

FACTORS INFLUENCING THE PARADIGM SHIFT TO LIBRARIANSHIP IN LIBRARY SCHOOLS IN RIVERS STATE

Emilian I. UWAIFO

Department of Library and Information Science
Niger Delta University Amasoma-Wilberforce Island, Bayelsa State
emilianbribena2017@gmail.com

Hannatu DAVID

Federal Polytechnic of Oil and Gas, Bonny, Rivers State
cataloguinglibrariang@gmail.com

Nsirim. Onyema

Department of Library and Information Science
Ignatius Ajuru University of Education, Port Harcourt
nsirimonyema@gmail.com

Abstract

The study investigated the factors influencing the paradigm shift to librarianship in Rivers State. A descriptive research survey was used. The population of the study is 812 of undergraduate students in University of Port Harcourt and Rivers State University and Ignatius Ajuru University of Education from which a sample of 296 was drawn. Data were collected by means of a structured questionnaire designed by the researchers. The study was analysed using simple percentage. The findings show that the subject background of 1 IS students were Arts, Social Sciences and Sciences and met entry requirements for admission. The result also shows that the students would have applied for the course if they knew much about it however; they now like the course because it is now very interesting. The challenges faced include lack of awareness and unpopular nature of the course it was therefore recommended that LIS as a course be introduced in secondary schools to boost its awareness.

Keywords: Choice of Librarianship. Factors Influencing, Rivers State

Introduction

Students decision to go any profession could influence their future and entire lifestyle and, or plan, so students are expected to think critically and choose wisely not because friends are studying the course or because everybody is opting in for the course but because they live interest and passion for it. Individuals are influenced and affected by the environment in which they live, students are not left out. Students' choice of course could be influenced by colleagues/friends, counselors, mentors, parents, subject background, academic performance, etc. A lot of factors could be responsible for students choosing a career of study over the other, some of these factors could be institutional based while some maybe as a result of mentorship.

A student choice of a career could be based on the available O'Level result at his disposal, cut-off mark for the course he wants to study and the institution test score obtained (Post UTME score). Some students don't have an idea of their choice of career; they often look up to some close individuals or friends for the choice of course to study, without considering their strengths and weaknesses. This ideology may have been reflected in the field of librarianship.

Librarianship is a profession that is concerned with the selection of relevant information materials as it will be most useful to the users, organization of the selected information for easy access and retrieval preservation of the information for posterity and dissemination of information. It is important to note that the terms in librarianship are changing to suit the 21 Century services for example, from dissemination to communication owing to feedback and interaction with patrons. The profession is committed to helping individual in their various information seeking. Owolabi and Salaam in Ronkuta (2018) stated that librarianship is a profession that is dedicated to serving the general public providing timely and accurate information, thus, contributing to the development of society. However, the profession does not share the glamour and respect that are given to other professions. Most students don't have an interest in Library and Information Science as a career but accidentally find themselves in it, although they eventually enjoy the course, most library school students would have preferred to choose more popular courses like Engineering, Accountancy, Science Laboratory technology etc. (Abata, Ajayi and Adetayo, 2018) but they find themselves studying library and information science. This is influenced by various factors which the study sought to unravel.

To prepare students for professional roles in libraries, inculcate knowledge and skills to serve the information needs of their communities prepare students for proactive engagement in the information professions and develop a commitment to continuing education by participating in local and national professional development opportunities, the Department of Library and Information Science had to kick start in University of Port Harcourt Rivers State University and Ignatius Ajuru University of Education, Port Harcourt in the years 2015, 2016 and 2017 respectively.

Statement of Problem

Librarianship as a profession is now gaining attention and increasingly becoming a career of interest for students in tertiary institutions. As a result of its dynamic, multidisciplinary and interdisciplinary nature as well as its recent attention, there has been establishment of more library schools leading to an increase in students' population in library schools In Nigeria. However, previous studies have shown students' reluctance to embrace library science but librarianship seems to be gaining wide acceptance. It becomes imperative to investigate the reason for the paradigm shift. The study therefore sought to survey the factors influencing the paradigm shift to librarianship in library schools in Rivers State.

Aim and Objectives of the Study

The main aim of the study is to survey the factors influencing the paradigm shift to librarianship in library schools in Rivers State. The specific objectives are to:

1. identify the factors influencing the choice of librarianship in library schools in Rivers State
2. determine the subject background of library and information science students in library schools in Rivers State
3. find out the admittance of library and information science students in library schools in Rivers State
4. determine the post-admission perception of library and information science students in library schools in Rivers State
5. ascertain the challenges facing library and information science students in library schools in Rivers State

Review of Related Literature

Several studies have been carried out to identify the factors influencing the choice of librarianship. Some of them are identified below:

Factors Influencing Career Choice of Librarianship

Abata, Ajayi and Adetayo (2018) investigated the factors influencing the career choice of library and information science students in Federal Polytechnic Ede, Osun State. The major objectives of the study were to find out the factors that influenced the choice of librarianship as a career among students, the level of students' perception towards library and information science as a career and to find a way out on how library and information science could become a reputable discipline in the society. A total number of 127 newly admitted students into LIS were purposely chosen, enumerative sampling techniques were adopted. A structured questionnaire was used for data collection. Findings of the study revealed that students were influenced based on their personal interest in the course 78(70.9%), to seek for knowledge 77(70.0%) and Career expectation 60(54.5%). The study also explored that the students level of perception towards choosing librarianship as a career choice and it was indicated that Library and information science is a lucrative field 95(86.4%), Library and information science is a professional course 93(84.6%), it offers job security 76(69.1%) and they will like to further their career in librarianship 60(54.5%). The study therefore recommended that there should be a continuous awareness of LIS in order to refute the belief of the public that L.IS profession is a dumping ground for poor students, It was also recommended that Nigeria library association should be involved in educating the publics about librarianship as a profession through symposiums, conferences, etc.. Fumilayo (2015) carried out a study to investigate gender perspectives of professional inclination in library studies using L.ARIS, Ibadan as case study. A total of 120 respondents randomly selected from 100-400 levels were used for the study and data were collected through a questionnaire. Results showed that the greatest factors that

motivated the male gender to Library studies profession were career prospects, personal interests, parental background, sibling's influence, career prospects, employment prospects, better working environment and no other alternative/by chance. No other alternative/by change has the greatest influence on the female respondents of the four factors stated above. Ayebusi (2015) in his study, the attitudes of undergraduates toward library and information science in University of Ilorin and University of Ibadan found that most of the respondents from the University of Ilorin opted for the course because they failed to secure admission to their choices of course.

Subject Background as a Factor Influencing the Choice of Librarianship Undergraduate students in Nigerian library schools possess all the required entry qualifications and are therefore not academically inferior to their counterparts in other programmes, Their diverse subject background caring from social sciences, arts, humanities commercial, after all, an advantage to the profession. This will allow for the much-desired subject specialization in future career pursuit. Exposure of the students to the nitty-gritty of the programme, the profession and their prospects both to society and the practitioners engendered in them a more positive impression of the programme. Issa & Nwafo, (2008), Undergraduates in LIS departments are also admitted based on specified admission criteria and they have to meet up with predetermined cut-off marks which constitute eligibility into the programme. In a study conducted by Egunjobin Sulisub and Ogunkeye(2015) investigated the academic profile and career choice of fresh undergraduates in library and Information science school in a Nigerian university of education. The study sought to find out the academic profile and the preferred choice of course chosen by undergraduate students as well as the perception of undergraduates about library and information science profession. A total of 120 newly admitted students from the department in the library and Information Science Tai Soalrin University of Education (TASUED) Nigeria were purposively chosen. Data were gathered using an instrument tagged 'Perception of New Entrants about LIS Profession All questionnaires administered were retrieved. The study showed that 94.3% of the students had at least a credit or more in mandatory subjects (De English Language and Mathematics) also the UTML score revealed that most of the students had 200 and above i.e. 72.5% over a total of 400.

Parental and Socioeconomic Factors Influencing Career Choice

Socio-economic status (SES) is an economic and sociological combined total measure of a person's work experience and an individual or family's economic position in relation to others, based on income, education and occupation. When analyzing a family's SFS, the household income earners' education and occupation are examined, as well as combined income versus individual, when their attributes are assessed or more commonly to depict economic differences in society as a whole. According to Singh and Chander (2014), income status of parents, the educational level of parents and health status of students are the most important family conditions that have significant role in the determination of educational achievement social behavior of children. In a study of socio-demographic factors that encore career choice among psychology students in South Mudhovozi and - Chireshe (2012) the participants who attended rural-situated public schools made delayed career decisions. The same study also found that

participants were mainly influenced by parents, teachers and friends to choose psychology as a career.

Challenges Facing Library and Information Science Students

Nsirim (2016) in his study, a comparative study of the demographic characteristics of students in University of Ilorin and federal polytechnic Offa library schools found that unpopular nature of the course, bad image of the course, lack of fund, lack of vocational training were the perceived challenges Kavulya (2007) observed that 1.1S training programmes "do not sufficiently address current job market requirements due to, inadequate teaching resources at LIS training, lack of adequate ICT content in the courses, inadequate length of courses, courses that are outright irrelevant to the job market and inadequate industrial attachments for LIS students" Amunga and Khayesi (2012), stated that 1.1S education faces various challenges such as variations in the names of programme, which students find confusing and at times present a challenge to prospective employers, shortage of teaching staff in L.IS schools, curriculum which are not in tandem with the job market, lack of information resources and other teaching/learning facilities, low funding of LIS schools and departments and low completion rates and wastage.

Methodology

The research design used was a survey research design, simple random sampling technique was used to gather the data. The data were collected by a structured questionnaire designed by the researchers and validated by an expert in the Department of Library and Information Science. The population of the study is 812 comprising all undergraduate students (hundred level to four hundred level) in University of Port Harcourt, Rivers State University and Ignatius Ajuru University of Education all in Port Harcourt from which a sample of 296 were drawn. A Questionnaire was the instrument used in data collection and analysis using descriptive statistics, frequency distribution and percentage.

Table 1: Demographic Characteristics of LIS Students

Gender	N	%
Male	118	40
Female	178	60
Age		
15-19	27	9
20-24	93	31
25-29	140	47
30 and above	36	12
Level of study		
100	68	23
200	117	39
300	69	23
400	42	14

Source: Author Field Survey, 2019. N=296

Table 1 describes the demographic of the respondents. The result o the findings shows that there were more females (60%) than Male (40%). The study further explained the age range of the students and found that the majority of the respondents fall between the age ranges of 25-29

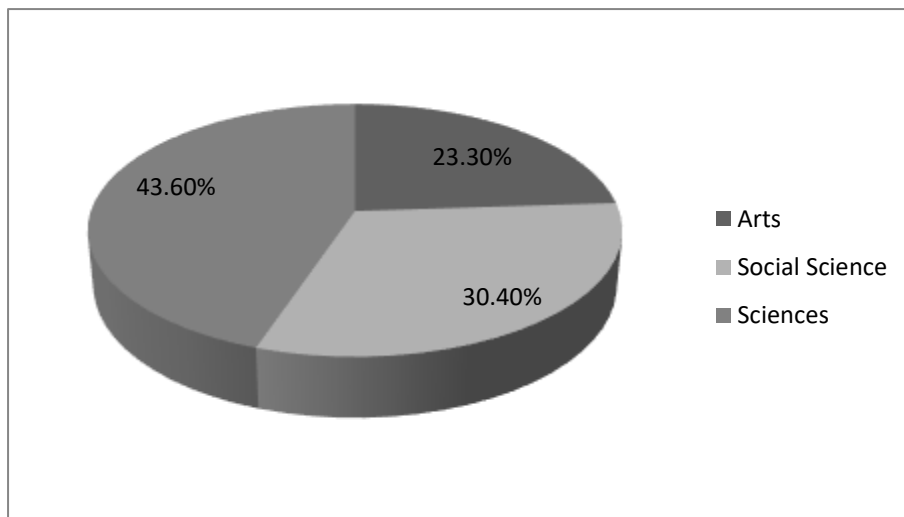


Fig 1 shows the subject background of library and information science students. The result shows that the subject background of the respondents are Arts (23.3%), Social Sciences (30, 4%) and Sciences (43.6%). The shows that accept all subject backgrounds making it multidisciplinary in nature. This correlates with the finding of Issa and Nwalo (2008) that students' diverse subject backgrounds ranging from Social Sciences, Arts, and Humanities to Commercial is, after all, an advantage to the profession.

Table 2: Factors Influencing the Choice of Librarianship

Why did you choose LIS?	SA N(%)	A N (%)	SD N(%)	D N(%)
I have personal interest for LIS	30 (10%)	51(17%)	128(41%)	87(29%)
There are career opportunities in the course	33(11%)	54(18%)	199(40%)	90(30%)
There is job opportunity in the course	39(13%)	45(15%)	96(33%)	116(39%)
I did not secure my choice of course	122(41%)	99(33%)	33(11%)	42(14%)
Someone influenced me to choose LIS	33(11%)	51(17%)	122(41%)	90(30%)
I was offered LIS without choosing	125(42%)	102(34%)	39(13%)	30(10%)
I have never liked the course	27(9%)	56(19%)	69(23%)	147(50%)
I already have work experience in the library	45(15%)	42(14%)	93(31%)	116(39%)
I love books	36(12%)	42(14%)	113(38%)	105(35%)

SA-Strongly Agree, A=Agree, D-Disagree, SD-Strongly Disagree. N=296

Table 2 shows the factors influencing the choice of librarianship and reveals that the students were just offered the 1.15 (76%) without choosing it because they did not secure their choices of course (74%). However, the students disagreed that personal interest (69%), career opportunities (70%), job opportunities (72%), work experience (70%) influenced their choice

of librarianship. They also disagree that they were influenced by someone (71%) and love for books (73%). The students refuted they never liked the course (73%). It therefore shows that the students found themselves into the profession by chance because they did not secure their choices of course however the students did not hate the course even though they initially did not have personal interest in the course. This finding is in line with Ayebusi (2015) in a similar study on the attitudes of undergraduates towards library and information science in University of Ilorin and University of Ibadan which he found that most of the respondents from the University of Ilorin opted for the course because they failed to secure admission to their choices of courses it is not palatable with Funmilayo (2015) on gender perspective of motivational factors influencing the choice of librarianships and found that most respondents were influenced by personal interest for the course, career and job opportunities.

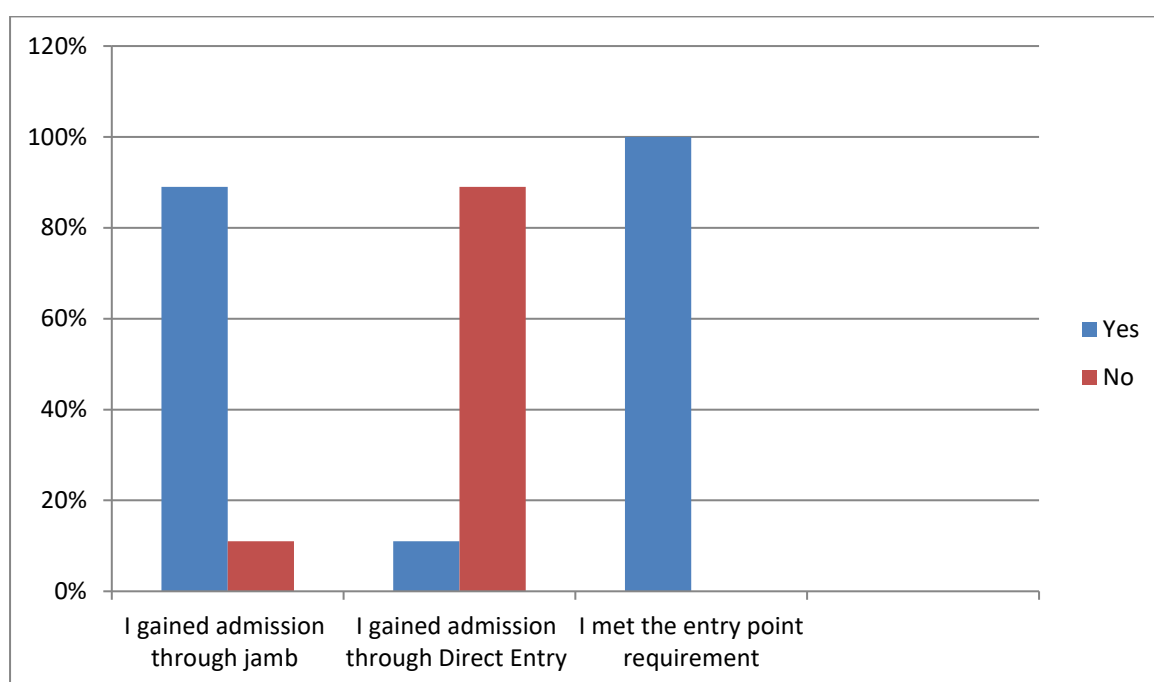


Fig. 2 Admittance of LIS Students

Fig. 2 shows the admittance of LIS students and found that (89%) of the respondents gained admission through JAMB examination while 11% gained admission through A Level, it also shows that all the respondents (100%) met the entry requirement for admission.

The study therefore shows that students in library schools have subject backgrounds that cut across arts, social sciences and sciences and meet the entry point requirement for admission like their counterparts in other courses. It however, refutes the finding of Ayebusi (2015) that students accepted the course because they could not meet their cut-off point and in line with Issa and Nwalo (2008) that Undergraduate students in Nigerian library schools possess all the required entry qualifications and are therefore not academically inferior to their counterparts in other programmes. Their diverse subject background ranging from social sciences, arts, and humanities to commercial is, after all, an advantage to the profession.

Table 3 Post-Admission Perception

Statement	SA	A	SD	D
If I knew about the course this much I would have applied for it	101(34%)	90(30%)	60(20%)	45(15%)
Although I didn't like the course initially, but now I like it	151(51%)	88(30%)	30(10%)	27(9%)
The course is now very interesting	82(28%)	95(12%)	63(21%)	56(19%)
I now recommend the course to friends	71(24%)	120(40%)	60(20%)	45(15%)
I will change if I'm given the opportunity	45(15%)	53(18%)	108(36%)	90(30%)
I can never be interested in the course	23(8%)	21(7%)	72(24%)	174(59%)

Table 3 shows the post-admission perception of L.IS students. The result shows that if the respondents (64%) knew about the course, they would have opted in for it. Although they (81%) did not like the course initially now they like it because they (60%) now found the course interesting. The students (64%) now recommend the course to friends. They (66%) disagreed that they would change if given the opportunity and 83% of the students disagreed that they would never be interested in the course.

It therefore shows that no doubt the students did not like the course initially because they were not aware which was why they did not choose it, but now they have familiarized themselves with the course they developed an interest in it because the course is now very interesting and would not change if given the opportunity to. This therefore opposes the study carried out by Issa (2012) where they discovered that students in the department of library. Archival and information studies, University of Ibadan in 2002/2003 academic session came subsequent list and that they expressed readiness to defect if given the opportunity.

Table. 4. Challenges Facing LIS Students

Statement	SA	A N	SD	D
Lack of ICT infrastructure	128(43%)	135(46%)	24(8%)	9(3%)
Lack of skill/vocational education	86(29%)	123(42%)	57(19%)	30(10%)
Inadequate staff	98(33%)	45(15%)	96(33%)	116(39%)
Over-enrollment in the course	56(19%)	75(25%)	105(35%)	60(20%)
Inadequate funding	122(41%)	120(40%)	24(8%)	33(11%)
Interdisciplinary nature of the course	74(25%)	84(28%)	66(22%)	60(20%)
Lack of awareness of the course	137(46%)	132(45%)	15(5%)	12(4%)
Unpopular nature of the course	131(44%)	138(47%)	15(5%)	12(4%)
Bad image of the course	59(20%)	57(19%)	108(36%)	72(24%)
The course is a dumping ground	57(19%)	54(18%)	96(32%)	93(31%)

Table. 4 describes the challenges library and information science students were facing. The challenges were lack of awareness of the (91%), Unpopular nature of the course (91%), lack of infrastructure (89%) inadequate funding (81%), lack of skills and vocational education (71%)

inadequate staff (60%), interdisciplinary nature of the course (53%), The students disagreed to the bad image of the course (60%), over enrollment in the course (55%) and that the course is a dumping ground (63%). The challenges affecting LIS students were lack of awareness of the course, unpopular nature of the course, lack of infrastructure, inadequate funding, lack of skills and vocational education, inadequate staff and interdisciplinary nature of the course. The course is not a dumping ground. This study therefore, supports the position of Edegbo (2011) where it was pointed out that the Nigerian library and information science schools will have to deal with a number of obstacles to accomplish its task. In this vein, the challenges affecting library and information science students were highlighted as the same stated above,

Conclusion

The study of career choice is an area that should be given a priority because making a wrong choice could affect student's entire life. Students' choice of course was found to be influenced by a number of factors including subject background, JAMB and Post UTME score, inability to secure their choices of course, interest, parental and socioeconomic backgrounds. In this study however, the major factors that influenced library students' choice of librarianship is the inability to secure their choices of course. This is due to lack of awareness which could be because the course was newly introduced in the schools under study,

Recommendation

Based on the findings of the study, the following recommendations were made

1. Librarianship as a course should be introduced in secondary schools and career guidance should be provided as this could influence the choice of librarianship.
2. LIS professionals should take through various media platforms to create awareness of the profession.
3. There should be provision of infrastructure, finance, development of curriculum to include vocational education and suit the current job market as well as training and retraining of staff.

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