

Satisfaction of Undergraduates with Library and Information Science Course and Some Factors that Influence their Choice of the Programme

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ABSTRACT

This study was conducted to assess the level of satisfaction of undergraduates with the Library and Information Science (LIS) course and some of the factors that influence their choice of the programme. The population of the study was all the 400 level undergraduates in the Department of Library and Information Science, Faculty of Education, University of Port Harcourt. A structured questionnaire, made up of three parts, was utilized for data collection. The first part involved the level of satisfaction of the respondents with the LIS programme while the second and third parts involved the influence of parents and peers on the respondents' choice of LIS programme, respectively. Out of the 21 copies of the questionnaire distributed, 20 were retrieved indicating a 95.2% response rate with 75% (15) male and 25% (5) female. Data were analyzed using percentages and simple regression analysis. Results indicated that the respondents were highly satisfied with the choice of LIS programme and would recommend the programme to others. Parental influence on the respondents' choice of LIS programme was minimal accounting for 7.8% of the changes in the choice of the programme while peer influence on the respondents' choice of the programme was substantial accounting for 78.0% of the changes in the choice of the programme. The fact that the respondents were satisfied with their choice of career in LIS is a strong indication that they would be committed to providing excellent service in librarianship needed to cater for the mutated information requirements of the society.

1. Introduction

Professionals are the mechanisms for effectiveness and efficiency of every profession. The sustainability of any profession is its ability to produce or raise personnel to continually provide defined services. Librarianship, as a profession, is dedicated to providing timely and accurate information services, thereby, contributing to societal development. To effectively and constantly provide for

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the information needs of the society, trained personnel with vision, technical expertise and managerial abilities are required to manage, disseminate, and interpret information. Librarianship is one of the oldest human professions, as practitioners are pre-occupied with searching for data and information on behalf of others and it is from these data and information that other professionals derive meaning to function (Ajibero, 1993). However, librarianship hardly shares the glamour of some other professions especially amongst undergraduates. According to Igbinsosa (2007), students do not often like to pursue a career in library and information science. They do not realize that librarians are the heroes behind the successful stories of students, researchers, and professionals. Moreover, the library is the heart of academic activities in tertiary institutions.

Studies conducted on the image of librarians and librarianship, the wrong perceptions and ignorance meted to the profession, an outright redefinition of the role of the librarians. Until this is done, the false perception of librarianship will continue to trail library and information science profession (Ajidahun, 2004). Okoro (2009) stated that despite the rich knowledge and information resources available in the library, librarianship is among the least sought-after profession in Nigeria. Many people, in developing countries such as Nigeria, are ignorant of what library and information science is all about or who the librarian is, his duties, required qualification, and status. This ignorance has continuously given librarianship and indeed the field of library and information science a poor image, regarding the profession as a second-career profession. Relatively, high interest in Library and Information Science (LIS) as a second-career profession may be partly explained by the interdisciplinary nature of this profession, offering to career changers opportunities to apply their skills and knowledge from previous occupations to the information environment (Lambert & Newman, 2012). Researchers have adduced that library work attracts few students with passion for teaching jobs, for its similarity to teaching, easy transfer of skills, and teachers' wish for intellectual challenges and professional advancement (De la Pena McCook, 2009; Galton & MacBeath, 2008; Lambert & Newman, 2012).

Recently, technological advancement has given the profession such a lift that the librarian is no longer confined only to the four walls of the library, and neither has the role of the librarian been eroded by the advent of technology. Rather, technological innovations have only come to accentuate the librarian's information role, such that the librarian of today doubles as a programmer, webmaster, digital curator, electronic librarian, internet searcher, database manager, etc. (Igbinsosa, 2007). The librarians' role now includes information mediator where they work behind the scenes in helping software designers to develop systems that fit into users' information seeking capabilities. They are also increasingly getting involved in developing and imparting information literacy. They are facilitators for providing effective search strategies, and educators familiar with literature and information in varying formats (Stueart, 2016). Technology and the internet do not replace the librarian but act as an enabler to an improved and refined information services, making information users prosumers (creating and using information at the same time).

The future of the library and information science profession is at crossroad because of the growing anxiety arising from a situation where a lot of students choose library and information science as a course of study after they failed to gain admission into their choice courses. This could lead to the production of professionals who are uncommitted to their jobs. Consequently, many students

are unsuitable for their careers as they find themselves in jobs where they could not satisfy their value needs. As a result, they constitute nuisance to themselves and to the profession, unable to give meaningful contributions to the society. The choice of a career path in library and information science requires interest due to the delicate nature of information management. The forces influencing undergraduates' satisfaction towards library and information science could either amplify interest or cause disinterest in the profession. Satisfaction represents a level of pleasure of an individual in responding to the specificity of goods and services provided by an organization. An individual's satisfaction is a major criterion in determining the quality of services provided. Evaluating satisfaction concerning a field of study is one of the most important factors in students' education and success. This study was undertaken to assess the satisfaction of undergraduates with Library and Information Science course and some factors that influence their choice of the programme.

2. Literature Review

The society has become largely dependent on information as human existence is largely dependent on its availability, accessibility and proper use. Information in the 21st century is equated with power, as it remains the major ingredient in taking decisions and assisting in reducing the degree of uncertainty. As a result, more librarians with interest and satisfaction in librarianship are needed to cater for the mutated information needs of the society. Borjian and Borjian (2011) stated that one of the most important factors that could increase the students' interest about their academic field of study is the rate of satisfaction with the field. Schuh and UpCraft (2001) averred that satisfaction is one of the most direct tests of post-secondary success and a positive relation between academic satisfaction and retention. In their study, Abayomi and Olawanle (2010) noted that 68% of library students said that they were highly satisfied with their choice of career in librarianship. David and Pexz (2006) revealed that librarianship is satisfying, and library students do not see themselves leaving the profession in the near future. Hart (2010) reported that, although most librarians are generally satisfied with their career as academic librarians, they are usually open to other job offers. The author reported that the major reasons for librarians' job dissatisfaction included a sense of stagnation, poor pay, and particularly poor recognition. The librarians pay structure cannot be compared with the other professions considered prestigious. Alansari (2011) stated that recognition of accomplishments, fair performance evaluations, and job security were much more important factors in the context of job satisfaction than the nature of the library and information work itself.

Dukic (2017) opined that student are often extrinsically (free from competitive job, earning a living, benefits, work conditions, employment stability, job security, stable working environment, employment opportunities) motivated to pursue a career in Library Science. Ard, et al. (2006) outlined wish to provide service, previous working experience in a library, poor job market in original occupation and a need for change, financial compensations, recommendation from a professional, coworker or friend as motivating factors for students taking up the librarianship profession. However, while majority of the factors are extrinsic, some are intrinsic, such as interest in the nature of library work, love of books and reading, enjoyment in providing service to people, interest in technology,

a desire for personal learning and career development (Moniarou-Papaconstantinou, Vassilakaki, & Tsatsaroni, 2015). Ho, et al. (2018) explored students' motivation across different cultural background s and reported extrinsic motivation to be more predominant than intrinsic motivation in the choice of career in Library Science.

An understanding of the principles guiding career choice among youths can be lost due to lack of awareness and appreciation of pressures that impinge on career decision-making. These pressures, according to Kemjika (2012), are of two main types: personal factors which are rooted in the individual as part of his personality (intrinsic), and external factors which are outside the individual, found in his environment (extrinsic). The aggregate of these factors influences individuals' satisfaction with their career. Generally, it is believed that the primary motive behind the pursuit of various occupations is the fundamental human need to 'make ends meet', to satisfy needs. External factors include: parents, peers, socio-economic background, family size, religious orientation, the school, economic and prestige, cultural background, urban/rural area, and working condition (Kemjika, 2012). These factors derive influential powers from the need for belongingness. Individuals, from every walk of life, want to be accepted in their environment, society or organization. Most often, professions considered prestigious are accorded most recognition in the society. The affiliation or belongingness need is the third tier of needs in Maslow's hierarchy of need. This need, according to Maslow (1959), combines with basic psychological needs and safety/security needs to form a self-fulfillment category of needs, and includes acceptance, affection, cordial relationship and sense of belongingness. Often, informal organizational set ups help employees to develop social relationships, and the cordial relationships between superiors, subordinates and colleagues give employees acceptance. When this need is lacking, it is very likely that the individuals will be dissatisfied with the profession.

3. Methodology

This study was conducted to assess the satisfaction of undergraduates with Library and Information Science course and the influence of parents and peers in the choice of this programme. The population of the study was all the 400 level undergraduates in the Department of Library and Information Science, Faculty of Education, University of Port Harcourt. The population was sampled using purposive sampling technique. A structure questionnaire titled "Social Factor and Satisfaction Scale (SFSS)" was utilized for data collection. The questionnaire was made of three parts: first part dealt with the satisfaction of the students with Library and Information Science programme, the second part dealt with the influence of parents on the choice of the course and the third with the influence of peers on the choice of the programme. From 21 questionnaire distributed, 20 were retrieved indicating a 95.2% response rate with 75% (15) male and 25% (5) female (**Table 1**). The data were analyzed using percentages and simple regression analysis.

The **Table 1** showed that 75 percent of the respondents are males while 25% are females. This also provides the justification for the study as it has been observed that the most students in LIS were formerly rejected to their programme of interest which usually is science programmes. "Some common reasons for women not to choose engineering are depicted to be lack of suitable role

models, sex-stereotyped and/or negative view on science and scientists and masculine content and climate of technical institutes” (Brown, 2001; Bosch, Rees, & Osborn, 2000; Sagebiel & Dahmen, 2006). This, therefore, creates the imbalance in students in LIS because when they are rejected from the science programme, LIS becomes the next option for enrolment. Hence, another crucial reason to assess the predictors of their satisfaction with the LIS programme.

Table 1. Demographic properties of respondents

S/N	Gender	Frequency	Percentage
1	Male	15	75
2	Female	5	25
Total		20	100

N = 20

4. Results and Discussion

Results showed that 90% of the respondents indicated that they were satisfied with the choice of LIS as a career while 80% would recommend LIS to others (**Table 2**). All the respondents (100%) agreed that LIS programme gives room for personal development, that LIS undergraduate students are equipped with dynamic and effective communication skills, and that LIS graduates are competent in managing information. Also, 90% of the respondents agreed that librarianship has the prestige they need for the future (**Table 2**). Based on the result, the level of undergraduates’ satisfaction with LIS programme is high. According to Maslow (1959), this would ensure optimal performance because being satisfied motivates individuals to put in their best efforts towards maximum productivity. This agrees with the observation by Pengcatan (2002) that majority of the library and information practitioners expressed satisfaction with the profession.

Table 2. Undergraduates’ level of satisfaction with library and information science programme

S/N	Items	Yes (%)	No (%)
1	I am happy with my choice of LIS as a career choice	18 (90)	2 (10)
2	I can recommend the LIS programme to others	16 (80)	6 (20)
3	LIS programme gives room for personal development	20 (100)	0
4	LIS undergraduate students are equipped with dynamic and effective communication skills	20 (100)	0
5	LIS graduates are competent in managing information	20 (100)	0
6	Librarianship has the prestige that I need for the future	18 (90)	2 (10)

In **Table 3**, the regression analysis showed a correlation coefficient of $r = 0.28$ indicating a poor relationship between parental influence and undergraduates’ choice of LIS programme. The

coefficient of determination of 0.078 was obtained. This showed that parental influence accounted for 7.8% ($100 \times 0.078 = 7.8\%$) of the changes in undergraduates' choice of LIS programme. Further analysis from the unstandardized Beta (B) indicated that a unit change in parental influence brings about 0.255 unit change in undergraduates' choice of LIS programme. Consequently, parental influence, to a low extent, influences undergraduates' choice of LIS programme. The finding showed that parents have less influence on the choice of career of their children or wards. According to Kemjika (2012), parental influence has strong hold on the choice of career, but the result of this study indicated that the students' choice of LIS programme is not substantially dependent on parental influence.

Table 3. Parental influence on undergraduates' choice of Library and Information Science programme

S/N	R	Adjusted R Square	Unstandardized Coefficient	
			B	Std.Error
1	0.280	0.078	0.255	0.206

Table 4 shows that peer influence and undergraduates' choice of LIS programme had a correlation coefficient of 0.81 indicating a high positive correlation. Also, a coefficient of determination of 0.780 was realized. This indicates that peer influence accounted for 78.0% ($100 \times 0.780 = 78.0\%$) of the changes (influence) on undergraduates' choice of LIS programme. The Beta value of 2.428 indicates that a unit of variation in peer influence brings about 2.428 units of change in undergraduates' choice of LIS programme. Hence, peer influence predicted undergraduates' choice of LIS programme to a high extent. This finding is in agreement with the assertion of Kemjika (2012) that peer influence is a formidable factor in exerting influence in the lives of young adolescents, and as the results of this study indicated, peers positively influenced undergraduate students' choice of LIS programme. This is understandable since students share a lot with their peers in school than with their family.

Table 4. Peer influence on undergraduates' choice of Library and Information Science programme

S/N	R	Adjusted R Square	Unstandardized Coefficient	
			B	Std.Error
1	0.810	0.780	2.428	0.024

5. Conclusion

The level of satisfaction of a staff in a job is a major criterion for determining the quality of services provided by the staff. This is most critical in non-profit organisation such as the library. The respondents in this study were highly satisfied with the LIS programme. It was shown that parental factor minimally influenced the choice of the programme by the respondents while peer factor substantially influenced the respondents' choice of the programme. It is hoped that the level

of satisfaction exhibited by the respondents would lead to LIS professionals who are satisfied with librarianship and, consequently, well-motivated to carry on the mantle of catering for the mutated information needs of the society.

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