

Research

Perception of Senior Secondary School Students of St. Murumba College, Jos, Towards Library and Information Science as a Profession

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This study was conducted to appraise the perception of senior secondary school students of St. Murumba College, Jos, towards Library and Information Science (LIS) as a profession. 3 research questions guided the study. A descriptive survey was adopted for the study. A total number of one hundred and thirty-nine (139) respondents were used for the study. No sampling technique was used as it was a census of the students. The instrument used for data collection was questionnaire. 139 copies of questionnaires were distributed to the respondents with 135 (97.1%) copies returned. Frequency table and mean score were used for the data analysis. The results obtained from the findings revealed that the level of awareness of the students on LIS as a professional course offered in universities was not encouraging. The findings also revealed that the students have a negative attitude towards choosing LIS as a profession. The findings further revealed that the perception of the students about the places where LIS professionals can work were not too many. Based on the findings, recommendations were made.

Keywords: Awareness, perception, Library and Information Science, profession, St. Murumba College, Jos

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INTRODUCTION

Library and Information Science (LIS) also known as "Library studies", "Librarianship" or "Library science" is an interdisciplinary or multidisciplinary devoted to applying theory and technology to the creation, selection, organization, management, preservation, dissemination, and utilization of collections of information in all formats (Reitz, 2004). However, it is believed that there is no generally agreed distinction between the terms: Library Science, Librarianship, and Library and Information Science. They are interchangeable but differing most

significantly in connotation. Libraries play a fundamental role in society. The resources and services they offer create opportunities for learning, support literacy and education, and help shape the new ideas and perspectives that are central to a creative and innovative society. They also help ensure an authentic record of knowledge created and accumulated by past generations. Many people cannot place librarianship well due to ignorance of the importance, but in a world without libraries, it would be difficult to advance research and human knowledge or preserve the world's cumulative knowledge and heritage for future generations.

Harris (1970) argued that a profession is a body of knowledge and skills held in common and continually extended by united efforts. In this work, a profession is seen as being based on an educational process which in itself, based on the common knowledge and common skills.

St. Murumba College came into existence in 1959. The school is located at Goodluck Jonathan way, formerly known as Zaria road, Jos. The school is rated as one of the top 5 secondary schools in the whole of Plateau State. The school was established out of the burning desire by the Catholic community in Jos to see to the advanced education of her young boys who were graduating from elementary schools. Many top personnel in the society today are products of the St. Murumba College.

Librarianship as a profession in Nigeria seems to be less popular than other professional courses such as Engineering, Law, Medicine and Accountancy, among prospective undergraduate courses in Nigerian tertiary institutions. Okoro (2009) opined that Librarianship is among the least sought-after professions in Nigeria. This less attention given to Librarianship could be attributed to poor awareness of what the profession entails, particularly at the primary and secondary school levels where students usually, make different career ambitions. Igbinosa (2007) maintained that people, particularly students, do not like to pursue a career in Librarianship. They do not know that Librarians are unsung heroes behind the successful stories of other professionals in different fields. This poor awareness and negative perception has continually given the librarianship a bad image. There is therefore a need to encourage younger generations, chiefly, senior secondary school students to consider choosing Library and Information Science as a profession to boost the image of the profession.

STATEMENT OF THE PROBLEM

Library and Information Science, a profession that bridges the gap between people, information and technology and brings about positive changes in the world, through their services has been perceived negatively by young Nigerian students due to one reason or the other. From experience, the researchers during secondary school days, perceived librarianship as a low esteemed profession out of ignorance, they are today, certified librarians of Nigeria (cIn). There are many people that may not be as lucky as we are. Many of them who rejected admission into the profession may end up frustrated, as a result of lost opportunity. It is therefore pertinent that this research is carried out to expose the beauty of librarianship to the younger generations and save them from bad consequences of being frustrated in life.

PURPOSE OF THE STUDY

The general purpose of the study is to evaluate the perception of senior secondary school students of St. Murumba College, Jos, Plateau State, Nigeria, towards LIS as a profession.

The specific objectives include to:

1. Ascertain the level of awareness of the senior secondary school students towards LIS as a professional course offered in universities.
2. Find out the attitude of the senior secondary school students towards choosing LIS as a profession.
3. Determine the perception of the senior secondary school students about the places where LIS professionals can work.

RESEARCH QUESTIONS

The study is guided by the following research questions:

1. To what extent are the senior secondary school students aware of LIS as a professional course offered in universities?
2. What is the attitude of the senior secondary school students towards choosing LIS as a profession?
3. What is the perception of the senior secondary school students towards places where LIS professionals can work?

LITERATURE REVIEW

Bebeng (2007), in her findings of study on "Level of Awareness of High School Students in the Province of Laguna on the Library Science Profession: Basis for Promotional Strategy," revealed that the level of awareness of the Library Science profession by the students is moderate. It can therefore be inferred that Library and Information Science courses are not very popular among the students, with the lowest awareness on the economic rewards. The shortage in the supply of Library Science professionals can be attributed to the few graduates of the LIS course. In this regard, it is but logical to presume that the course lacks rigorous promotion. First and foremost, awareness of the target market must be established before any promotion takes place (Bebeng, 2007).

Tella, Ayeni and Popoola (2007), observed various factors, such as attractive salary, good condition of service and job security, could promote Librarianship as a profession. Agumanu (1989) conducted a study on

factors that influenced the students in Imo State University Library School. The findings revealed that 80% of the respondents entered the Library School because they failed to secure admission into other departments such as Law or Engineering and that 20 % of the students picked the profession due to the influence of Librarians in their family.

Igbinosa (2007) opined that technological advancement has therefore given the profession of Librarianship a lift such that a Librarian is no longer confined only to the "four walls" of a Library and neither has the place of the Librarian been eroded by the internet. Rather this technological platform enhances a Librarian's information role, such that the Librarian of today doubles as a Programmer, Webmaster, Digital Curator, Electronic Librarian, Internet Searcher, Database Manager, etc. Mary Bay (in Shontz, 2002) encouraged, "these days, Librarians have a pretty easy time finding positions when they want to be. Just be patient; you will get the right one".

Onoyeyan and Ajayi (2015) in their study titled "Perceptions toward Law Librarianship as a career choice: a study of Law students in Ogun state, Nigeria" aimed at discovering Law students' perceptions of Law Librarianship as a career choice. Descriptive survey research method was used for the study. The population consisted of undergraduate Law students of Olabisi Onabanjo University, Ago-Iwoye and Babcock University, Ilperu-Remo in Ogun State in the 2013/2014 academic session. The 2013/2014 academic session had 510 registered Law students in Olabisi Onabanjo University, 269 students in Babcock University. Thirty percent of the population of Law students in each school was sampled for the study. This translates to 234. 234 questionnaires were distributed. 223 questionnaires were returned representing 95.3% rate of response. Data collected were analyzed using frequency count and simple percentages. The study showed a low perception of Law students toward Law Librarianship as a career choice. The study concluded with recommendations.

Olayinka (2008) wrote a paper captioned "Choosing Librarianship as a career: a study of public secondary school students in Ekiti State". The research unravelled the attitudes of secondary school students in Ekiti-State towards choosing Librarianship as their career, probed into the respondents' awareness, understanding and knowledge of Librarianship as a profession. The research also investigated the perceptions of Librarians and

Librarianship by the secondary school students (respondents) in Ekiti State. Questionnaires and interviews were used to elicit necessary information from the respondents. It was discovered that the respondents' conscious awareness, knowledge and understanding of librarianship are too shallow, just as their perceptions of Librarians and Librarianship revealed the unwillingness of 98.12% of the respondents to choose Librarianship as a career.

METHODOLOGY

Descriptive survey design was adopted for the study. The population of 139 respondents was used. No sampling technique was used as it was a census of the students. Data was collected using Questionnaire. Simple frequency and percentages were used to analyze research questions 1 and 2 which were not presented in the Likert Scale format. The computation of items in research question 3, which were presented in the Likert Scale format, were carried out using the mean formula

$$\bar{x} = \frac{\sum fx}{n}$$

Where \bar{x} = Mean

Σ = Summation

f = Frequency of respondents

x = Scores

n = Total number of respondents

Using the four-point scale of:

Strongly Agree (SA) = 4points; Agree (A) = 3points; Disagree (D) = 2points and Strongly Disagree (SD) = 1point

The mean was calculated as: $\frac{4+3+2+1}{4} = \frac{10}{4} = 2.50$

Mean of 2.50 and above is regarded as accepted while; a mean below 2.50 is regarded as rejected.

FINDINGS

Research question one: Awareness Test

Table 1: To what extent are you aware that Library and Information Science is a professional course offered in universities?

DESCRIPTION	FREQUENCY	PERCENTAGE (%)
Very much aware	20	14.8
Not interested	27	20
Not very much aware	2	1.5
Not aware	86	63.7
TOTAL	135	100

Table 1 shows that almost all the students are not aware of the existence of library science as a course for study in the university. The 20% that are aware are not interested. This may be because of the absence of professional librarians in the school library. It was observed that the staff in the library is not even a paraprofessional in librarianship. The students also told the researcher that use of the library is sometimes thought, but it does not have credit hour. This can make most of the students uninterested in the whole exercise.

Research question two: Attitude Test

Table 2: Would you like to study Library and Information Science if given a chance?

DESCRIPTION	FREQUENCY	PERCENTAGE (%)
I will like	70	51.9
I will not like	25	18.5
I will manage	30	22.2
Not interested	10	7.4
TOTAL	135	100

Table 2 shows that a greater number (74.1%) of students agreed to read library science as a course, if given a chance. This may be because of the difficulty in getting admission into tertiary institutions in Nigeria. That may also be the reason why negligible number (25.9%) rejected the offer in the form of; "not interested" (7.4%) and "I will not like" (18.5%)

Table 3: Do you wish to become a Librarian in future?

DESCRIPTION	FREQUENCY	PERCENTAGE (%)
I wish	9	6.7
I do not wish	123	91.1
Not interested	3	2.2
TOTAL	135	100

From table 3, 91.1% will not wish to become a librarian in the future. This may be because they are ignorant of what the profession entails. Their plan may be to use the chance of admission to get a university degree and then use the certificate to work elsewhere.

Research question three: Perception Test

Table 4: Do you agree that:

S/N	ITEMS	SA	A	D	SD	MEAN	DECISION
A	The job of Librarians is to only dust and arrange books	14	39	52	30	2.27	R
B	Librarianship is a dull and boring profession	13	43	46	32	2.28	R
C	Librarians can work anywhere as information is part of the requirements for production	16	31	43	38	2.20	R
D	Librarians are information disseminators to all and sundry	46	56	23	10	3.02	A
E	Librarianship is women oriented profession	27	48	39	21	2.6	A
F	Librarians perform little tasks and earn high salaries	15	38	61	18	2.38	R
G	Librarians are more than people who go about in the library telling readers to keep quiet and loaning books to readers	42	59	22	11	2.99	A

Key: A= Accepted, R= Rejected

Analysis of data in table 5 showed that the respondents agreed on three (3) out of seven (7) of the items asked with mean rating of 2.50 and above. They include Librarians are information disseminators to all and sundry which recorded the highest mean response of 3.02, this is closely followed by Librarians are more than people who go about in the library telling readers to keep quiet and loaning out books to readers with 2.99 and lastly, Librarianship is women oriented profession with the mean response of 2.6. The respondents rejected that Librarians perform little tasks and earn high salaries (2.38), Librarianship is a dull and boring profession (2.28), the job of Librarians is to only dust and arrange books (2.27), and Librarians can work anywhere as information is part of the requirements for production (2.20).

CONCLUSION

The study showed a low level of awareness among senior secondary students of St. Murumba College, Jos on LIS as a professional course offered in universities. The study also showed that the students have a negative attitude towards choosing LIS as a profession. They also believed that job opportunities for librarians are not too many. Librarians can work anywhere as information is part of the requirements for production

RECOMMENDATION

Based on the findings of the study, the following recommendations have been made:

1. There is a need for library advocacy by the practicing professionals to expose the beauty of the profession.
2. Librarians in various primary and secondary schools should be a key player in creating awareness of the LIS profession; this can be done while discharging their duties.
3. The NLA and allied professional bodies should increase the tempo of their promotional strategies to increase the awareness of the profession.
4. Federal and State governments should give scholarships to students in secondary schools to study LIS in the university. National Library, state branch chairpersons should be at forefront to lobby for the scholarship scheme
5. Enlightenment programs, conferences, seminars and talk shows should be organized by all state branches of NLA to correct any wrong perception and negative attitude the students have towards choosing LIS as a profession.

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