use of available information resources in the library of the Federal University of

Technology Akure, Ondo State, Nigeria.

- iv. Setting up of a counseling unit where new undergraduate students could be enlightened on how to make the best use of library resources and services, make enquiries from librarians on how to go about their challenges in the library, will go a long way in reducing library anxiety among the students in Federal University of Technology Akure, Ondo State, Nigeria.
- v. Organizing a yearly library orientation programme is essentially to bring to the knowledge of new undergraduate students what the library can offer them in terms of resources and services to assist them in their educational pursuits in Federal University of Technology Akure, Ondo State, Nigeria.
- vi. Innovative ideas can help students overcome their fears while using the library. Staff of the library should teach students on how to search for information on databases, Online Public Access Catalogue (OPAC) and attend to their information needs in Federal University of Technology Akure, Ondo State, Nigeria.

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