AN ASSESSMENT OF UNIVERSITY-BASED LIBRARY SCHOOLS IN NORTHERN NIGERIA: THE ACADEMIA.

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ABSTRACT

This study was aimed at assessing the availability of teaching staff in university-based Library Schools in former Northern Region of Nigeria. The study assesses the academia (i.e. teaching staff) by classifying their gender, qualification and rank, length of service and areas of specialization. The population of the study consists of all library schools situate in the universities. Stratified sampling technique was used while four (4) Library Schools were sampled using the three (3) geopolitical zones as a criteria. Ahmadu Bello University Zaria and Bayero University Kano are to represent the North-West; and University of Maiduguri is to represent the North-East zone while the Federal University of Technology, Minna Library School represents North-Central zone. Questionnaire was the only research instrument used in data collection. The findings revealed that 45 or 56% of the teaching staff in Library Schools under study were inadequate. It was also discovered that traditional disciplines of Library Science such as in the areas of national and school libraries, outreach and reference services and library history—are being neglected by most of the researchers or academic staff. As a way forward, the paper recommends that special incentives must be provided for library and information professionals in order to attract them to teaching. Research grant can also be made available for research into areas lagging behind.

INTRODUCTION

Library Education in Nigeria began with the establishment of the Institute of Librarianship in the (Premier University) University of Ibadan in 1959/60. Eight years later, the second Library School was established in Ahmadu Bello University in the year 1968. The establishment of Zaria Library School follows the F.A Sharr report on the Library Needs for Northern Nigeria, Olden (1980). Thus the Department of Library Science, Ahmadu Bello University Zaria became the first Library School to be established in Northern Nigeria.

Between 1970's and 1980's Library Schools were established in Bayero University Kano (1977), University of Maiduguri (1978), Abia State University, Uturu (1981) and University Of Nigeria Nsukka. Similarly, in the 1990's Library Schools were established in Delta State University, Abraka, Imo state University, University of Uyo, Nnamdi Azikwe University, Awka, Enugu State and the University of Science and Technology, Enugu. Aguolu (2002).

The number of Library schools in Nigerian universities kept on increasing even into the 21st century. For example, the Federal University of Technology, Minna established Library School in 2001 for undergraduate programme in Library and Information Technology (Students Handbook 2001-2006). The Ibrahim Badamasi Babangida (IBBUL) Lapai, a newly established university, established its own Library School in 2006 to run undergraduate programme. Also, the Department of Library and Information

Science was established in the newly established Katsina State University, Katsina in 2006, to run undergraduate programme (BLS Library Science and B.Sc Ed Library and Information Science respectively. (Daily Trust July 25,2007).

The University of Ilorin and Benue State University have established library schools during the 2006/2007 academic session. In the South-South, Rivers State University of Science and Technology Port-Harcourt has got approval to commence the BLS programme in the 2006/2007 session (NLA Newsletter 2006).

Statement of the Problem

The numbers of Nigerian University-based library schools are on the increase as confirmed by Alhassan (2007). There are now 27 number of library schools in the country. In order to produce professionals that will face challenges in the modem Librarianship, the need to equip the Library Schools with adequate infrastructure, facilities and teaching staff is very crucial. Although the provisions of other facilities are very important, the place of teaching staff in the effective implementation of any curriculum is indispensable. Therefore one wonders that with the increase in the number of library schools in the country how has the staffing situation been? This study therefore seeks to answer the following research questions.

1. What is the number and rank of teaching staff in the selected library schools?
2. What is the area of teaching staff in the selected library schools?
3. What is the proportion of teaching staff by gender in those selected library schools?
4. What is the length of service of the teaching staff in selected library schools?
5. What are the research profiles of the teaching staff in the selected library schools?

Review of Related Literature

Higher education and the environment in which it operates are in an age of transformation. Changing in technology, student and parent expectations, teaching and learning and research creates new opportunities and new challenges for many institutional departments. Nelson, (2007). This is true

of higher education professionals teaching in library schools and even colleges.

The National Universities Commission (NUC) has been assigned the responsibility of monitoring university education in Nigeria. Its role in the furtherance of university education has led it to championing several innovative ideas in recent times—aimed at increasing excellence. One of its important roles is its position as an agency for the accreditation of programmes run by the universities, therefore encouraging quality and excellence of the university system. Okafor (2005).

The training and education of a librarian or the information worker, to a large extent, would depend on his educational foundation, especially as gained from a high institution such the university. The proliferation of library schools in Nigerian universities is on the rise. The question of qualified manpower therefore asks for serious reflections. The present study is not only concerned with the academic qualification of the teaching staff but also their experiences as spelt out in their ranks and professionalism. Johnson (2007) addresses some concern with education for library and information science teaching in developing countries with a view to enhancing the curricular content to prepare graduates with the challenges of globalization. Diso and Njoku (2007) also examined the types of library and information science programmes these schools offer, the content of their curricula and training facilities against the needs of the society.

At an international meeting, the Association of Universities and Higher Education Institutions (IAU) under the auspices of UNESCO and Conference of Presidents of Universities (CPU) in France (May 2007) it was emphasized that quality of education offered at home, quality of offshore programmes, quality of incoming courses as well as the means and processes used to assess, enhance and sustain high quality of higher education cannot be overlooked or treated lightly. It is therefore necessary to look at the "actors" involved in quality enhancement and assurance.

Assessment of university-based library schools academia or the teaching staff is necessary because of the concerns for library and information science education. According to Kigongo-Bulenya (2005), accreditation introduces a complex

quality assurance system which leads to a process of self-regulation in which the interest of the profession at both the academic and professional levels is brought to test. Therefore accreditation is measured at "quality control" involved with education, training and practices among university based library schools and their products there from.

In a write-up on trend in curriculum programme of A.B.U. Zaria Library School, Abubakar (2005) posits among other things that the department was ranked with a 95.8% accreditation status by National Universities Commission. The academic staff strength stood at 2 professors, 4 Senior Lecturers and others who are between Lecturers I and II status; and that two (2) academic staff specialises in ICT related courses

Scope and Limitations

The present study is only confined to the assessment of full-time teaching staff in four (4) university-based Library Schools in Northern Nigeria. It was not very easy to have interviews with heads of library schools due to their tight schedules and constraints of finance on the part of the researchers.

Methodology

This study adopted the survey method. The population of the study is the university-based library Schools in Northern Nigeria as shown below:

1. Department of Library and Information Science, ABU Zaria
2. Department of Library and Information Sciences, BUK, Kano
3. Department of Library Science, University of Maiduguri
4. Department of Library and Information Science, Benue State University
5. Yola Library School, Yola
6. Department of Library and Information Studies, IBBU Lapai
7. Department of Library and Information Technology, FUT, Minna
8. Department of Library and Information Science, Katsina State University, Katsina.
9. Department of Library and Information Science, University of Ilorin.
10. Nasarawa State University, Keffi.
11. University of Abuja, FCT.

Sources:
Nos 1 – 6 = UME/DE Brochure 2007/2008 Academic session p147
No. 7 = Departmental Hand book 2001 – 2006
No. 8 = Daily Trust July 25, 2007, P. 40
Nos 9-11 = NLA (2007) National Conference/AGM Proceedings, p.2.

Four (4) out of eleven (11) Library Schools were selected on the basis of their geographical location as they appear below:

S/NO	LIBRARY SCHOOLS	YEARS OF ESTABLISHMENT	GEO-POLITICAL ZONES
1	Department of Library and Information Science, ABU Zaria	1968	North-West
2.	Department of Library and Information Sciences, BUK Kano	1977	North-West
3.	Department of Library Science University of Maiduguri	1978	North-East
4.	Department of Library and Information Technology, FUT, Minna	2001	North-Central

Instrument for Data Collection

A one page questionnaire was designed which includes both open and close ended questions. Questionnaires were administered by the researcher as well as research assistants. The period of administration was between January and August, 2007. Descriptive statistics was used in analyzing the data collected.

Data Analysis and Discussion

Response Rate

A total of eighty (80) copies of questionnaires were administered and 45(56%) copies were returned and found usable. This is a fair response rate, attributed to the fact that most respondents feel reluctant to fill in questionnaire.

Table 1: Respondents by Characteristics (Gender)

Gender	Frequency	Percentage (%)
Male	37	82.00
Female	08	18.00
Total	45	100.00

Based on the response rate, by gender; 37 (82%) of respondents were males while 8 (18%) respondents were female. This is an assertion that males are more in the teaching fields than the females. The finding is related to the responses from the questionnaire received only.

Table 2: Respondents by Length of Services

Year of Teaching Experience	Frequency	Percentage (%)
Below 1 year	02	04
1 – 5	13	29
6 – 10	07	16
11 – 15	16	13
16 – 20	05	11
21 – 25	02	04
26 – 30	00	00
31 – 35	00	00
Total	45	100

From the tables, it was discovered that 16 (36%) of respondents had between 11 and 15 years teaching experience. They are likely to be those in the ranks of lecturer II and I. While those with 16 to 20 years, 21 to 25 years of experience could be Lecturers that have attained the ranks of Senior Lecturer and Reader. Those that spent few months and those within the range of 1 – 5 years are likely to be recent entrants (i.e. Graduate Assistants and Assistants Lecturers) into the teaching field.

Table 3: Respondents by Academic rank

Rank	Frequency	Percentage (%)
Professor	-	-
Assoc. Professor/Reader	03	07
Senior Lecturer	10	22
Lecturer I	07	16
Lecturer II	06	13
Assts. Lecturer	12	27
Graduate Assistant	06	13
Rank not indicated	01	02
Total	45	100

There are higher concentrations of academic staff in the rank of Assistant Lecturers with 12 (27%). Most of them could be fresh Master Degree holders who might have not had up to three (3) years of teaching experience. The table shows that 10 (22%) are on the rank of Senior Lecturers and that most of them are likely to be holders of Ph.D degree. There is few academic staff with the rank of Associate Professor or Reader. They are 3 in number which represents 7% of the entire academic staff that responded to the questionnaire. The fact is that to attain the rank of an Associate Professor a candidate is subjected to external assessment as a criterion for promotion. In addition to that, obtaining a Ph.D takes longer than expected in most Nigerian Universities. For example, when F.U.T., Minna advertised for academic staff vacancies of various positions of Professors/Associate Professors and Senior Lecturers which include that of Library Science and Information Technology Department were prominent. (News Bulletin August 31st, 2007, p. 2)

Only 1 (2%) respondent did not indicate his/her rank. However, there were no responses from professors probably

because the questionnaires could not reach them. Six or 13% of the academic staff were Graduate Assistants. They were mostly pursuing their Master degree at the same time teaching. Most graduate assistants are attached with professors to provide them with the teaching experiences.

Table 4: Respondents Specialization by highest Degree obtained

Specialization	Ph.D	Master Degree	Bachelor Degree	Total	Percentage (%)
Library Science	12	22	04	38	84.44
Information Science	-	01	-	01	2.22
Computer Science	01	02	03	06	13.33
Total	**13**	**25**	**07**	**45**	**100**

In the course of data analysis, it was discovered that Library Science was well covered in the respondents' areas of specialization. As can be seen from the table, Library Science top the list with 38 (84.44%) with the breakdown of 12 Ph.D holders, 22 Master degree holders and 04 Bachelor degree holders all in Library Science—that is, Library and Information Science; Library Studies; and, Library Science. It was discovered that only 1 academic staff obtained a Master of Information Science representing 2.22%. This is probably because only the University of Ibadan provides the Master of Information Science Course at their African Regional Centre for Information Science. However, Ahmadu Bello University Zaria had also decided to run 'Master of Information Science' programme from the 2007/2008 academic session.

With the provision of Library Services using ICT, the curriculum of Library Schools becomes broader. Thus various Library Schools in Nigerian universities now have academic staff that specializes in Computer Science and Computer Technology. The table indicated that 6 (13.33%) teaching staff possesses various degrees in Computer Science.

Table 5: Respondents by Research Profiles in Ranked Order

Ranked Order	Research Profiles	Frequency	Percentage (%)
1	Library & Information Science	13	10.33
2	Information Technology	13	10.33
3	Information Management	11	9.17
4	Library Science/Library Studies	09	8.00
5	Library Education	08	7.00
6	Academic Librarianship	07	6.00
7	Research Methodology	06	5.00
8	Computer Science	06	5.00
9	Book trade and publishing	06	5.00
10	Technical Services	05	4.17
11	Library Administration	05	4.17
12	Special Librarianship	04	3.33
13	Public Library	04	3.33
14	Information Science/Studies	04	3.33
15	Bibliometric	04	3.33
16	Archives Record Management	04	3.33
17	School Librarianship	03	2.50
18	Preservation of library materials	02	1.66
19	Weblography & Bibliometrics	02	1.66
20	Reference and Information Services	01	0.83
21	Outreach Services	01	0.83
22	National Library	01	0.83
23	Library History	01	0.83
	Total	**120**	**100**

The fact is that a respondent can tick/state more than one alternative options meaning that he/she is engaged in a number of researches or has more than a single field of specialization. This is reflected in the frequency returns. The table above shows the various field of specialization by research profiles, which may include probably areas of journal publication output, or, areas of interest in terms of courses taught. It could also include areas of higher degree awards. The research profiles were tabulated in descending order beginning with 13 and ending with 1.

From the table, the clustered fields of research were those of Library and Information Science as well as Information Technology. Each indicated a frequency of 13 (10.33 %) respectively. Both research profiles/fields are closely related. Information Science and Information Technology are inseparable and interwoven. An example is Library Automation and the Internet Resources as discipline requiring the use of computers and information and communication technology. Related to these is Information Management indicating 11 (9.17 %) response rates. It is linked with Information Technology. The fourth in the ranked order is Library Science or Library Studies. One very interesting thing within the first four ranked order (i.e. 1st, 2nd 3rd, and 4th) research profiles were the similarities or relationship existing within them. In the present information age, computer and the information and communication technology (ICT) represents an axis to librarianship generally. One cannot talk of Library Science/Studies without talking of Information Technology or Information Management.

The least of the research profiles indicated by the respondents are those representing the traditional disciplines of librarianship such as: Outreach services, National Library, Reference and Information services, as well as Library History. Each posted 1(0.83 %) response rate. This translates to mean that active researches into those areas are being relegated to the background.

Findings from the Study
1. Generally there is inadequate teaching staff in the university-based library Schools in Northern Nigeria.

2. Very few females take up teaching appointments in librarianship.
3. There were no adequate numbers of Professors of Library Science in university-based Library Schools in Northern states. This may likely be attributed to the 'brain-drain' syndrome.

RECOMMENDATIONS
1. In order to attract professionals into the teaching field, special allowances should be created as incentives to retain and attract new entrants.
2. More professionals should be trained in the field of Information Science.
3. Research grants should be made available in the traditional areas of the discipline such as National and School Librarianship as well as Public Information Systems and Services, Library History and Reference Service. This will encourage researchers in the areas mentioned above.

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