

## Relationship between School Library Management and Students' choice of Career in Librarianship.

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### Abstract.

This study is the examination of the relationship between School Library Management and Students' choice of Career in Librarianship. The specific objectives of the study were to determine how school library management components such as components like staffing, collection development, and library curriculum related or affected the students' choice of Library and Information Science as a course of study in the University, and Librarianship as Career. To achieve this objective, a survey research method was adopted, and close ended questionnaire was served to the three and four hundred level students of Library and information science, University of Maiduguri, Nigeria as the population for the study. The data were subjected to descriptive analysis using table of frequencies and percentages. The study revealed among others that, the School Libraries in Nigeria have not been managed adequately to motivate the students as expected, in their choice of Librarianship as a career. Also, most students came from primary and secondary schools which had no library. Many students had no prior knowledge of Library and Information Science as a course of study, and were given the course even though they did not apply for it. While some of the respondents who had a good school library experience, chose to read the course and to practice Librarianship as a career. It was also revealed that most direct entry students who had other background other than Library Science adopted the discipline due to the career opportunities. Based on the findings, recommendations were made towards repositioning Nigerian School Library towards achieving its aims and objectives.

**Keywords:** School Library Management, Relationship, Students, Career Choice and Librarianship.

### 1. Introduction.

Information and Knowledge at whatever level and form are documented and packaged in a format for proper preservation and retrieval. In the developing countries and Nigeria in particular, book is known to be the most popular container of information and knowledge. This is because development of other formats or containers of information and knowledge such as the electronics, internet etc is at the crawling stage in the country. It becomes pertinent therefore, that the book should be kept and preserved for future use and this is where the libraries become very necessary. The emphasis of this study is on the School Library, arguably, the mother of all Libraries. The school library is that type of library that is established in the primary and secondary schools. The intent is to introduce the pupils and students to the world of books, to develop their recreation, reading, study skills and in extension, establish library awareness. In his classical inaugural lecture series, (Aguolu, 1989) described it thus, 'For the personal, intellectual and social Development of the Nigerian child, the school library, whether at primary or secondary level, is essential. It is his first exposure to information universe'. By policy and design, the school library caters for the pupils and students alike during their academic teething stage. The pupils' book reading skill and culture is expected to be cultivated within the well managed school library, with a qualified Teacher-Librarian utilizing a well designed curriculum to ensure excellence use. It provides the platform for career awareness of the student, subsequent academic development towards choosing a career in the field of librarianship.

Librarianship, according to Reitz (2004), is the profession devoted to applying theory to the creation, selection, organization, management, preservation, dissemination, and utilization of collection of information in all format. This requires therefore, that the Librarian must be studious, someone who had a good grass root knowledge of library, reading skill and Information sense. That is to say that you cannot be a librarian until you are professionally trained for the care of library and its resources. It is rather worrisome that Librarianship as a profession still remained unpopular in Nigeria despite the huge potentials, and opportunities available for the graduates of Library and Information Science in every organization. Worried by the scenario, (Okoro, 2009:53) said that 'Librarianship as a profession will only remain relevant when practitioners place value on themselves and the profession.' The graduate of Library and Information Science, all over the world and in Nigeria is not limited to the Library or to lecture in the Department. There are scores of them in the research, information and documentation departments of the oil and gas industry, Mass Media, Bank, tertiary institutions in the country etc. yet most of these students did not make this course neither their first nor second choice, it was all by accident or taken in absence of nothing. (Mugot, 2012), Commented that many new librarians entered the field as a second

career, coming from fields ranging from law to business to education. Librarianship is a profession where any experience and knowledge you bring in or pick up along the way comes in handy, making it a great midlife career change for many. It has been observed that, most students who were forced so to say, to read this course tended to perform poorly in their first and second year of study respectively. The reason being, that since they have no prior knowledge of the course, or Librarianship as a profession, they just whiled away their time. While some changed to the course of their choice after the first or second year, leaving the few that actually knew the course, and had chosen Librarianship as a profession. To think that Library and Information Science, the course that produces the Librarians is excluded in special scholarship award both by the Federal, state governments and Multi-National Organization is evident that the profession is either unpopular or not recognized in the scheme of things in Nigeria. (Ochogw, 2007) presented the scenario this way:

It is a well known fact that librarianship as a discipline or profession does not enjoy the same status and priority in scholarship awards when compared to disciplines such as law, Medicine, Engineering, Business Administration etc. in the priority list of most Federal and State government scholarship awards, Library and Information Science is at the bottom or not mentioned at all. Given this situation, the young men and women who would like to study librarianship in the university will definitely have a rethink in the negative.

The scenario is quite different in most developed and developing countries where there are developed school library libraries managed by qualified librarians and teacher- librarians, where the students graduate from the secondary schools with desire to major as librarian. Dority (2006) stressed that being a specialist in any of the various Library disciplines bring the opposite challenges and rewards. Your skills do not travel as easily, but there are fewer people who can do what you do, so less competition for available jobs. The unpopularity of the profession, which transcends from non-recognition to marginalization in scholarship and students' negative perception, could not be unconnected to the poor awareness in the grassroots' which is the school library. This study attempts to identify the impact of school library in the students' career choice in Librarianship.

## 2. Statement of the Problem

The researchers' pre- research interview of the two three and four hundred level students of the department of Library and Information Science during first semester of 2012/2013 academic session revealed that many two hundred level students were preparing to buy the inter-departmental transfer form to another department. This was because according to them, they did not apply to read the course; also, they do not know how viable and valuable the course is. In other words, these students do not know what fate awaits them in job market with Bachelor of Library and Information Science certificate. Majority of the Three and Four hundred level students interviewed wanted to practice another profession after graduation because according to them, Librarianship is unpopular, and therefore may not attract better salary and most importantly, they saw their job as unattractive and limited to the library. It is common to notice students who were unserious, with poor academic record. Not because they were not brilliant students, they did not apply for LIS and therefore, had no reason being in the department.

To most of them, the name of the course does not sound like a course that will raise ones' social status like law, bank, insurance etc. Moreover, the passive natures of the practicing librarians have not encouraged the students to have faith and hope to succeed in life as a librarian. There is no significant evident that these students have passed through good and well managed school library, with adequate collections. This is why this study is very important, particularly, to suggest how the school library can be repositioned to be able to fill the gap created as a result of poor management.

## 3. Objectives of the Study.

This study was undertaken with following specific objectives:

- 3.1. To find out the students previous library knowledge prior to university entry
- 3.2. Determine the level of collection and management of the school library where it existed.
- 3.3. Determine if library studies was part of the school library curriculum
- 3.4. Determine how school library influences the students' choice of course.
- 3.5. To find out if the students knew about library and information science before entry into university.
- 3.6. To determine the students; entry point, UME or Direct Entry.
- 3.7. To determine the students choice in JAMB/IJMB.

3.8. Determine the students' choice of career after graduation

#### 4. Research Questions

The results or findings of this study would answer the following research questions:

- 4.1. Did your Primary and Secondary have School Library?
- 4.2. If yes, how was the Library management?
- 4.3. Did your school library have a qualified teacher-librarian?
- 4.4. Was Library studies part of the school curriculum?
- 4.5. Did School library experience influence your choice of library and information science?
- 4.6. You had knowledge of LIS before coming into the University?
- 4.7. If your entry was through UME, was LIS one of your choice courses?
- 4.8. If through Direct Entry, what was your entry degree?
- 4.9. Do you hope to pursue a Career in Librarianship?

#### 5. Literature Review.

A well managed school library serves as a fountain of knowledge that produces pupils and students, with skills and interest in book reading, and introduces them to the world of information retrieval, manipulation and develops in them the love for librarianship. In line with the above view, Mbagwu I.F.J and Akanwa P.C (2012) asserts that 'The expansion in the composition of information materials in the school library has brought about a change and hence there is need for effective management' a school library with the required collections but lack a qualified teacher-librarian and other library staff cannot achieve above feat. While writing on the topic 'Staffing school libraries for effective learning in Nigeria' Aguolu (2002) stated that 'No aspect of school library management is as crucial and central to the development of school library as the preparation and employment of appropriate personnel to promote qualitative teaching and learning. The library personnel interpret the content of the library, guide and guard the students in addition to changing their erroneous belief about librarianship as a carrier. Folorunso and Olayinka (2008) recommended that 'Career talks at the secondary school level should be revived and intensified. In the course of the career talks, students are educated more on different fields of knowledge, what each field of knowledge requires and the benefits for choosing every career. Students are enlightened and guided and any ignorant and erroneous beliefs about careers hitherto held are easily corrected during periodic and well-organised career talks in schools.

Emphasizing the importance of qualified school librarian, Biagini (2012) in her study titled 'How Do School Libraries Help Pennsylvania Students Achieve Academic Success?' Believed that, school librarian's most important responsibility is to collaborate with teachers in the teaching-learning process so that all students can learn and achieve academic success. Further, she said that to accomplish this collaboration, the school librarian must work closely each day with teachers in planning instruction across the curriculum, teaching information literacy skills to students and assessing how well the students are learning.

School library collection is another component which has great influence on how successful the library could be. Kantumoya (1992) remarked that Collection development has become more difficult in recent times with escalating book and publishing cost. Also, as a result of gross under-funding by Nigerian government, current books, periodicals, magazines, fictions and non-fictions that can support teaching and student use in the school's library were not there. The school libraries are warehouse for old books, some of which were covered with dust that had gathered over time, with mismatched chairs and tables blending well with the ageing bookshelves. Still worried over the school library situation in Borno State, Aguolu (2002) said that while the primary schools are almost totally devoid of library services, many of the post-primary institutions that can claim to have school libraries actually operate one room apartment book collections containing a few outdated publications, acquired by their principals, or received as donations from foreign cultural organizations, without regard to the institution's curricular and developmental needs. Lance, (2012) Students need large collections of current and relevant books and magazines to encourage them to read independently. The size of the collection, however, is not the only consideration; the currency of these resources is equally important. Out-of-date books cannot provide students with timely and accurate information they need for their learning, and students won't choose to read worn and dated books that have no appeal. In the developed countries of the world, the children, are encouraged towards making career choice through provision of good primary school with resourceful school library. The president of the United States, Johnson (1966) did not mince words while passing the "Elementary and Secondary Education Act of 1965" By passing this bill, we bridge the gap between helplessness and hope for more than 5 million educationally deprived children.

We put into the hands of our youth more than 30 million new books and into many of our schools their first libraries. We reduce the terrible time lag in bringing new teaching techniques into the Nation's classrooms. We

strengthen State and local agencies which bear the burden and the challenge of better education. If such assertions can be made by various levels of government in Nigeria, no Nigerian child will leave secondary school without being sure of what career to follow.

Ogunrombi (2004) in his research work revealed that there is a positive relationship between school libraries and student achievement; further, he stated that whether such achievement is measured in terms of reaching scores, literacy, or learning more generally. A school library that is adequately staffed, resourced, and funded can lead to higher student achievement regardless of the socio-economic or educational level of the community. Kolade (2001:34) affirmed that, the school library media centre is the intellectual development unit within the school system that provides an organized collection of books and non-book media specially collected to support the teaching and educational work of the school from early childhood, to primary junior and senior secondary levels. The school library, therefore, nurtures the preliminary stages in the scholastic life of the child. A well developed school library is a motivation factor. This implies that, the students who are expected to be the future librarians must be motivated adequately so that they will have problem of choice of librarianship for career. According to Brophy (1987), motivation to learn is a competence acquired "through general experience but stimulated most directly through modeling, communication of expectations, and direct instruction or socialization by significant others (especially parents and teachers)." He is of the opinion that teachers strategies about teaching and learning and the nature of the expectations they hold for students also exert a powerful influence

## **6. Methodology**

The target population for this research is three and four hundred levels students of the department of library and information science, University of Maiduguri, Borno State, Nigeria. The researcher employed survey research method while close ended questionnaire was the instrument for data collection. Random sampling technique was used to select a sample size of 100 students from part three and 150 students from part four making a total of 200 students out of the total population of 450 students which is 55.6% of the total population; this formed the sample size for the research.

## **7. Research Instrument.**

The instrument used to collect data for this research was the questionnaire and was supported by physical observation. According to Aina (2004), questionnaire is a commonly used instrument for collecting data basically to seek opinion of individuals in sample of population on issues directly related to objectives of the research study. Two set of close ended questionnaire comprising section A: Demographic information and section such as age, sex, entry mode and section B contains 9 items designed to elicit information from the respondents regarding the topic of the research. The data were subjected to descriptive analysis using tables of frequencies and percentages.

## 8. Results and Discussion.

**Table 1: distribution of respondents by Demographic Characteristics**

Demographic characteristics	Frequency	Percentages %
<b>Gender</b>		
Male	170	68
Female	80	32
Total	250	100
<b>Age groups</b>		
17-22	98	39.2
23-28	112	44.8
29-34	40	16
Total	250	100
<b>Entry Mode</b>		
UME	170	68
Direct Entry	80	32
Total	250	100%

The figures in table one displayed the distribution of the demographic information. The result showed that out of the 250 questionnaire were filled and returned validated. Out of which 170 were male representing 68% while 80 were female which 32% is. The students were mainly between the ages 22-28 with 112 (44.8%), closely followed by 98 students representing 39.2%. 40 students fall within the ages between 29-40 with 16%. Mode of entry showed that majority of the students came in through UME with 170 (68%) respondents while 80 (32) gained admission through the Direct Entry mode.

**Table 2: Relationship between School Library Management and Students' Choice of Career in Librarianship in Nigerian.**

		Respondents	
		Yes	No
1	Availability of Primary and Secondary School Library	16 (84%)	90(36%)
2	If yes, has the Library a good management?	13(5.2%)	237(94.8%)
3	Availability of qualified school librarian and staff	28(11.2%)	222(88.8%)
4	Library times as part of the school curriculum	60(24%)	190(76%)
5	School Library experience influenced your choice of LIS	30(12%)	220(88%)
6	had knowledge of LIS before coming into the University	100(40%)	150(60%)
7	Was LIS one of your choice courses?	40(16%)	210(84%)
8	Choice of Career in Librarianship after graduation	40(16%)	210(84%)

The scenario in table two reflected the respondents' view of the relationship between school library management and students choice of career in librarianship. In question one on the table, a meager 16(84%) of respondents agreed to have come from the school with a school library while a lager number, 90(36%) responded negative to the availability of library in their schools. The few school libraries that existed had good management as only 13(5.2%) affirmed it while a whooping 237(94.8%) suffered poor management of their school libraries. There were no qualified librarian and other library staff, as 222(88.8%) indicated yes. Also, the libraries that existed were like an island in the school where library times were supposed to be part of the school curriculum as indicated in question four. About 220(88%) of the respondents had no vibrant school library experience, they came into the department of Library and Information Science not because of school library experience. Despite the unlimited job opportunities that is available to the graduates of library and information science, the course is not popular as expected. Only 100(40%) of the respondents agreed to have heard about it prior to entry into university, while 150(60%) responded no to the question. As a result of lack of knowledge, many students do not consider it as a course of study in the university. Question 5 showed that 210(84%) of the respondents did not choose LIS either as first or second choice. The researcher's personal observation showed that the 40(16%) who applied to read LIS were mainly library staff who were on study fellowship. As a result, the same number of respondents 40(16%) indicated their interest to pursue a career in librarianship against the greater number 210(84%) that wanted to switch to another profession after graduation.

**Table 3: Entry qualification for direct entry students**

	Respondents	
1	Nigerian Certificate in Education (NCE)	38(47.5%)
2	Diploma, Information Technology (DIT)	15(18.75%)
3	Ordinary National Diploma (OND) Library Science	10(12.5%)
4	Others	17(21.25%)
	Total	80(100%)

The situation in table 3 revealed that out of 80 direct entry students, 38(47.5%) came in with the National Certificate in Education, 15(18.75%) had diploma in information technology. A meager 12.5% representing 10 respondents got admission with an OND in library science leaving 17(21.25%) other respondents with various other degrees. This indicates that most respondents had little knowledge of LIS prior to entry into university.

### 9. Conclusion and Recommendation.

Based on the findings of this study, it could be concluded that the school library in Nigeria has failed to meet its objectives of preparing the students for future career. What it had lacked in management actually translated into poor services thereby leaving the pupils and students at the receiving end. It has not impacted the students in any significant way towards awareness of library and information science as a course and librarianship as a profession.

It is obvious that till now, the students have not known much about library and information science as a course of study in the university. They had no vibrant school library experience that supposed to serve as a tonic or trigger the students' desire for the course and the discipline. .

Many students got admitted to read library and information science against their choice. This is why most of them perform poorly academically. While some of them change to another course of study after their first year, majority of them graduated only pursue another profession leaving few that understood the potentials and opportunities for library and information scientists.

The following recommendations were made based on the conclusion:

1. The policy, aim and objectives behind the establishment of the school libraries should be revisited, and the proper supervision regarding its implementation be ensured.

2. Every primary and secondary school in Nigeria should be given library budget like it is done in the University. The libraries also, should have defined organization which should be autonomous but functions in collaboration.
3. The each secondary school management especially, should ensure that collections of the school library covers and forms part of the school curriculum in addition to a well defined library curriculum'
4. Every school, most importantly, the public schools should not be allowed to function without well equipped and managed school library.
5. A guardian counselor should be attached to the library and Career awareness should be handled seriously.
6. There should be a resounding orientation to every newly admitted into the department of library and information science regarding the importance of the librarian to information source, management, delivery towards individual academic and national development.
7. The renowned achievers in this profession should come out and boldly defend their profession, enough of passiveness and apathy among the librarians.

When these recommendations and others proffered by various researchers in this topic are followed to the later, the librarian will no longer be seen only as the clerk in the library shouting silence and order to the users of the library. But as an information curator, manager and is capable of working in any office and is able to manipulate, transmit information to various information seekers in any organization.

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