Impediments to the Educators in Training Library and Information Science Professionals in Delta State University, Abraka and Ambros Ali University, Ekpoma

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Abstract

This study examined the impediments to the educators on the training of Library and Information Science professionals in DELSU and AAU. In order to achieve this, four objectives were formulated, the target population for this study consisted of the 11 lecturers from the Department of Library and Information Science Delta State University (DELSU), Abraka and the 14 lecturers in the Department of Library and Information Science Ambrose Ali University (AAU), Ekpoma. The study adopted survey quasi-experimental research design, structured questionnaire was used as instrument for data collection. The study revealed that: the extent to which the absence of computers, printers, multimedia projectors/slides and internet facilities negatively affect the education of LIS students; that the ways in which shortage of LIS educators hinders the education of LIS students include: too much curriculum overload, slow pace in completion of course outlines, tutoring courses in unspecialized areas, etc; It was recommended among others that: more efforts should be made by the university management and the LIS departments of DELSU and AAU on the provision of ICT facilities to overcome the challenges facing LIS education. Adequate and qualified LIS educators should be employed so as to increase the ratio of students to teachers in LIS departments

Keywords: Impediments, Educators, Training, Professionals, LIS Schools**.**

Introduction

It is no longer news that the interests of educators in Library and Information Science profession as per the education of their students has stimulated as a result of high demand for the profession. Drawing attention to the earliest stage of librarianship in Africa, Library and Information Science (LIS) education institutions commenced quite early in1960 in the continent but by mid 1980s, there were five main LIS education institutions based in Ghana, Nigeria, Senegal, and Uganda. Much as LIS education in Africa today nolonger focuses on educating librariansto

work in libraries only, originally, the focal point in the area of education in LIS schools was librarianship (Ocholla&Bothma, 2006).

However, as the needs of employers change overtime and the propagation of related courses and programmes to librarianship, many changes have taken place in the field of librarianship. The names of LIS education programmes, LIS education awards and LIS education courses have all changed. These changes have been especially due to the reorientation of higher education in the world and the need to stay relevant in the global competitive world (Okello-Obura & Kigongon-Bukenya, 2011).

Given the competition now in the field of LIS and the realization of the LIS profession to remain relevant, the global reorientation has not spared the content. The issue of what constitutes or should constitute the "core" in Library and/or Information Science (LIS) education is one that is frequently debated in different circles by LIS professionals (Raju, 2014). No wonder, Drexel University (2010) had earlier suggested that education for LIS professionals should integrate both human and technical aspects of information systems and exhibit a strong client orientation in service delivery to the library and information users. In addition, as noted by Feather and Sturges (2013), there is a clear manifestation for the need to balance between core skills of LIS and those which apply to specific work environments. Education for LIS professionals has taken a new dimension in the midst of far-reaching developments sparked off by the movement called 'globalization'. Although, the challenges for libraries and information centers in Africa have been enormous, they are not insurmountable given our human capacity to adapt to change. It is largely true that libraries and information centers in Africa are adapting to change particularly on innovations brought about by the application of ICT (Nkanu, Iyishu&Ogar, 2013). LIS professionals do not only have to adapt to changes arising from globalization but also require in-depth and structured education programmes for occupational engagements. However, one important aspect of such professional discourses derive from the search for suitable, relevant academic and professional programmes is one that should be made available in LIS schools in response to societal needs (Lawal cited in Nkanu, Iyishu&Ogar, 2013).

However, Opeke (2017) reported that Library and Information Science education in Nigeria is practiced in most complex and diverse way. Opeke remarked that differences occur in programme structures, duration and content of courses, ways of teaching and assessment, student placement and departmental focus. According to Opeke, as a result of these variations in Nigeria library schools, LIS educators and instructors are finding it difficult to harmonize and standardize the curriculum of LIS education in Nigeria through the collaboration of other disciplines' educators, practitioners, National Association of Library and Information Science Educators (NALISE), Nigerian Library Association (NLA) and Librarians' Registration Council of Nigeria (LRCN). Similarly, Ryan (2015) highlighted the current state of LIS profession, financial, social and political factors

as among the obstacles facing the proper education of students in Nigerian LIS schools.

Problem Statement

The surfacing of a knowledge-based society in the 21st century poses new challenges to the Nigerian education system. Increasing globalization and rapid technological change now call for re-examination of education's pivotal role in Nigeria. On the strength of this in the information age, education must not only be seen as an initial activity preparing LIS students for productive life, but rather a continuous necessity for LIS professionals to cope with society's changing needs (Mohammed, 2013). Furthermore, Okello-Obura and Kigongo-Bukenya (2011) writing on Library and Information Science education and training: trends and challenges, confirmed that the factors standing as impediments to the educators on the training of LIS professionals include but are not limited to lack of adequate LIS educators, standardization of LIS programmes, lack of appreciation by policy makers in the development of a nation, inadequate technology infrastructure at LIS schools amongst others.

With this in mind, the pivotal role of LIS educators in the education of these students cannot be undermined. Personal observations have shown that there abound a number of drawbacks that hinders this activity of imparting knowledge and skills. This can be hinged on several issues ranging from the constant changing nature of the discipline to social, economic, individual as well as the cultural contexts in which LIS departments function. This scenario is worrisome considering the fact that these LIS younglings are the continuity-carriers of the profession. Is this situation true of LIS schools in Edo and Delta States? What are the issues affecting LIS educators in the education of their students in these states? Informed by the issues raised above, this study investigated the impediments to the educators on the training of LIS professionals in DELSU and AAU.

Objectives

The main objective of the study was to investigate the impediments to the educators on the training of LIS professionals in Delta State University (DELSU), Abraka and Ambrose Ali University (AAU), Ekpoma Edo State. Specifically, the study sought to:

1. Determine the extent to which the absence of ICTs hampers students' education in LIS schools.
2. Find out how the shortages of LIS educators hinder the education of these students.
3. Establish the extent to which LIS educators collaborate with relevant departments to educate their students.
4. Propose possible ways to combating the impediments to students' education in LIS schools.
5.

Literature Review

Information and Communication Technologies (ICTs) are a diverse set of technological tools and resources used for creating, storing, managing and communicating information, and to support teaching and learning and research activities (Vajargah, Jahani&Azadmanesh, 2010). These include: internet access, electronic mail, CD-ROMS, telephone, on-line databases and fax machines (Nwosu &Ugbomo, 2012). Other ICTs include computers, laptops, video machines, multimedia projectors or power points, digital cameras, internet facilities, computer network, telephone (GSM and land phones), e-library, television programmes among others (Akuegwu, Ntukidem, Ntukjidem& Jaga, 2011). Yusuf (2015) highlighting the essence of ICTs in the education of LIS students asserted that ICTs provide a variety of tools to support and facilitate LIS lecturers' professional competence. They transform teaching and help them to be more efficient and effective, thereby increasing their interest in teaching. ICTs increase LIS lecturers' emphasis on individualized instruction, and as such enable them spend more time with individual students

However, the availability of ICTs is the presence of these technologies to support the teaching, learning and research activities in the field of LIS to generate significant performance gains for both the students as well as the lecturers but where these ICTs are unavailable, the education and training of these students are hindered to a very large extent (Adegbemile, 2012). Adegbemile further asserted that in the Nigerian tertiary institutional context, the ICTs required in the field of LIS are not readily available as they are largely sparse when compared to other developing countries thereby impeding the educational training and development of the upcoming LIS professionals in the world. This growth may have initially been market driven, but with time, it is necessary to heed the warning that "growth is not necessarily justified by market needs" (Shogwe&Ocholla, 2012). Furthermore, recent study by Amunga and Khayesi (2018) seem to indicate that nothing has really changed. The study's results indicated that there is a shortage of staff teaching in LIS schools, lack of information resources and other teaching and learning facilities, low completion rates and wastage, and low funding of LIS schools. Amunga and Khayesi emphasized that the scantiness of LIS professionals in library schools can be linked to the unwillingness of the school management and authorities to employ more qualified LIS professionals in educating their students. This, the authors opined to hinder the successful education processes in the field of LIS.

However, Alimohammadi and Jamali (2011) writing on the common problems of library and information science education in developing countries stated that adequate staff is one of the attributes of accredited LIS departments. There is usually more than one qualified person for teaching a given course and directing a given research project. This diversity helps the departments optimize courses and provide students with a better experience but in contrast, according to Alimohammadi and Jamali, there is a scarcity of qualified LIS professionals in tertiary institutions in developing countries. Departments are found that still use

academic librarians as lecturers on a full-time or part-time basis while financial and legal problems do not let these universities to employ more LIS lecturers. This to a high extent increases the curriculum workload on the existing lecturers who in turn look for ways to streamline the curriculum to suit them thereby distorting the education and training processes of the students (Alimohammadi &Jamali, 2011).

LIS as an interdisciplinary field needs to establish strong links with interconnected fields such as mathematics, computation, communications, psychology, linguistics, philosophy and others (Alimohammadi &Jamali, 2011). In America and Europe, powerful relationships could be seen among faculty members of all disciplines. Collaboration among researchers in different universities and departments has been showed (Noruzi, 2008). However, developing countries, in contrast, have another situation. There is not any scientific exchange and collaboration among faculty members in a given LIS department, among LIS departments and between LIS departments and other departments (Satija, 2009; Tran & Gorman, 2009; Wijetunge& Wilson, 2008; Mortezaie&Naghshineh, 2012). According to Okello-Obura and Kigongon-Bukenya (2011), LIS departments in schools nowadays form alliances with other departments to address the problem of inadequate educators in the LIS field so as to promote teaching, research and innovations in the field of LIS. Essentially, collaboration is about sharing and exchanging knowledge and skills. Thus, it involves knowledge, skills and techniques' sharing and transfer and enables visibility, and by using collective effort, it solves problems faster, they enthused.

The challenges discussed above as the impediments to LIS education can be overcome using the suggestions of the scholars: careful curriculum design and involvement of stakeholders; strengthening and full integration of ICTs in LIS education and training curricula; adequate facilities, resources and buildings; adequate number of LIS educators; collaboration with other disciplines; new teaching strategies (Kavulya, 2017; Anderson, 2017; Okello-Obura & Kigongon-Bukenya, 2011).

Methodology

The study adopted survey search design. The method was considered appropriate because it aimed at collecting data on, and describing systematically, the characteristics, features and facts about a study (Egbule&Okobia, 2001) which in this case referred to the impediments to students' education in Library and Information Science schools. The study was carried out in two state universities in Edo and Delta States that offer Library and Information Science as a course of study. These institutions: Ambrose Alli University (AAU), Ekpoma (Edo State) and Delta State University (DELSU), Abraka (Delta State). The target population for this study consisted of 11 lecturers from the Department of Library and Information Science (DELSU) and 14 lecturers in the Department of Library and Information Science (AAU). Owing to the fact that the population was accessible and manageable, the entire population was used as sample because it was small. The research instrument

used for the study was the questionnaire designed by the researchers. The data collected were analyzed using simple percentage and mean scores (x). To determine the level of acceptance, a mean score of 2.50 was chosen as the decision point for RQ1 & 3. Consequently, any item with a mean score of 2.50 and above was considered acceptable (Accept) while responses with a mean score of 2.49 and below were regarded as not acceptable (Reject).

Results and Discussion

A total of Twenty-five (25) questionnaire were administered to the respondents and twenty -one (21) were duly completed and returned. The responses of the respondents show in the tables below.

Table 1: Extent of Absence of ICTs on Students' Education in LIS schools

ICTs	Very High Extent 4	High Extent 3	Low Extent 2	Very Low Extent 1	$\bar{X}$	Remarks
Computers	14	6	1	0	3.62	Accepted
Electronic photocopiers	7	5	8	1	2.86	Accepted
Cellular phones (GSM)	3	4	10	4	2.29	Rejected
Printers	8	9	3	1	3.14	Accepted
Duplicating machines	2	5	7	7	2.10	Rejected
Audio tapes and Discs	0	2	8	11	1.57	Rejected
Scanners	1	3	12	5	2.00	Rejected
Closed circuit television (CCTV)	0	1	17	3	1.90	Rejected
Television sets	0	2	16	3	1.95	Rejected
Multimedia projectors and slides	2	15	4	0	2.90	Accepted
Telecom facility	5	9	6	1	2.86	Accepted
Fax (facsimile) machines	0	0	9	12	1.43	Rejected
Overhead projectors	6	11	3	1	3.05	Accepted
Internet facilities	18	3	0	0	3.86	Accepted

N = 21

Aggregate mean = 2.54

Criterion mean= 2.50

Table 1, shows that with an aggregate mean of 2.54, which is above than the criterion mean of 2.50, it can be concluded that the extent to which the absence of ICTs hamper students' education in the library schools under study is high. This finding is in agreement with Adegbemile (2012) who opined that the availability of ICTs is the presence of technologies to support teaching, learning and research activities in the field of LIS to generate significant performance gains for both the students as well as the lecturers but where these ICTs are unavailable, the education of these students are hindered to a very large extent.

Table 2: Shortage of LIS Educators as Hindrance to Students' Education

Problems of LIS Educators' Shortages	Agree		Disagree	
	F	%	F	%
Too much curriculum workload	19	90.5	2	9.5
Slow pace in completion of course outlines	15	71.4	6	28.6
Tutoring courses in unspecialized areas	16	76.2	5	23.8
Inability to close monitor the students' performance	12	57.1	9	42.9
Poor optimization of LIS courses	18	85.7	3	14.3
Inability to provide students with better experiences	20	95.2	1	4.8

N = 21

Table 2, indicates the various ways in which the shortage of LIS educators hinders the education of LIS students. As revealed in the table, the respondents agreed that: too much curriculum workload (19, 90.5%), slow pace in completion of course outlines (15, 71.4%), tutoring courses in unspecialized areas (16, 76.2%), inability to closely monitor the students' performance (12, 57.1%), poor optimization of LIS courses (18, 85.7%) and inability to provide students with better experiences (20, 95.2%) are the different ways in which the shortage of LIS educators hinder the education of LIS students in library schools. This is in agreement with the view of Okello-Obura and Kigongon-Bukenya (2011) who stated that among the factors hindering the education and training of upcoming LIS professionals, the shortage of LIS educators rank top in the list and this was confirmed by Alimohammadi and Jamali (2011) to manifest negatively in the form of increase in curriculum workload, tutoring courses in unspecialized areas, slow pace in course outlines completion among others.

Table 3: The Mean Response on the Extent to which LIS Educators Collaborate with Relevant Departments to Educate LIS Students

Departments	Very High Extent 4	High Extent 3	Low Extent 2	Very Low Extent 1	$\bar{X}$	Remarks
Educational Administration and Policy Studies (EAPS)	5	9	4	3	2.76	Accepted
Guidance and Counseling	1	2	13	5	1.95	Rejected
Science Education	9	10	2	0	3.33	Accepted
Business Education	11	7	2	1	3.33	Accepted
Sociology	4	16	1	0	3.14	Accepted
English & Literary Studies	8	12	1	0	3.33	Accepted
Vocational Education	3	14	2	2	2.86	Accepted
Technical Education	1	6	9	5	2.14	Rejected
Social Science Education	2	8	7	4	2.38	Rejected

N= 21

Aggregate Mean = 2.43
Criterion Mean = 2.50

The results presented in Table 3, reveales that with an aggregate mean of 2.43, which is below the criterion mean of 2.50, it can be concluded that the extent to which LIS educators collaborate with relevant departments to educate their students is low. This finding is in line with the studies of Satija (2009), Tran and Gorman (2009), Wijetunge and Wilson (2008), Mortezaie and Naghshineh (2012) who revealed that there is no any scientific exchange and collaboration among faculty members in a given LIS department, among LIS departments and between LIS departments and other departments. However, this finding disagree with Okello-Obura and Kigongo-Bukenya (2011) who opined that LIS departments in schools nowadays form alliances with other departments to address the problem of inadequate educators in the LIS field so as to promote teaching, research and innovations in the field of LIS.

Table 4: Ways of Combating the Impediments to Students' Education in LIS Schools

Suggested Ways	Agree		Disagree	
	F	%	F	%
Careful curriculum design and involvement of all stakeholders	20	95.2	1	4.8
Strengthening and full integration of ICTs in LIS education and training curricula	21	100	0	0
Adequate facilities, resources and buildings	21	100	0	0
Adequate number of LIS educators	19	90.5	2	9.5
Collaboration with other disciplines	20	95.2	1	4.8
New teaching strategies	16	76.2	5	23.8
Assessing the training needs of the educators	21	100	0	0
Allocating a regular budget for educators' training.	18	85.7	3	14.3

N= 21

Table 4, shows the responses on the possible ways of combating the impediments to the education of LIS students. As shown in the table, the respondents agreed that: careful curriculum design and involvement of stakeholders (20, 95.2%); strengthening and full integration of ICTs in LIS education and training curricula (21, 100%); adequate facilities, resources and buildings (21, 100%); adequate number of LIS educators (19, 90.5%); collaboration with other disciplines (20, 95.2%); new teaching strategies (16, 76.2%); assessing the training needs of the educators (21, 100%) and allocating a regular budget for educators' training (18, 85.7%) are the possible way forward in combating the impediments to students' education in Library schools. This finding is in agreement with Okello-Obura and Kigongo-Bukenya (2011) who identified the solution to the challenges facing educators in the education and training of LIS students to include the aforementioned.

Summary of Findings

Based on the analysis of the responses, the study discovered that:

i. The extent to which the absences of ICTs hamper students' education in the library schools under study is high, due to absence of computer, multimedia, projector and slides, internet facilities etc.
ii. Theshortage of LIS educators negatively affects the education of LIS students thus, making them to experience too much curriculum workload; slow pace in completion of course outlines; tutoring courses in unspecialized

areas; inability to closely monitor the students' performance poor optimization of LIS courses etc.

iii. The study discovered that the extent to which LIS educators collaborate with relevant departments to educate their students is low.

iv. careful curriculum design and involvement of stakeholders; strengthening and full integration of ICTs in LIS education and training curricula; adequate facilities, resources and buildings adequate number of LIS educators; collaboration with other disciplines; new teaching strategies etc.

Conclusion

Based on the findings of this study, one can conclude that the absence of ICTs (especially computers, printers and internet facilities) hamper the education of LIS students to a high extent. It can also be concluded that the shortage of LIS educators affects the education of their students in the form of increase in curriculum overload and inability to provide students with better experiences. From the results of the study also, the researcher concludes that LIS educators collaborate with relevant departments to educate LIS students to a low extent. However, it is safe to conclude that if the strategies highlighted by the researcher are put in place, the impediments faced by LIS educators in the education of their students will be reduced drastically.

Recommendations

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

i. More focus should be placed by the management of LIS departments on the provision of ICT facilities to kick against the challenge of ICTs unavailability in LIS departments.

ii. Adequate and qualified LIS educators should be employed so as to increase the ratio of students to teachers in LIS departments.

iii. LIS educators should be encouraged to see the need for better collaborations with relevant departments so as to enrich their teaching strategies.

iv. Close attention should be paid to better ways in combating the challenges facing LIS educators in the education of their students.

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