
Orientation Programs are Supportive to Improve the Utilization of Academic Library- with Special Reference to Library Professionals of Self Financing Engineering College at Madurai and Dindigul Districts of Tamilnadu, India

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Abstract:

The growth of information technology has brought about a drastic change in the society. Today information is regarded as primary and vital resource for national development. The emergence of the Orientation program includes educating or instructing the user in topics like introduction to libraries, brief explanation on library techniques and the available information sources. The orientation program helps to create a rapport between the library personnel and the users. Different kinds of library orientation program are in use depending on the type of the user and information to be taught. Some programs are complicated while some are simple with just boards displaying information about opening hours, Library information rules, Library timings and staff maintained. Lecture methods of orientation program may be formal / informal. Some methods in academic libraries are the workshop, demo on the CD-ROM, online services practice workshop, advertising papers, journals, posters,

pamphlets etc. Library professionals should know the latest development and let the users of library also know. User orientation programs play a vital role in communication between the library and its users.

Key words: Orientation Program, Principles, information sources, academic libraries

1. INTRODUCTION

Orientation has been defined as an introduction to some strange subject or a particular new situation. Successful organizations, whether they are educational institutions or any other information-based organization, have often developed extensive orientation programs to assist library professionals in learning the basic facts or principles to run a library efficiently. Thus, orientation is often the first socializing program or marketing tool in the academic library. The task of providing some type of orientation program for new library professionals has been implemented by libraries across the State for a number of years. Traditionally, orientation programs in the library Professionals environment have been primarily centered around three categories: personal contact, teaching, and tools¹. Library orientations for academic administration, faculty, and support staff are the perfect place to begin recognizing and addressing this user group's information needs and information seeking behaviors, as they are as much of an integral part of the functioning academic environment as are the faculty and students and should not be overlooked

Library orientation program encourages the collaboration of faculty and the librarian to achieve the goal of helping students to develop the skills required to recognize the various information sources and to use them in correct and suitable ways. A library Professional orientation program is a

service created to introduce library users to the library environment and informally assess users' research skills (Kaetrena Davis, Gregg Graniteville Library, University of South Carolina Aiken, personal communication, 5 December 2010). The program aims to educate library users on how to use the library and often includes bibliographic education and information literacy skills. Bibliographic education enables users to define the required information, its site, its evaluation, and the right usage, whereas information literacy instruction enables users to have "the ability to recognize when information is needed", and then "locate, evaluate and use effectively the needed information" (American Library Association, 1989). There are differences between the theoretical objectives and the practical objectives of a library professional orientation program. Theoretical objectives are achieved through activities with a set of abilities that provide the library users with theoretical knowledge to enable them to know several ideas about the library such as library services.

Many academic libraries' main goal is the service to the faculty, students and staff of their respective institutions. However, often the needs of the administration and the staff, as library users and information seekers, may be neglected or inadvertently dismissed².

The orientation program is intended to offer the library and media center's services and resources to the user group, to encourage them to make use of their services and resources, and to provide them some basic skills to address their information needs independently. Additionally, library staffs expect the academic administration, faculty, and support staff to be able to independently:

- Locate service points in the library;
- Become familiar with the library's physical and virtual spaces;
- Be able to search the online catalog and databases;

- Order resources from other branch libraries;
- Feel comfortable approaching library staff for help; and
- Become aware of the ways the library can assist them with their information needs.

There are several aspects to be considered in designing a library orientation program. First, the logistics to be taken care, such as³:

- How long should the orientation session be?
- What time of day should it is held?
- What materials should be covered and what can be left out?
- Should pre-registration be required?
- How should the library advertise the orientation session?
- What take-home materials should be provided?
- How will the library evaluate the effectiveness of the session?

2. Benefits

The literature abounds with evidence of the benefits of a well-designed and implemented orientation program⁴. Frequently cited advantages include:

- Increasing the commitment of the staff to the organization and reducing turnover, which saves money (and frustration) in the long run;
- Clarifying expectations and providing reliable information;
- Shortening the learning curve, increasing productivity, and decreasing mistakes;
- Helping the new employee feel like a valued team member in which the library has an investment;

- Increasing employee confidence and relieving anxiety; and
- Contributing to a positive relationship and good communication between the new employee, the supervisor and other close coworkers.

3. The Materials Covered

- The library's and media center's web pages and how to find them;
- The physical layout of the library building and location of various types of resources and service points;
- Borrowing procedures and privileges;
- An explanation of reference services;
- An introduction to media center services;
- Searching the catalog;
- Requesting books and articles;
- How reserve materials work; and
- Searching databases.

To evaluate the effectiveness of the orientation, attendees were asked to fill out a brief questionnaire of ten questions after the session. The questionnaire was aimed to know about the attendees:

- Had they visited the library or media center before the session?
- Had they ever visited the library or media center's web sites before the session, and if so, what for?
- Had they used the catalog before?
- What did they find particularly helpful in the session?
- Was there anything not covered they would have liked to learn about?
- Do they now feel more comfortable using the library and media center?
- Would they be interested in advanced training sessions?

- Was the session too long or too short?
- Was the session held at a convenient time of day, if not, why? And
- Any additional comments or suggestions

4. Orientation Program Principles

The orientation program strives to plan the program activities according to the following principles:

- Orientation should be viewed as an ongoing process, not an event.
- Orientation should begin before the new faculty member arrives on campus and extend throughout the first year and beyond.
- Orientation activities should focus on the individual and potential interactions with the university, school, and home department.
- Wherever possible, orientation activities should attempt to achieve synergy by involving multiple schools and units.
- University, Engineering College and arts and science college level orientation should be coordinated wherever possible.
- Orientation should have a quality assurance process to continuously upgrade and refine the program and gather regular feedback from users.
- The orientation process should be flexible enough to accommodate varying needs and to provide reasonable convenience for participants

5. Literature Review

Julien (2000)⁵ revealed in a national survey of library orientation program in Canadian academic libraries, that

trends in teaching objectives, methods and content of library instruction have witnessed little change in the past five years. She reported that instructional librarians continue to face numerous challenges, particularly with regard to limited resources available and faculty and student attitudes. The study highlighted that library orientation program should concentrate on research strategy, information evaluation skills, access to information sources, and using databases. Although there are obvious examples where instructors have taken responsibility for learning how to teach well, and, where libraries have devoted significant resources to the instructional function, Julien (2000) opined that there is a remarkable level of apparent neglect for instructions in Canadian academic libraries.

Many researchers studied information literacy instruction as part of the orientation program conducted by academic and public libraries. Cameron, Wise and Lottridge (2007)⁶ suggested that college and university libraries provide course-related instructions, tutorials, and other interventions to support students' development of information literacy skills. They added that many library instructions encourage faculty-librarian collaboration with the goal of helping students to develop the skills.

Kraemer, Lombardo and Lepkowski (2007)⁷ compared three methods of library instruction program: online instructions only, live instructions, and the "hybrid" combination of live instructions and online tutorials. The results showed that there were differences in student performance in relation to pedagogy. It is suggested that online instructions is one of the comprehensive information literacy programs used in library orientation, which must also include librarian-student interaction. Using a hybrid instructional model, librarians can address multiple learning styles, engage students with the latest technology, respond to external

pressures to move into an online teaching environment, and still maintain the physical contact that is vital to student learning.

In Jordan, Klaib (2009)⁸ found that information literacy instructions are not comprehensive programmes. No more than five responding libraries (35.7%) offer students the required lectures that inform them about the importance of libraries and library departments; provide practical training on online access to databases through the Internet; and train users on the usage of periodical indexes. Besides, the curricula offered to more than 78.6% of the respondents lacked courses or exercises that support library usage. Findings from information literacy instructions offered to students at Zarqa Private University, revealed that the program concentrates on the theoretical, rather than the practical aspects.

6. Research Methodology

6.1. Research Objectives

- To identify the users' opinion related to achievement in library orientation
- To know users' perception regarding orientation program.
- To analysis users preference of orientation program.
- To identify necessity to conduct the orientation program for librarian.

6.2 Data Collection

Primary data were collected through a structured questionnaire, which was distributed among the respondents in library professional of Self financing Engineering Colleges located at Madurai and Dindigul Districts, Tamilnadu. The questionnaire contained open-ended questions and it also

incorporated various parameters that were identified for analyzing those parameters.

6.3 Sample Size

The sample size consists of 52 respondents who had library professional and only covered Librarian and Assistant Librarian. Convenience sampling technique was used for a period of 2 months (November – December 2012).

6.4 Research Design

Question-wise analysis was carried out with the help of Microsoft Excel Workbook and SPSS version 15.0. The questionnaire was based on difference variables, which were considered to be significant while using Public Library. Some analytical techniques like tables, percentage, and chi-square test were used to analyze the collected data.

Table 1. Demographic Factors of Respondents

Gender	Frequency	Percentage
Male	30	57.70
Female	22	42.30
Total	52	100.00
Age	Frequency	Percentage
Below 25 Years	16	30.80
26 Years to 35 Years	22	42.30
Above 36 Years	14	26.90
Total	52	100.00
Qualification	Frequency	Percentage
Master Degree	24	46.20
Research Degree	28	53.80
Total	52	100.00
Experience	Frequency	Percentage
Below 5 Years	26	50.00
6 Years to 15 Years	22	42.30
Above 16 Years	4	7.70
Total	52	100.00

Source: Primary Data

Table 1 displays the distribution of respondents based on their gender of the total respondents 57.70 per cent are males and 42.30 per cent are females.

Age group of the respondents taken for the study of the total respondents, 42.30 per cent belong the age group of 26 – 35 years followed by 30.80 per cent belonging to the age group of less then 25 years and remaining above 36 years category form 26.90 per cent.

Educational qualifications of the respondents find out the study of the total respondents, 53.80 per cent of the respondents are in their research degree level and 46.20 per cent of respondents whose qualification level is master degree.

Library professional experience among the respondents covered under this study. It is found from the table that 50.00 per cent of the respondents belong below 5 years followed by 42.30 per cent belonging to the group of 6 years to 15 years and remaining above 16 years category form 07.70 per cent.

Table 2 Opinions on Conducting Orientation Program

Gender	Important		Some What Important		Not Important		Chi-square analysis *	
	N	%	N	%	N	%	Calculated χ^2 value	Remarks
OPINION ON CONDUCTING ORIENTATION PROGRAM								
Male	11	21.15%	14	26.92%	5	9.62%	2.41	Accepted
Female	10	19.23%	10	19.23%	2	3.85%		
Total	21	40.38%	24	46.15%	7	13.46%		

Source: Primary Data * **Degree of freedom is 2 and Chi-square Table value (0.05) is 5.99**

Table 2 show that the gender wise opinion of conducting orientation program. Out of 100 per cent respondents, 40.38 per cent respondents are accepted conducting orientation program for library professionals is important among this 21.15 per cent male and 19.23 per cent female. 46.15 per cent respondents' opinion somewhat important, 26.92 per cent male and 19.23 per cent female. From that, there is no significant difference

between gender of respondents and their opinion about conducting orientation program.

Table 3 Opinions on Necessity to Conduct the User Orientation

Experience	Agree		Neutral		Disagree		Chi-square analysis *	
	N	%	N	%	N	%	Calculated χ^2 value	Remarks
TO CREATE THE AWARENESS OF LIBRARY RESOURCES								
BELOW 5 YEARS	23	44.23%	1	1.92%	2	3.85%	9.25	Accepted
6 YEARS TO 15 YEARS	14	26.92%	2	3.85%	6	11.54%		
ABOVE 16 YEARS	4	7.69%	0	0.00%	0	0.00%		
Total	41	78.85%	3	5.77%	8	15.38%		
TO INCREASE THE KNOWLEDGE AMONG USERS								
BELOW 5 YEARS	8	15.38%	14	26.92%	4	7.69%	12.91	Rejected
6 YEARS TO 15 YEARS	4	7.69%	12	23.08%	6	11.54%		
ABOVE 16 YEARS	3	5.77%	0	0.00%	1	1.92%		
Total	15	28.85%	26	50.00%	11	21.15%		

* Degree of freedom is 4 and Chi-square Table value (0.05) is 9.49

Table 3 shows that, out of 100 per cent respondents, 78.85 per cent respondents are agreed for conducting orientation program to create awareness of library resources. From that there is no significant relationship between experience of respondents and their opinion about conducting orientation to create awareness of library resources.

From above Table, 50 per cent respondents' opinion is neutral about orientation program increase knowledge and 28.85 per cent respondents are agreed. So there is significant relationship between experience of respondents and opinion about orientation program increases knowledge.

Table 4 Opinions on Orientation Programme Preference

Age	More preferable		Some what preferable		Not preferable		Chi-square analysis *	
	N	%	N	%	N	%	Calculated χ^2 value	Remarks
SPECIAL SPEECH FROM RESOURCE PERSON								
BELOW 25 YEARS	4	7.69%	12	23.08%	0	0.00%	8.93	Accepted
26 YEARS TO 35 YEARS	7	13.46%	10	19.23%	5	9.62%		
ABOVE 36 YEARS	5	9.62%	4	7.69%	5	9.62%		
Total	16	30.77%	26	50.00%	10	19.23%		
CONDUCT THE PAPER PRESENTATION AND WORKSHOP								
BELOW 25 YEARS	10	19.23%	4	7.69%	2	3.85%	0.78	Accepted
26 YEARS TO 35 YEARS	14	26.92%	5	9.62%	3	5.77%		
ABOVE 36 YEARS	8	15.38%	3	5.77%	3	5.77%		
Total	32	61.54%	12	23.08%	8	15.38%		
BOOK EXHIBITION								
BELOW 25 YEARS	2	3.85%	6	11.54%	8	15.38%	6.44	Accepted
26 YEARS TO 35 YEARS	4	7.69%	8	15.38%	10	19.23%		
ABOVE 36 YEARS	5	9.62%	7	13.46%	2	3.85%		
Total	11	21.15%	21	40.38%	20	38.46%		

Source: Primary Data * Degree of freedom is 4 and Chi-square Table value (0.05) is 9.49

Table 4 shows that, out of 100 per cent respondents, 30.77 per cent respondents are more preferable about the special speech from resource person. 7.69 per cent respondents' age group of below 25 years, 13.46 per cent respondents' age group of between 26 to 35 years and 9.62 per cent respondents' age group of above 36 years. So there is no significant relationship between age of respondents and their opinions about the

conducting special speech from resources person in orientation program.

61.54 per cent respondents are more preferable about the paper presentation and workshop.19.23 per cent respondents' age group of below 25 years, 26.92 per cent respondents' age group of between 26 to 35 years and 15.38 per cent respondents' age group of above 36 years. So there is no significant relationship between age of respondents and their opinions about the conducting paper presentation and workshop in orientation program.

Only 21.15 per cent respondents are more preferable about the book exhibition. 3.85 per cent respondents' age group of below 25 years, 7.69 per cent respondents' age group of between 26 to 35 years and 9.62 per cent respondents' age group of above 36 years. So there is no significant relationship between age of respondents and their opinions about the conducting book exhibition in orientation program.

Table 5 Achievement of the Library Orientation Programme

Qualification	Agree		Neutral		Disagree		Chi-square analysis *	
	N	%	N	%	N	%	Calculated χ^2 value	Remarks
TO CREATE A GOOD IMPRESSION ON LIBRARY								
MASTER DEGREE	17	32.69%	6	11.54%	1	1.92%	4.58	Accepted
RESEARCH DEGREE	14	26.92%	10	19.23%	4	7.69%		
Total	31	59.62%	16	30.77%	5	9.62%		
TO EMPHASIZETHE IMPORTANCE OF LIBRARY IN SUPPORTING SEARCH SKILLS								
MASTER DEGREE	13	25.00%	11	21.15%	0	0.00%	5.97	Accepted
RESEARCH DEGREE	16	30.77%	8	15.38%	4	7.69%		
Total	29	55.77%	19	36.54%	4	7.69%		
TO PUBLICIZE THE LIBRARY MISSION AND ITS TASKS.								
MASTER DEGREE	13	25.00%	7	13.46%	4	7.69%	11.97	Rejected

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RESEARCH DEGREE	18	34.62%	9	17.31%	1	1.92%		
Total	31	59.62%	16	30.77%	5	9.62%		
TO PROVIDE USER ,THE KNOWLEDGE OF LIBRARY CATALOGUE								
MASTER DEGREE	9	17.31%	7	13.46%	8	15.38%	0.06	Accepted
RESEARCH DEGREE	10	19.23%	8	15.38%	10	19.23%		
Total	19	36.54%	15	28.85%	18	34.62%		
TO TEACH THE USER, ABOUT DIFFERENT APPROACHES TO INFORMATION SOURCES								
MASTER DEGREE	19	36.54%	0	0.00%	5	9.62%	9.12	Rejected
RESEARCH DEGREE	18	34.62%	7	13.46%	3	5.77%		
Total	37	71.15%	7	13.46%	8	15.38%		
TO TEACH THE USER ,TO DEFINE THE REQUIRED INFORMATION								
MASTER DEGREE	18	34.62%	2	3.85%	2	3.85%	8.94	Rejected
RESEARCH DEGREE	14	26.92%	6	11.54%	8	15.38%		
Total	32	61.54%	8	15.38%	10	19.23%		
TO CREATE AWARENESS ON LIBRARY SERVICES AND ITS BENEFIT TO THE USERS								
MASTER DEGREE	19	36.54%	1	1.92%	4	7.69%	8.92	Rejected
RESEARCH DEGREE	14	26.92%	7	13.46%	7	13.46%		
Total	33	63.46%	8	15.38%	11	21.15%		
TO SENSITIZE THE USER ON THE IMPORTANCE OF READING AND ITS PROMOTION								
MASTER DEGREE	19	36.54%	0	0.00%	5	9.62%	12.56	Rejected
RESEARCH DEGREE	13	25.00%	8	15.38%	7	13.46%		
Total	32	61.54%	8	15.38%	12	23.08%		
TO PROVIDE USERS WITH CLEAR IDEA ABOUT ELECTRONIC LIBRARY COLLECTION								
MASTER DEGREE	14	26.92%	10	19.23%	0	0.00%	5.73	Accepted
RESEARCH DEGREE	10	19.23%	17	32.69%	1	1.92%		
Total	24	46.15%	27	51.92%	1	1.92%		

Source: Primary Data * Degree of freedom is 2 and Chi-square Table value (0.05) is 5.99

Table 5 shows that qualification wise analysis of library professionals related to achievement through orientation program. Most of the respondent's opinion is 'Agree' and 'Neutral'.

So most of the respondents opinion regarding, achievement of the library orientation program out of nine factors, four factors accepted relationship with qualification and the remaining factors is rejected.

7. Findings

- All respondents have given opinion as 'more important' regarding the conduction of Library orientation program.
- Most of the respondents given more preference to conduct the user orientation program.
- To conduct the papers presentation, Workshop and Speech from resource person is the most preferred option in Orientation Program.
- Library Orientation Program helps to develop the Library routines and develop good idea about Library extension services.

8. Suggestions

More attention has to be given to various methods of library orientation program, which focus on teaching students the practical skills that enable them to access the required information and encourage them to increase library usage;

Specialized credit, or non-credit library skills courses, or exercises/units should be offered as part of the study plan, which support library usage and scientific research; and

More studies on the suitability of contents and feedback on library orientation program have to be conducted from time

to time to inform the library administrators on the extent of achievement of the instructional objectives.

9. Conclusion

The most important role of academic library professionals is to direct the users to utilize the library resources effectively. This is possible by conducting the user education program periodically. Also the vast developments of the e-resources and familiarity of online resources to the users are forcing the library professionals to update their own skills. After the development of Internet and e resources the library professionals are facing lot of challenges and opportunities. In this situation the librarians not only should update their skills about e-resources but also understand the user's need, identify the relevant resource for the user's requirement. This is the only way to provide better service to the users.

This paper points out that the user education is definitely a relevant concept to stimulate the user's attitude towards the maximum use of library resources properly. Prior conducting the orientation program the library professionals should classify the user's type i.e. students or faculty and to which category they belong to either the fresher group or the existing user group, and the available resources in library. Accordingly the librarians should plan and execute the program to be a successful one.

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