Librarianship, Why The Shift? A Case Study Of University Of Port Harcourt And Rivers State University, Rivers State, Nigeria

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Abstract
The purpose of the study was to investigate the reason for shift to librarianship. A descriptive research survey was used; data were collected by means of a structured questionnaire designed by the researchers. A total of 300 copies of questionnaire were retrieved, analyzed using percentage and used for the study. The findings show that the subject background of LIS students were Arts, social sciences and sciences and those students met the entry point requirement for admission however students didn't actually choose LIS as a career choice but were just offered the course. This is because they were not aware of the course as the study shows that the students would have applied for the course if they knew much about it. The study also shows that despite they didn't like the course initially they developed interested in the course that course is now very interesting. The challenges faced were lack of ICT infrastructure, changes in curriculum, lack of skill/vocational education, inadequate funding, lack of awareness and unpopular nature of the course. It was therefore recommended that LIS be introduced in secondary schools to boost its awareness; also there should be provision of ICT infrastructure by government, provision of skill/ vocational education and more qualified staff.

Keywords: *Choice of Librarianship, ICT, Rivers State University, UniPort.*

1.1 Introduction

Students decision to go into any profession could influence their future and entire life style and or plans, 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 find some great level of compatibility with the course, interest and passion for the course which however could be influenced by colleagues/friends, counselors, mentors, parents, subject background, academic performance, etc. It is trite to note that Individuals are influenced and affected by the environment in which they live, students are not left out. A lot of factors could be responsible for student choosing a career of study over the other, some of these factors could be institutional based while some may be 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 institution test score obtained (post UTME score). Experience has shown that most students don't really have an idea of the choice of career; they often look up to some close individuals or friends for the choice of course to study, without considering their personal strength and weakness. This ideology may have reflected in the field of librarianship. Most of the students don't have interest in Library and information science as a career but accidentally they found themselves in it, although they eventually enjoy the course. Most of library school students would have preferred to choose more popular courses like Engineering, Accountancy, Science Laboratory technology etc (Abata, Ajayi and Adetayo, 2018).

In order 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 the University of Port Harcourt and Rivers State University in the years 2015 and 2016 respectively.

1.2 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 nature, multi-disciplinary in nature and interdisciplinary in nature and its recent attention, there have been establishment of more library schools and increase in students' population in library schools in Nigeria. However, previous studies have shown students reluctance to embrace library science hence; a study to investigate the reason for the shift to librarianship now becomes imperative.

1.3 The Objectives of the Study

The following specific objectives of study were to:

1. find out why library school students choose library and information science in University of Port Harcourt and Rivers State University
2. find out the subject background of library school students
3. find out the admittance of students in the two library schools
4. determine the post-admission perception of library and information science
5. find out the challenges facing library and information science students

2.1 Review of Related Literature

Several studies have been carried out to identify the reasons for librarianship. Some of them are outlined below.

2.2 Factors Influencing Career Choice of Librarianship

Presently, library and information science education in Nigeria is a vibrant profession and the various categories of degrees such as DLIS, BLIS, MLIS, and Ph.D. are available in more than 30 tertiary institutions in Nigeria (Jimoh & Igwe, 2011). 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 was 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. 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%). It was also 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 other to refute the belief of the public that LIS profession is a dumping ground for poor students, Nigeria Library Association (NLA) should be involved in educating the public about the benefits of 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 Department of Library, Archival and Information Studies (LARIS), 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, employment prospects, better working environment and no other alternative/by chance. Of the seven factors, no other alternative/by chance has the greatest influence on the female respondents. 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

2.3 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 ranging from social sciences, arts, and humanities to commercial is, 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 and Nwalo, 2008). This was supported by (Egunjobi, Salisu, & Ogunkeye, 2013) that Undergraduates in LIS departments are also admitted based on specified admission criteria used for their counterparts in the "profession" disciplines. They have to meet up with predetermined cut-off marks.

All these and the subjects taken at secondary school constitute the entry profile of students. An undergraduate's entry profile into LIS is not restrictive rather it is a combination of different subjects, hence the richness of the profession. In a study conducted by Anuoluwa, Taofik & Olufela (2013) which 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% and 93.4% of the students had at least a credit or more in mandatory subjects i.e. English and mathematics also the UTME score revealed that most of the students had 200 and above i.e. 72.5% over a total of 400.

2.4 Parental and Socioeconomic Factor Influencing Career Choice

Socio-economic status (SES) is an economic and sociological combined total measure of a person's work experience and of an individual or family's economic and social position in relation to others, based on income, education and occupation.(Wikipedia, 2018). When analyzing a family's SES, 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 difference in society as a whole. According to Singh (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 and social behavior of children. In a study of socio-demographic factors that encore career choice among psychology students in South Africa, Mudhovozi and Chireshe (2012) found that 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.

2.5 Challenges Facing Library and Information Science students

Igwela and Nsirim (2018) in their 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 LIS training programmes "do not sufficiently address current job market requirements due to, inadequate teaching resources at LIS training schools, 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 LIS education faces various challenges such as variations in the names of the programme, which students find confusing and at times present a challenge to prospective employers, shortage of teaching staff in LIS schools, curricula 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.

3.1 Research Methodology

The research design used was descriptive research survey; simple random sampling technique was used the data were collected by means of a structured questionnaire designed by the researchers. A total of 350 copies of questionnaires were randomly administered, only 300 copies were retrieved and analyzed using descriptive statistics. Frequency distribution and percentage were used for the computation.

4.1 Results and Discussion of Findings

Table 1: Demographic Characteristics of LIS Students	
Gender	
Male	40.0%
Female	60.0%
Age	
15-19	9.0%
20-24	56.0%
25-29	31.0%
30 and above	5.0%
Level of study	
100	30.0%
200	44.0%
300	26.0%
Source: Author Field Survey, 2018. N=300	

Table.1 describes the demographic of students in University of Port Harcourt and Rivers State University. The result of the findings shows that there were more females (60%) than males (40%). The study further explained the age range of students and found that the majority of the respondents fell between the ages ranges of 20-24 (56%).

Fig 1: Subject Background of LIS Students
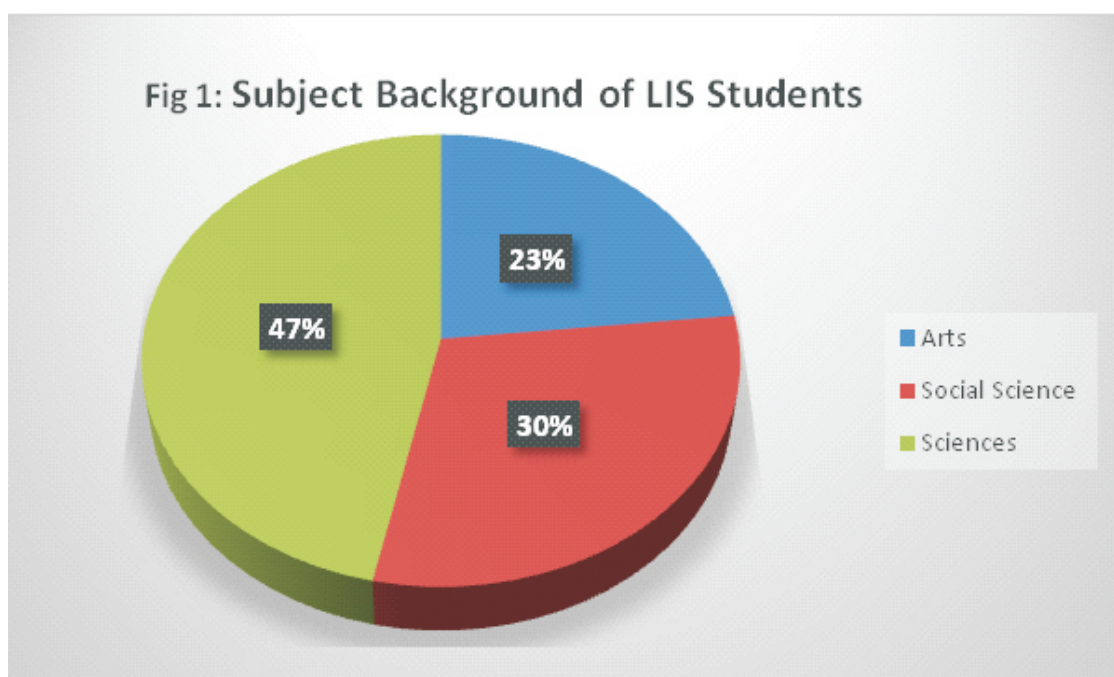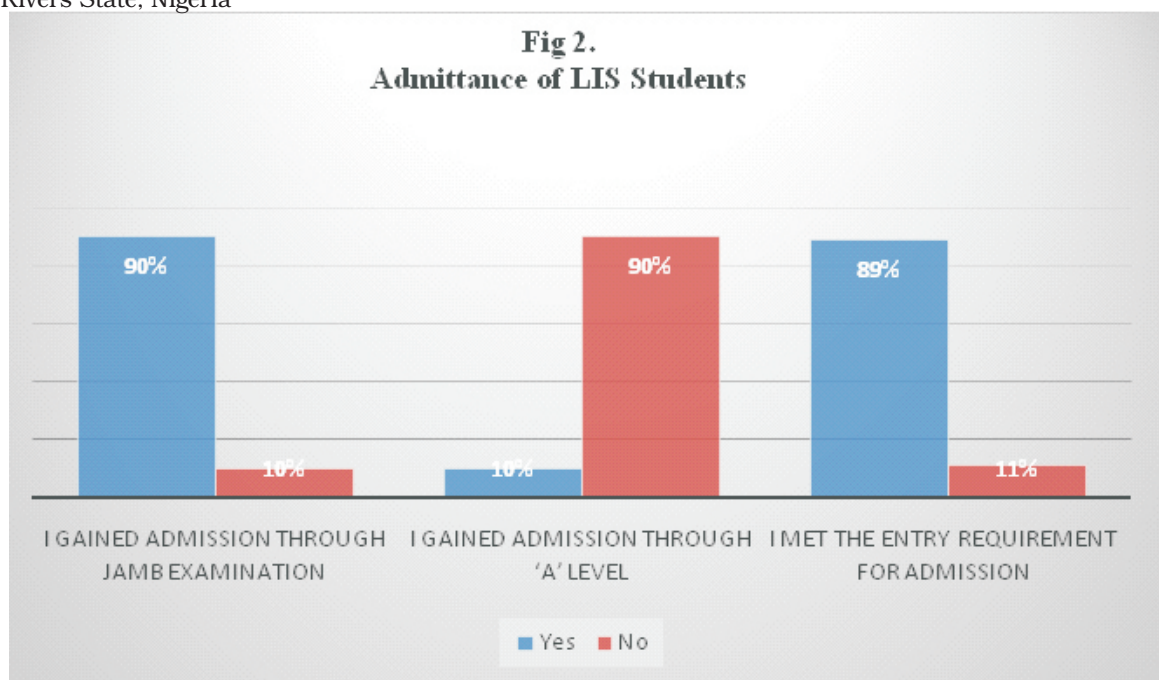
Source: Author Field Survey, 2018

Fig .1 shows the subject background of library and information science students. The results for the subject background of the respondents were Arts (23%), Social Sciences (30%) and Sciences (47%). The result shows that LIS accepts different subject backgrounds which make it multidisciplinary in nature. This correlates with that of Issa and Nwalo (2008) that their diverse subject background 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**	**A**	**SD**	**D**
Personal interest for LIS	10%	17%	29%	44%
Career opportunities in the course	11%	18%	30%	41%
Job opportunity in the course	13%	15%	40%	32%
I didn't secure my choice of course	42%	33%	14%	11%
Someone influenced me to choose LIS	11%	17%	30%	42%
Work experience in the library	15%	14%	40%	31%
love for books	12%	14%	35%	39%
I was offered LIS without choosing it	43%	34%	10%	13%
I have never liked the course	9%	20%	49%	23%
N=300. SA= Strongly Agree, A= Agree, SD= Strongly Disagree, D=Disagree Note: SA + A = A, SD + D = D Source: Author Field Survey, 2018				

Table.2 shows the factors influencing the choice of librarianship. The findings show that most of the respondents (75%) didn't secure their choices of courses, 77% were just offered LIS without choosing it. However, 72% of the respondents disagreed that they never liked the course. The results show that personal interest, career/job opportunities, job experience, love for books, influence by someone were not what motivated LIS students to LIS. This is because they didn't know about the course that's why they didn't even choose the course and because they failed to secure admission to their choice of course, they were therefore offered the course by chance. This could be as a result of the fact the course is still somehow new in this two schools under study unlike the schools where the course has been for a long time. The study is therefore in line with that of Ayebusi (2015) in his study on the attitudes of undergraduates towards library and information science in University of Ilorin and University of Ibadan where 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.

Fig 2.
Admittance of LIS Students

Source: Author Field Survey, 2018

Table 4 shows the admittance of LIS students and found that (90%) of the respondents gained admission through JAMB examination while 10% gained admission through A Level, it also shows that most of the respondents (89%) met the entry requirement for admission.

The study therefore shows that students in library schools met the entry point requirement for admission like their counterparts in other courses. It however, refutes that of Esther and Ayuk (2012) 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.

Table 3: Post-Admission Perception				
Statement	**SA**	**A**	**SD**	**D**
If I knew about the course this much I would have applied for it	35%	30%	15%	20%
Although I didn't like the course initially, but now I like it	51%	30%	9%	10%
The course is now very interesting	40%	42%	8%	10%
I now recommend the course to friends	25	40	15%	20%
I will change if I'm given the opportunity	15%	19.0%	30.0%	36.0%
I can never be interested in the course	9%	7.0%	58.0%	24%
N=300. SA= Strongly Agree, A= Agree, SD= Strongly Disagree, D = Disagree Note: SA + A = A, SD + D = D Source: Author Field Survey, 2018				

Table.3 shows the post-admission perception of LIS students.
The result shows that if they knew about the course, they would have applied for it (65%) and that although they didn't like the course initially but beginning to develop interest in the course(71%) because the course is now very interesting(82%) that they even recommend it to their friends (65%). They disagreed that they would change if given them the opportunity (66%) and that they can never be interested in the course (82%)

The results therefore shows that students in LIS were not aware of the course which was

the reason they didn't apply for it that actually they didn't like the course initially but are now finding the course interesting and also expressed satisfaction in the course that they would not change if given the opportunity. This therefore opposes the study carried out by Esther and Ayuk (2012) where they discovered that students in the department of library, archival and information studies, University of Ibadan in 2002/2003 academic session came from subsequent list and that they expressed readiness to defect if given the opportunity.

Table.4: Challenges Facing LIS Students				
Statement	SA	A	SD	D
Lack of ICT infrastructure	44%	45%	3%	8%
Lack of skill/vocational education	30%	41%	10%	19%
Inadequate staff and expertise	34%	27%	10%	29%
Over-enrollment in the course	20%	25%	20%	35%
Inadequate funding by government	42%	40%	11%	8%
Interdisciplinary nature of the course	26%	28%	20%	22%
Lack of awareness of the course	47%	44%	4%	5%
Unpopular nature of the course	47%	45%	4%	4%
Bad image of the course	21%	19%	24%	36%
The course is a dumping ground	19%	18%	31%	32%
N=300. SA= Strongly Agree, A=Agree, SD= Strongly Disagree, D= Disagree Note: SA + A = A, SD + D = D Source: Author Field Survey, 2018				

Table.4 describes the challenges faced by library and information science students. The challenges faced were lack of infrastructure (89%), lack of skill and vocational education (71%),inadequate staff and expertise (61%), inadequate funding by the government(82%), interdisciplinary nature of the course(54%), the lack of awareness of the course (91%) , Unpopular nature of the course(92%). Over-enrollment in the course, Bad image of the course and the course is a dumping ground

was not a challenge. The result therefore shows that the challenges faced by library and information science students were lack of fund by the government, unpopular nature of the course, lack of awareness of the course, interdisciplinary nature of the course, lack of staff and expertise. However, most of the respondents disagreed that over-enrollment in the course, bad image of the course and the course was a dumping ground was a challenge. This study therefore supports the one carried

out by Edegbo (2011) where he 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 inhibiting teaching practical application of ICT to library services in Nigerian Library and information science schools were highlighted as most of the same stated above.

Conclusion

It was reported that if library and information science students knew much about the course they would have opted in for it voluntarily rather than just being offered, however the course is now very interesting, lucrative and recommendable. It is therefore recommended that librarianship as a career is introduced in secondary schools in Nigeria and career guidance should be provided in order to boost its awareness. Also there should be provision of skills/vocational training to students of Library and Information Science by institutions and recruitment of more and qualified staff.

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