A REVIEW OF THE TRENDS AND ISSUES IN LIBRARY AND INFORMATION SCIENCE EDUCATION IN NIGERIA

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Abstract

This paper reviews the growth of Library and Information Science Education in Nigeria from inception. The study reviewed what has been readily available and captured on the trends and issues in Library and Information Science Education in Nigeria. Library and Information Science has become an integral component of tertiary education and now acts as catalyst for transformation in education. Challenges and issues were examined. The paper recommends that LIS curriculum must be re-structured keeping in view the new technological trends in the profession and demand of job market in digital era; that workshops and laboratories in Nigerian library schools should be upgraded to acceptable standard with necessary facilities put in place; efforts should be made to promote collaboration opportunities in LIS education, and the problem of shortage of manpower in the LIS schools should be addressed by appointing qualified Library science Educators to improve the staffing level in the LIS schools. The paper concluded that if proper management of human, financial and material resources was achieved then the librarians will be relied upon for national development.

Key words: Library and Information Science, LIS Education, Library Schools.

Introduction

Schools have been established in Nigeria since 1842, however, no thought was given to the establishment of libraries and training of librarians until the second half of the 20th Century. This was the time, when modern libraries that were first established in Nigeria as the result of the establishment of research institute and their libraries, had acute staff problem. The library can be said to be the store house for the world's intellectual property and a center for dissemination of knowledge. Librarians, who are the custodians of information, play active roles in information dissemination to knowledge seekers. Initially, there was no formal training for librarians; young

people only learned to be librarians while on the job with more experienced practitioners. And librarian's duties then did not require specialized professional training.

Beginning from the late 19th century, Librarian's tasks gradually started becoming more complex and more dependent on technology. Hence, the study of Library Science moved from the work setting to professional schools in the universities and the polytechnics. The emergence of library schools in Nigeria has come a long way since the first school at University College Ibadan in 1960. At the core of the concept of the "information" are those people who manage the acquisition, organization and dissemination of information to an identifiable group of users. The operation of the knowledge and skills is undertaken is diverse number of work situations. The delivery mechanism and the nature of the dissemination process could vary and need not necessarily be technologically based. Thus, the traditional environment for the information professionals has usually been the library.

Several changes have been witnessed in the country at large and in the library profession in particular technologically or otherwise. Igwe (2005) posited that new trends and development worldwide emerged posing great challenges for library and information science education in Nigeria. The key to library development anywhere is personnel while modern librarianship requires personnel with adequate education and training. In the United States and Canada, education designed for the professional librarian is at the post graduate level whereby the prospective librarians attend one or two years professional education programs leading to a master's degree in library science or its equivalent such as information science (Halsey 2009). The Carnegie Corporation in collaboration with the British government founded the first regional library school in Africa in Ghana in 1944. The corporation also in 1960 established the library school at Ibadan, Nigeria. Now known as the school of Library, Archival, and Information

Studies, it offers paraprofessional training and bachelors, masters, and doctoral degrees to enable students to become professional librarians (Halsey 2009).

Traditionally, professional librarians studied subjects in the liberal arts, such as literature or history before beginning their professional education. However, many librarians now have their undergraduate degrees in the natural sciences, computer science, business, librarianship and other related areas. At the beginning the libraries were manned by the Non indigene staff. With the proliferation of libraries over time, it became apparent that the existing non indigene staff could hardly cope with the growing number of libraries.

Several reasons were advanced for the growing needs to promote library education in Nigeria then. Some of these, as put forward by Ojo-igbinoba (1995), include the following:-

- The demand for trained and professional librarians.
- There were libraries with large buildings and growing collections, which required expert management.
- The increase in world population and literacy output required more libraries and qualified librarians to man them.
- Trained manpower is required for the complex and scientific nature of library operations.

The question that arises is how the library schools or faculties prepare the librarians to meet job market that is demanding, constantly changing, challenging with much diversified needs. It is inview of this that this study attempts to do a review of the trends and issues in library and information science education in Nigeria.

A documentary research method was adopted for the study. This is because the researcher consulted documentary sources a number of literatures were consulted by the researcher. The researcher sought to find the perception, options and observation regarding the library and

information science education in Nigeria. Journals were consulted for the purpose of review. Observation as means of data collection was also used

Nature of Library and Information Science Education in Nigeria

Nwalo (2000) on collaboration in the Provision and utilization of IT facilities for library and information science education in Nigeria posited that library and information science education in Nigeria today cannot be very useful and desirable without the proper and effective preparation of new generation librarians to effectively use the ICT in their professional practices. For this task to be accomplished, it requires the acquisition of new resources, expertise and careful planning.

Anyanwu, et al (2013) in their study on repositioning Library and Information Science graduates in Nigeria for self-employment through entrepreneurship education, argued that the entrepreneurship education in Library and Information Science course content will not deliver its dividends if efforts are not made to ensure that the programme is practical orientated and it will be difficult for graduate of Library and Information Science to secure self-employment. They recommend among others the upgrading of workshops and laboratories in Library schools.

Abioye (2013) in his study on Enhancing Library and Information Science Education through cross boarder collaboration between University Ibadan, Nigeria and University of Ghana found out that the two schools are lacking in terms of manpower i.e. teachers and the level at which the two schools are collaborating is poor and therefore recommended that the boards of the two Library and information Science schools should as a matter of urgency meet to work out modalities for collaboration between the institution.

The new trend in library education is that relevant and modern competencies on ICT have been infused in most of the curriculum of library schools globally; therefore curriculum of library schools in Nigeria should not be excluded as such necessary restructuring of the curriculum should be evident in library schools in Nigeria (Kamba, 2011). Khan and Batti (2012) revealed that the emergence of new information and communication technology, internet, World Wide Web pose new challenges for library professionals and library education in general. It requires library educators to become positively energetic, equipped with skills and capabilities to survive in this new digital environment.

Ochogwu (1992) in his work instructional and research resources for library education in Nigeria found out that quite a number of library schools has some kinds of instrumental teaching aids and suggested that permanent forum be established between the library schools and the chief executives of universities to discuss issues affecting library and information science departments and the publication of more information resources resulting from more research by both educators and practitioners.

Nwosu, Eyisi, & Ekene (2013) in their study found out that NUC has not yet come out with the minimum academic standard for postgraduate programme in library and information science schools in Nigeria. According to them what are on ground are the different curricula designed by respective library schools running postgraduate programme. They challenged NLA and LRCN to rise up and design for NUC standard academic curricula for postgraduate programme in Library and information science. They further stated that the postgraduate programme in a library schools with well thought out and elaborate curricula, for other library schools with shallow curriculum content.

Challenges to Library Education in Nigeria

Challenges such as inadequate infrastructure, poor human and financial resources and lack of access to vital and necessary information materials for learning, information gaps among key players in the library school are the major issues of concern in library schools in Nigeria.

✓ **Lack of ICT Infrastructures:**

To enable large quantity of student have access to appropriate hardware and software. It involves installing and maintaining work stations in the classroom. There is also the problem of weak information and communication technology (ICT) base which makes LIS education in some of these LIS schools less responsive to the needs of the society. Ochalla (2007) for instance observed disparities in the nature and level of ICT access and use at different levels and attributed the disparities to both economic and political reasons. M.O.E (1998) pointed out that College libraries, which are the largest group of libraries in the country, have also been facing the problem of poor services, out dated collection of reading materials, financial constraints and in adequate professional staff..

✓ **Over Enrolment:**

Enrolment expulsion or over enrolment considering the fact that most of the library schools are so over populated with students that available facilities are stretched over population of students also creates the problems of classroom control. This is at the root of all the problems facing library and information science schools in Nigeria.

✓ **Inadequate Staff and Expertise:**

Most library schools in Nigeria do not have sufficient staff and or expertise. This implies that training and retraining of those personnel in the responsibility of both the library schools and the management of the various organizations

- ✓ **Issues in Library and information science Education**

The major issues that took place in library and information science education are the formation of NALISE (National Association of Library and Information Science Educators),IFLA (International Federation of Library Association),NLA (Nigerian Library Association), LRCN (Librarians Registration Council of Nigeria) and More schools of library education emerged which includes polytechnics, colleges of education (State), Federal Colleges of education.Advancement in information and communication technologies has ushered in an era of development in information handling. It empowers the ability to acquire and process information at a very high speed and transfer it across vast distances

Self-Employment Opportunities in LIS in Nigeria

Self-employment opportunities also emerged in the field of Library and information science, some of these opportunities according to Anyanwu(2013) includes: Publishing, Development of computer software, Production and sale of library Equipments, Information brokerage and Consultancy Services, Book Selling Business, and Operation of Business Centre and Cyber Café Business.

Malumfashi(2011) added that areas of entrepreneurship in LIS also include: Compilation, Print and publishing, Journal publication, Bindery and lamination Services, Stationery Store, Newspaper Vendor/ Distributor, Photocopying Services, Newspaper man, Services to special group, and Telephone / GSM library. He then views the future of library as being very bright

with the above enumerated entrepreneurship opportunities since Librarians are changing their perceptions and adopting new technologies. He opined that from the foregoing, it is evident that entrepreneurship can make a further incursion in librarianship

Table 1: List of Accredited LIS Schools in Nigeria

S/No	Universities	Approved Programme
1.	Abia State University, Uturu	Library & Information Science
2.	Abubakar Tafawa Balewa University, Bauchi	Library & Information Science
3.	Adeleke University, Ede	Library Science
4.	Ahmadu Bello University, Zaria	Library & Information Science
5.	Ambrose Ali University, Ekpoma	Library & Information Science
6.	Bayero University, Kano	Library & Information Science
7.	Baze University, Abuja	Library & Information Science
8.	Benson Idahosa University, Benin City	Library & Information Science
9.	Benue State University, Makurdi	Library & Information Science
10.	Delta State University, Abraka	Library & Information Science
11.	Federal University of Technology, Minna	Library & Information Science
12.	Federal University of Technology, Yola	Library & Information Science
13.	Ibrahim Badamasi Babangida University, Lapai.	Library & Information Science
14.	Imo State University, Owerri	Library & Information Science
15.	Kwara State University, Ilorin	Library & Information Science
16.	Madonna University, Okija	Library & Information Science
17.	NnamdiAzikiwe University, Akwa	Library & Information Science
18.	Tai Solarin University of Education, Ijebu-Ode	Library & Information Science
19.	Umaru Musa Yar'adua University, Kastina	Library & Information Science

20. University of Calabar, Calabar	Library & Information Science
21. University of Ibadan, Ibadan	Library & Information Science
22. University of Ilorin, Ilorin	Library Science
23. University of Maiduguri, Maiduguri	Library Science
24. University of Nigeria, Nsukka	Library & Information Science
25. University of Uyo, Uyo	Library & Information Science

Source: Librarian Registration Council of Nigeria (n.d)

Recommendations

The paper has the following as recommendations

- Since collaboration presents immense opportunities for growth in LIS education, efforts must be made to promote it.

- The problem of shortage of manpower in the LIS schools should be addressed by appointing qualified Library science Educators to improve the staffing level in the LIS schools.

- LIS curriculum must be re-structured keeping in view the new technological trends in the profession and demand of job market in digital era.

- Retraining of lecturers in library schools: the lecturers in library schools should be sent on entrepreneurship and ICT based training as it will repositioned them to impart the entrepreneurship and computer knowledge to students.

- That workshops and laboratories in Nigerian library schools be upgraded to acceptable standard with necessary facilities put in place

- Sufficient and adequate facilities such as well-furnished internet laboratory equipped with modern tools for providing digital services to the users must be provided in every LIS schools/ Departments.

Conclusion

Library and information science education received a boost with the coming of the new technology and particularly the internet and its accessories. All these emerging operational realities, undoubtedly, require skilled support staff and highly educated professional librarians. This is because the introduction of information technology (IT) has not only allowed for new, easy and better operations carrying out a number of library operations but that retro-active services have consequently been displaced by new pro-active services. From the foregoing, the far-reaching implications and challenges that the present information technology (IT) environment holds for the library and information professionals have been clearly and distinctly brought to the force.

A variety of changes have come to affect and shape the present library environments. Such changes have manifested in the forms of "users' needs, information resources, and communication technology. These have necessitated the re-appraisal of library education and training in all its ramifications. This was with a view to attaining the required capacity building through the production of modern information professionals who are capable of exploiting "new technologies". To this end, both the present and future librarians should be able to exploit the use of information and communication technologies (ICT) for modern library practice. Only then, can they be able to have greater access to a rich and diverse range of electronic library services

that are currently dominating the world of information storage, processing, retrieval and dissemination.

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