

Chapter 12

An Assessment of the Perception of Library School Students towards Librarianship at the University of Ilorin: A Pilot Study

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ABSTRACT

This is a pilot study, which investigated the perception of the University of Ilorin library school students towards librarianship. It was aimed at examining the characteristics of the students and how they got admitted into the Department. It adopted the survey research design where the entire 90 students (100 and 200 levels) constituted its population, while the 74 that were available during the data collection exercise represented the sample. Questionnaire and structured interview were employed for data collection. The results revealed that 75.7% in 100 and 24.3% of 200 levels came in through the Joint Admissions and Matriculations Examinations and direct admission/transfer, respectively. Their subject backgrounds include Arts (36.5%), Science (28.4%), and Commercial (23.0%); a majority had a SSSC (45.9%) result with the mean scores of 219 from JAMB and 59.69% from post-JAMB, respectively. The majority (87.8%) did not choose LIS originally, and 67.6% claimed to be initially uninterested, against the current positive perception (66.2%). Hypotheses tests showed no significant difference in subject background and current perception of students who chose and those who did not choose LIS as a first choice. It concluded that the peculiar situation under which many of the pioneering students came into the Department (i.e. transfer), was undesirable given the prevalent negative perception of librarianship. Appropriate recommendations were made.

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INTRODUCTION

The pattern of LIS education in any country is said to be shaped by a combination of circumstances, which according to Kargbo (1999), include "the nature of the country's library service; the structure of tertiary education; the system of government; and the professional organizations which librarians themselves have formed" (pp. 97-103). Thus, a basic consideration for the development of any profession is the system of educating its initiates into the field. Personnel, especially professionals, are the foundations for effective and efficient library and information services similar to other professions. Planning for the future supply of this cadre of staff and adequate utilization of the present manpower often depend on a thorough knowledge of the characteristics of the existing professionals (Nzotta in Alemna, 1991). Hence, education for librarianship emanated out of a concern to develop an ideal profession to provide practitioners with appropriate working frameworks (Ibrahim, 1994).

Not only is librarianship a labour-intensive service profession, effective library services demand a much skilled and efficient staff. Thus, central to library development is personnel with modern librarianship demanding personnel with adequate education and training. However, unlike for other professions like Law, Medicine and Accountancy, librarianship has been a less popular calling especially among prospective undergraduates of Nigerian higher institutions such as the polytechnics and universities. This is due largely to the low-level awareness of what it is and what it entails, particularly at the primary and post-primary school levels where students normally begin to fiddle with different career ambitions. The situation has been that more of LIS undergraduates got into the department only when they have failed to secure their preferred courses of choice. This can only make for a crop of uninterested, uninspired and reluctant workforce of the future who could be lacking in required commitment and diligence on the field of

practice. This has been a source of great concern to many stakeholders in the LIS subsector, and thus attracting research attention.

The Emergence of Library School at the University of Ilorin

The University of Ilorin, Ilorin, Kwara State, was one of the seven institutions of higher learning established by a decree of the Federal Military Government in August, 1975, aimed at providing more opportunities for Nigerians aspiring to acquire university education and to generate high level man-power, so vital for the then rapidly expanding economy. Academic activities commenced in October 1976 at the then University College with 200 foundation students and three faculties namely Arts, Science and Education. Today, seven additional faculties have since been added in the following order namely: Engineering & Technology (1978), Business & Social Sciences (1981), Agriculture (1982), Law (1993, after an initial start-up in 1983, Basic Medical Sciences (2004), Clinical Sciences (2004) and Communication and Information Sciences (2008).

The Faculty of Communication and Information Sciences (CIS) was formally established via the decision of the Senate at its 193rd (Special) meeting held on 20th June, 2008. Part of that Senate decision was the movement to CIS of the Department of Computer Science from the Faculty of Science; and same for the Department of Mass Communication from the Faculty of Business and Social Sciences. In addition to the decision to move these two Departments, was also the decision to formally commence activities in the departments of Information and Communication Science, Telecommunication Science, and Library and Information Science. This faculty is the University's flagship faculty designed to take full advantage of multidisciplinary interactions of the science and technologies of computing, information and communication, with its undergraduate curriculum designed to reflect this.

The Department of LIS commenced undergraduate academic activities in the 2009/2010 academic session, admitting into the 100 and 200 levels a total of 66 and 24 candidates respectively. Aside from a few among them who applied to read LIS as a course, it was observed that majority of them came usually unwillingly as transferred students having failed to secure entrance into their various choices. However, since this is a new library school, it may be rather premature to assume that a pattern of dumping ground syndrome is already in place. Thus, this study is a pilot assessment of the perception of University of Ilorin library school students towards librarianship as a discipline of choice. Its main objective is to examine how these students came into the Department of LIS, University of Ilorin. Specifically, it sought to know: their secondary school subject backgrounds; their first choice courses; why they failed in their first choice courses bids; establish their perception of librarianship presently; and how they are coping presently.

Literature Review

Library and Information Science Education in Nigeria

The training of librarians in Nigeria was a feature of the second half of the 20th Century when early modern libraries that were established alongside their research institutes had acute staffing problem (Nzotta, 1984). Initially, expatriate staff who manned the libraries could no longer cope with the management of the growing number of libraries. The need to educate and train more indigenous librarians arose, but without any training institutions in any of the African countries. This necessitated in-house training courses organized for indigenous staff by various libraries enabling them to sit for the United Kingdom Library Association examinations in the various British colonies (Aina and Serema, 2001). By the 1940s, the training of

indigenous personnel to manage existing libraries began to attract more serious attention than ever. Some of the reasons advanced for the growing needs to promote library education in Nigeria, then, according to Ojo-Igbinoba (1995) include the following: -

1. The demand for trained and professional librarians.
2. There were libraries with large buildings and growing collections, which required expert management.
3. The increase in world population and literacy required more libraries and qualified librarians to man them.
4. Trained manpower is required for the complex and scientific nature of library operations (p. 13).

The 1953 Ibadan UNESCO Seminar was significant to the development of libraries and the establishment of professional training courses in Nigeria. At the Seminar, participants expressed the need for trained library personnel who are adequate in terms of "number, competence and vision for the enormous task ahead" (UNESCO, 1954). The West African Library Association (WALA) was one of its outcomes, aimed, among other things, at establishing professional training courses to ensure an adequate supply of trained staff in the sub-region. John Harris, its then president, obtained financial assistance from the Carnegie Corporation, which sponsored Harold Lancour in 1957 to conduct a survey of library conditions in West Africa. Lancour (1958) recommended the establishment of a library school connected with a university level institution "with the resources, personnel and prestige to develop a high quality, professional training agency". Ibadan library school was thus established in 1959 to "help the development of libraries by training librarians and investigating problems of librarianship and bibliography with special reference to West Africa and

with particular attention to the leadership level” (Ibadan University Annual Report).

The growing need for more personnel to man the expanding library staff requirements led to the establishment of the Zaria library school in 1968; as fallout of the 1963 Sharr’s Report on the library needs of Northern Nigeria. By the mid 1970s, both library schools could no longer cope with the growing demand by the fast expanding Nigerian libraries precipitated by the establishment of new academic libraries in newly established universities and other tertiary institutions.

The growing awareness of the importance of research and libraries for socio-economic and technological development also made research institutes to expand tremendously. All these propelled a greater need for more personnel, which had to be met by expanding the existing library schools and by establishing new ones. Bayero University, Kano, 1977; University of Maiduguri, 1978; the then Imo State University, Okigwe, 1981, (now renamed Abia State University, Uturu), and Imo State University, Owerri, 1993, established library schools in that order. There was also the establishment of the African Research Centre for Information Science, University of Ibadan in November 1990 as the first tertiary-level educational institution in West Africa mandated to undertake research and consultancy services, and offer higher degree and continuing education training in information science; an multidisciplinary field providing the required synergy among the various and more specialized disciplines and fields jointly referred to as information sciences, such as information management, information systems, information technology, computer science, library science, telecommunications, records management, communication and media arts (ARCIS, 2011). Since then, many more universities and polytechnics have contributed to the steady increase in the number of library schools in Nigeria today.

Trends in the Library and Information Science Practice

Library activities at present have become more sophisticated and complex due to the explosive number in information sources and their management devices. This has turned the modern library into a typical reception centre for the assemblage of communication of every description; just as the modern societies have become largely dependent on information as their existence hinged on the availability, unhindered accessibility and intelligent use of information. To constantly provide for these needs, trained personnel with vision, technical expertise and managerial ability are required; such calibre as could design and operate systems relating to the collection, management, dissemination and interpretation of information with the accompanying technologies. Consequently, certain changes have affected and shaped the present library environments, as can be seen in things like communication technology, users’ needs, information resources (Sangal, 1995).

All these have necessitated the re-appraisal of library education and training in all its ramifications with the aim of attaining the required capacity building through the production of modern information professionals who are capable of exploiting “new information technology infrastructure”. This is with a view to serving as “teachers of users, information counsellors, intermediaries, facilitators and information brokers” (Wali and Adimorah, 1998, pp. 23-33). It implies that library schools are now expected to train modern information professionals who are adept at utilizing new technologies in value-added economy. The effective management of complex resources typified in modern day libraries requires a new breed of professionals who are committed to understanding the information age and helping people and organizations control information flow through the new technologies.

Present and future librarians are thus expected to explore and exploit the use of information and

communication technologies (ICT) for modern library practice. This way, they would have more access to a rich and diverse range of electronic library services that are presently dominating the world of information storage, processing, retrieval and dissemination. Kigongo-Bukenya (1999) aptly asserted that library and information professionals are now required to be "contingent", i.e. their orientation, skills and techniques must be 'the best fit' to measure up to the ever-changing information society needs.

Thus, a successful library and information science course must review its philosophy and content continuously. This is with a view to responding to the changing realities of the workplace and to the changing roles and expectations of the information professional. Burke and Peter (1992) are however of the opinion that students come to the course with, sometimes, vague expectations, often based on ideas of what the library profession involves, or with a fixed intention to follow down a specific road. Consequently, the emergence of the library and information science school as a potent factor in shaping new philosophies and fostering new attitudes in the library profession has come to be identified as one of the most significant aspects of the evolution of librarianship in the 21st Century (Kargbo, 1999).

Currently, the library and information science practitioners are saddled with the task of providing leadership and expertise in the design, development and ethical management of knowledge-based information systems. This is with a view to meeting the information needs and obligations of patrons/institutions. While stressing that "electronic information provides librarians with challenges that are not necessarily new", Orick (2000) maintained that given the changing roles of the librarians, there will be challenges to long-standing professional ethical codes. Similarly, Keyes (1999) noted that "in the future as now, we can expect the virtual library to be the organization that identifies, selects, negotiates for, and provides access to an incredible range of information resources on

our behalf" (pp. 313-324). The globalization of information implies that access to information is no longer limited to what is available in the local collection. Consequently, the librarian is no longer the primary "gatekeeper" or guide to information.

Movement toward a digital library or virtual library does not only challenge the accessibility of the information but also the entire philosophy of what constitutes a document. Many libraries today strive to maintain a "transitional library" by collecting and organising both print and electronic resources' thereby justifying the assertion that ongoing complexity and unpredictable currents of change will mark the future of libraries. There is also a change in the description of the term "information" from a printed, permanent format as a "document" to a "resource". Unlike the past, when a user accessed a book/journal at a particular time and place; at present, electronic information are stored and accessed by millions of users simultaneously from personal computers with modems or through direct Internet connections from home, work or practically anywhere (Orick, 2000, pp. 313-324). Hence, users no longer have to physically visit the library to retrieve information since this latest wide-ranging opportunity provides users with convenient and immediate access to information. Similarly, as libraries engage in the use of inter-library loan and document delivery, there is the potential to provide access to all materials, and not just those materials owned by the individual library in a locality. Thus, Keyes (1999) maintained that the evolution toward a digital library creates a change in the 'locus of control', observing that the library's collection is moving outside the library itself. Essentially, digital collections have the potential of being stored offsite by which the "individual library will have far less control than today over the actual availability of information to the end user".

Karisiddappa (2004) rightly observed therefore that the contemporary scenario predominated by information and knowledge perspectives indicate the pressing need to educate and train the library

and information manpower towards a sustainable professional competence. He stressed that the manpower of today will meet in the near future the new challenges just as the onslaught of the impact of IT on LIS envisages in making substantial contribution to the ever-perpetuating information society. Hence, they need to be equipped in this context with necessary skills and competence to satisfy the high level, complex and ever-growing multifarious information needs of the users. Adekunle, Omoba & Tella (2007) noted that the application of ICT has brought about dramatic changes in library operations of today including 'automated cataloguing, circulation, information retrieval, electronic document delivery, and CD-ROM databases'; as 'digital and electronic libraries complement, and in some cases replace, traditional libraries'. Rather than becoming non-useful and irrelevant, the educational and guiding roles of librarians are now more important than ever, such that librarians now need new and updated education to fulfill their role. Dastgerdi (2009) affirmed that today's users still need librarians for a variety of reasons:

- Increasing amount of information and continuous information updating
- Array of media and formats for information
- Lack of confidence in accuracy information
- Need to evaluate information resources according to professional standards
- Scattering of information in different electronic and printed sources
- Users' need for knowledge of different types of information resources and search strategies (p. 1).

More and more of today's librarians must be clever interrogators, helping the patron to reframe their question more usefully, thus becoming "high-tech information sleuths, helping patrons plumb the oceans of information available in books and digital records" (Nemko, 2009, p.1) submitting that librarianship is an underrated career.

Perception Studies on Library School Students

Douglas (1957) sought to establish the extent to which librarianship selects members who have a certain characteristic personality pattern and found that the various notions held about librarians/ among librarians themselves, has a strong basis for describing the average American librarian in training as far back as 1948. It was thus concluded that library science student is not a very dynamic person. Rainwater (1962) studied 94 library school students at the University of Texas and found that they scored significantly higher than the established norms on the administered test for achievement; deference, order and endurance. The score was however found to be lower on exhibition, affiliation dominance, heterosexuality, and aggression; correlating with Douglas (1957) on the six traits of deference, endurance, less need for affiliation, dominance, aggression, and heterosexuality in interests.

Clayton (1968) tested the hypothesis that the personality of academic librarians was responsible for the inferior status of academic librarianship in American higher education. It revealed that many of them were not inclined toward initiative, decision-making, and assertiveness. Busha (1970) examined the relationship between librarians' attitude toward censorship and their authoritative nature and found that less than 10% of the sampled library school students have anything close to authoritarian personalities, as only this amount held strong attitudes toward censorship. Sukiennik (1978) examined assertion among librarians, postulating that a training programme could significantly alter traditional non-assertive female behaviour patterns. With the sample consisting of female library school students, the programme focused by the study was meant to produce more positive attitude vis-à-vis women roles toward librarianship as a career. The findings were not too different from previous ones especially with regards to assertiveness training

and attitude change; implying that increase in assertive behaviour did not necessarily facilitate attitude change.

Similarly, Agada (1989) investigated the impact of library school education on the assertive ability of its students at the Ahmadu Bello University, Zaria, between 1983 and 1986. The ANOVA results indicated that the Library Science and Liberal Arts students had lower scores in their final years than in their first year; while the mean score of law students appreciated progressively over the years; suggesting that student assertion may not be enhanced consequent upon receiving library school education, at the Ahmadu Bello University, Zaria. On his part, Agumanu (1989) studied the choice of librarianship as a career in Nigeria to identify the factors that influenced the students' choice of the course in Imo State University library school. He found that librarianship was not a typical first choice for these students as most of them indicated the initial choice of Law, while admission standard ranked highest among factors for the second choice demand of librarianship.

The Librarian's Professional Image

There is no doubt that the issues of professional image for librarians and librarianship has attracted a considerable attention in the form of both empirical studies and written articles. Fasanya (1984) identified factors widely accepted in professional life to include: length of training, content of professional knowledge, importance of profession to human life, risk of the job, versatility of practitioners in the profession, clauses of comfortable living, regulatory factors within the profession, and effect on/appeal to offspring. Slatter (1981) recognized three main facets of the social image of any group, occupation/profession as "the public, the self and ideal facets". Whereas "the public image" refers to the way the society sees a profession, "the self facets" is internal and concerns the way those in the profession see themselves; even as "the ideal

facet" refers to what the image of a particular profession should be.

It is against this backdrop that Kantumoya (1993) underscored the negative image of librarianship in Zambia while Awaritefe (1983) confirmed that users of library and the public in general do not appreciate librarianship as a profession, asserting that the public do not see librarianship as of equal importance as other professions with similar levels of academic qualification. The outcome of his case study of attitude to librarianship upheld the hypothesis that the attitude to librarianship as a profession is negative; and therefore agreed with his initial assumption about the unfavourable attitude of the people toward librarianship.

Ajidahun (1997) conducted a study on students' perception of librarianship at the Ondo State University, Ado-Ekiti, borne out of an observed occurrence whereby "students treat librarians with ignominy and reproach without observance of courtesy and regards to their status". Parts of his findings revealed ignorance on the part of the student library users about who a librarian is; his duties, required qualification and status. He concludes that the lack of awareness has persistently given librarianship a bad image. Though Lungu (1995) asserted that libraries in Zambian universities are highly valued by both planners and their users, but noted that the human beings (librarians) who manage these services are often marginalized. Agada (1987) summarized the outcomes of some landmark studies, based on Western populations, with regards to the personality of the librarian thus: -

All the studies showed the average librarian to be more submissive or deferential than the general population, and to possess a set of qualities summarized by the term endurance. They also showed that the librarian is less likely to be affiliative, is less dormant, less heterosexual in interests and less aggressive than the normative population. All the studies agreed that the same characteristics

applied to both males and females within the total population of librarians (pp. 305-325).

Young (1996) asserted that for librarianship and libraries, the pervasive influence of digital computing is transforming the expression and communication of shared ideas and knowledge. Marshal (1997) examined whether librarianship is considered a profession in Italy and that the Italian librarians play a professional role and on the basis of her findings, concluded that in as far as the job requires specialization and a high level of training, the Italian government is yet to acknowledge the skills and training necessary to become a librarian as it does not recognize the diplomas awarded by universities. However, this contrasts the findings of Salisu (2001), which confirm that librarians enjoy faculty status in 9 (60%) of the Nigerian universities studied with 56.91% librarians in this category. Similarly, Oppenheim and Sophie (2001), in their personality and glass ceiling issues study, found that the major issues are not related to gender as much as to commitment, as LIS staff tend not to have sufficient commitment to corporate goals.

Issa and Nwalo (2008) investigated the low preference for choice of library and information science among undergraduates in Nigerian library schools, revealing that majority did not make the course as their first choice but ended up in the library school as a last resort, while the few who did, were influenced mostly by previous library work experience. The study concluded that despite the evidence of improved popularity of the programme among the respondents, it remains largely unpopular among prospective undergraduates in Nigeria when compared with such other courses as accountancy, medicine and law. Also by Issa and Nwalo (2008), found significant relationships between undergraduates who chose the course originally and those who did not, regarding age and career choice; gender and career choice; subject background and career choice and

admission predisposing factors and career choice. This implies that the variables tested influenced the career choice of undergraduates in Nigerian library schools.

Thus, Okoro (2009) concluded that in spite of the vast and diverse knowledge and information resources available in libraries, they still remain the least popular institution and the least sought profession in Nigeria. Salaam & Owolabi, 2010, also believed that given the fact that a strong academic background breeds career success, little surprise then that professionals like lawyers, doctors, engineers and accountants are traditionally held in high esteem because they all demand solid academic backgrounds; insisting that there are some professions demanding advanced training and still failed to attract corresponding respect, among which is librarianship. Similarly, Igbinosa (2007) maintained that students do not pursue careers in librarianship because it does not have the prestige given to other professions. Obaseki, Ibrahim and Momoh, (2010) underscored the continued prevalence of the notion that librarianship is 'still very unpopular in Nigeria', stressing that 'people still tend to find it hard to comprehend why someone would study library science', leading to 'the drastic reduction of potential library students, with many leaving the profession, and too many who take refuge in the profession... with no real zeal for librarianship'. He maintained that the profession has witnessed a decline in its public rating in Nigeria. In an analysis of 100 videos created by the librarians, Attebury (2010) found an interesting picture about what message librarians are sending to viewers and how effectively they are challenging negative stereotypes. A comparison of these videos to those created by non-librarians shows differences from the ways that librarians portray themselves and hints at alternative methods that librarians might want to employ to combat negative stereotypes of the profession.

The Research Problem

There is no doubt that the growth and development of library and information science schools in both the polytechnics and universities in Nigeria especially in the last one and half decades have been remarkable. This is because many more of such schools have come be established within that period than in the entire period of its history, which dated back to the 1960s. This is a significant development for the training and education of librarians in the country and beyond representing the engine room for the production of the much-needed manpower in the profession. But librarianship today, has been considerably affected by the development in Science and Technology as well as ICT. There is no gainsaying therefore that its present and future workforce required a high level of competence, commitment and diligence in order for their libraries to remain relevant.

However, observations have shown that many undergraduates in Nigerian library schools took to librarianship due to their inability to secure their desired first choice courses, thereby turning the library schools into a dumping ground. This portrays unwillingness on the part of such students, which may later in life, result in lack of interest and commitment at the workplace. This pilot study therefore examined the perception of the pioneering students of LIS at the University of Ilorin towards librarianship, with a view to understanding the circumstances leading to their admittance into the Department. Specific objectives include to: know their secondary school subject backgrounds; find out their first choice courses; know why they failed to make their first choice courses; and establish how they perceive librarianship presently. The study will be guided by the following research questions namely:

1. What is the demographic composition of the library school students at the University of Ilorin?

2. What is the parental characteristics composition of the library school students at the University of Ilorin?
3. What is the academic background of the students?
4. What are their first choice courses and why did they fail to secure them?
5. What is the perception of the students towards librarianship presently?

The Methodology

The study adopted the survey research design; taking the entire student number (90) comprising 66 and 24 for 100 and 200 levels respectively, as the study's population and also sample; due to its relative smallness. The questionnaire was used as the main tool, administered on the students, for data collection; while a representative of the Head of Department, who was directly involved in the selection process that brought in the students into the department was also interviewed. The questionnaire was subdivided into three namely: A-Bio-Data, which has 9 questions; B-Educational Background, with 8 questions; C-Choice of Librarianship, with 10 questions and D-Perception of Librarianship, with 12 questions. The questionnaire was administered on the students during a series of normal classroom engagements, having been subjected to content validity through the assessment appropriateness by two experts in librarianship. Responses from the interview assisted in getting the correct understanding of the situation surrounding their admittance into the department. In addition to 4 research questions, whose analysis was presented descriptively, two research hypotheses were also tested using one-way ANOVA statistics. The integrative approach was employed in presentation of the report whereby relevant interview responses were discussed alongside others.

Findings and Discussion

Research Question 1: What is the Demographic Composition of the Library School Students at the University of Ilorin?

Table 1 provides an overview of the demographic composition of the research respondents showing clearly that 75.7% are in the 100 level where they all come in through the Joint Admissions and Matriculations Examinations (JAMB). This is unlike the 24.3% 200 level category who were either of the direct admission; having had relevant qualifying Diploma from other institutions previously or transferred from other departments in the university. On account of their gender, female had slightly higher figure of 51.4% than that of the male (48.6%). Expectedly on age, 17-21 bracket was the most predominant (60.8%); followed by the 22-26 (37.8%), while majority (98.6%) are married, and 71.6% as Christians.

Research Question 2: What is the Academic Background of the Students?

Results from Table 2 showed that though respondents are of diverse subject backgrounds, more are of the Arts (36.5%) Science (28.4%) and then Commercial (23.0%). Surprisingly, Social Sciences has an insignificant 12.2% representation. And even though respondents have varying combinations of 'O' level results, majority had only one result namely Senior Secondary School Certificate (SSSC); just as another 20.3% had National Examination Council Certificate (NECO) only and 10.8% General Certificate of Education (GCE) only; all pointing to the sound state of the respondents' academic health. This also points out that majority had SSCE, NECO and GCE certificates in that order.

On the number of attempts made at JAMB before securing this admission, it is instructive that majority (39.2%) did twice; another 28.4%

Table 1. Demographic composition of respondents

Demographic Characteristics	Frequency	Percentage
Course Levels		
100	56	75.7
200	18	24.3
Total	74	100
Gender		
Male	38	51.4
Female	36	48.6
Total	74	100
Age		
Under 15 years	1	1.4
17-21	45	60.8
22-26	28	37.8
Total	74	100
Marital Status		
Married	1	1.4
Single	73	98.6
Total	74	100
Religion		
Christianity	53	71.6
Islam	21	28.4
Total	74	100

did thrice; while only 9.4% had four attempts. Remarkable also is that 23.0% had a single attempt at JAMB as is indicative of their sound academic standing; all things being equal. This assertion was earlier attested to by the fact that a more significant 56.8% made their 'O' level results at the very first attempt followed by another 29.7% who did same at the second attempt

Seeking to know when respondents obtained their 'O' level results within a period of 10 years (1999-2009), revealed that the years 2008 (29.7%), 2007 (21.6%) and 2006 (16.2%) featured prominently in that order. This indicates that majority of the respondents obtained their results within the last three to four years of their admission into the university.

Table 2. Academic background of the respondents

Respondents' Academic Background	Frequency	Percentage
Subject Background		
Science	21	28.4
Social Sciences	9	12.2
Arts	27	36.5
Commercial	17	23.0
Total	74	100
Nature of 'O' Level Certificate		
SSCE	34	45.9
GCE	8	10.8
NECO	15	20.3
SSCE & GCE	2	2.7
SSCE % NECO	9	12.2
GCE & NECO	5	6.8
SSSE, GCE & NECO	1	1.4
Total	74	100
No. of 'O' Level Attempted		
1 time	42	56.8
2 times	22	29.7
3 times	3	4.1
4 times	7	9.4
Total	74	100
No. of JAMB Attempted		
1 time	17	23.0
2 times	29	39.2
3 times	21	28.4
4 times	7	9.4
Total	74	100
When 'O' Level was Obtained		
1999		
2000	1	1.4
2001	1	1.4
2002	2	2.7
2003	5	6.8
2004	2	2.7
2005	6	8.1
2006	12	16.2
2007	16	21.6
2008	22	29.7
2009	7	9.5
Total	74	100

Table 3. Respondents' first choice courses and why they did not succeed

First Choice Courses	Frequency	Percentage
Accounting	10	13.5
Banking and Finance	2	2.7
Business Administration	1	1.4
Civil Engineering	4	5.4
Computer Science	3	4.1
Economics	5	6.8
Electrical Engineering	3	4.1
English Language	1	1.4
Geology	1	1.4
Industrial Chemistry	1	1.4
Law	11	14.9
Library and Information Science	9	12.2
Mass Communication	18	24.3
Mechanical Engineering	2	2.7
Microbiology	1	1.4
Political Science	1	1.4
Sociology	1	1.4
Total	74	100
Reasons for Failing on First Choice Courses		
Do not know why	42	56.8
Do not meet JAMB/Post JAMB Cut-off/Deficient 'O' Level Requirements	19	25.7
Limited Space in the Chosen Department	4	5.4
Admitted into First Choice Course	9	12.2
Total	74	100

Results on JAMB score for admission into the University of Ilorin revealed that respondents had a minimum of 182 and maximum of 266 with a mean of 219.85 while the University's cut-off point stood at 200. Similarly, the average Post-JAMB score was 59.69; where 50 was the minimum score and 80 as maximum.

Research Question 3: What are their First Choice Courses and Why Did They Fail to Secure Them?

Research Question 4: What is the Perception of the Students Towards Librarianship Presently?

From Table 3, Mass Communication (24.3%) was the predominant first choice course followed by Accounting (13.5%) and then LIS (12.2%). However, the widespread of other choices made ranging from Arts through Commercial to Science was instructive. Thus, majority (87.8%) respondents were not admitted into their first choice courses and had no idea why they were so denied. This means that most of them did not choose LIS at all; which invariably explains why majority (67.6%) claimed that they were sad, unhappy, disappointed, uninterested and confused with only 14.9% claiming to be indifferent when they got admitted into the Department. This may

Table 4. Respondents' perception of library and information science as a course

Perception	Frequency	Percentage
Initial Reaction to the Course		
Sad/ Unhappy/Disappointed/Uninterested/Confused	50	67.6
Indifferent	11	14.8
Happy	13	17.6
Total	74	100
Current Perception of LIS^a		
It is Satisfying/Interesting/Good	49	66.2
It is Challenging	23	31.1
It is Unsatisfying/Uninteresting	2	2.7
Total	74	100
Prospect of the Course		
The Course has Prospect	72	97.3
The Course has no Prospect	2	2.7
Total	74	100
Desire to Become		
An Information Scientist/Information Broker	46	62.2
A Librarian	20	27.0
A Lecturer	2	2.7
Indifferent	6	8.1
Total	74	100

partly explain why 31.1% indicated willingness to return back to their first choice courses, given the opportunity; as their interest still remain in the original choice made.

On the current perception of LIS by the respondents, 66.2% majority indicated that they are interested and satisfied with it even as 31.1% considered it challenging (Table 4). That only 2.7% indicated dissatisfaction with the course presently contrasts sharply with their initial reactions when it was first introduced to them; where 67.6% expressed disappointment, sadness and lack of interest. Already, 97.3% expressed the belief that the course has prospect; with focus on becoming Information Scientists (62.2%), Librarians (27.0), and Lecturer (2.7%). This is because most (95.9%) are coping well presently; deploying the strategy of hardwork (97.3%); showing

that they are determined to excel in it after all, using such platforms as hardwork (35.1%), Interest (29.7%) and Flexibility of the course (20.3%). Hence, prominent among their experiences on the course were expressed in terms of Interesting (24.3%) and Requires hardwork (33.8%) respectively; which is why 94.6% of them would be willing to recommend LIS to friends and relations.

The Interview Report

Arising from the interview held with a key pioneering staff of the Department, who oversaw the process through which the 200 level students came in, it was revealed that out of the 23 students in that level, only five came in through the Direct Entry; having had requisite qualifications. From the 'Transferred List' of 40 candidates who have

Table 5. One-way ANOVA (F-Test) of students' subject background and the choice of LIS

Subject Backgrounds	N	$\bar{X}$ (mean)	S.D.	Cal. F-value	Probability (p-value)	F-tab.	D.F.
Science	21	1.95	0.22	2.206	0.095 (NS)	2.72	3
Social Science	9	1.89	0.33				
Arts	27	1.93	0.27				
Commercial	17	1.71	0.47				
Total	74						

NS = Not Significant at 0.05 alpha level

failed on good standing rating in the Faculty of Engineering, as prepared by the Admission Office, 18 scaled through the screening process arranged by the Department. This was due to the fact that the Department was not advertised for admission for that academic session which accounted for why it had no applicant that year.

Results of the Hypotheses Tested

The study tested 2 hypotheses the results of which are given below:

H₀₁: There is no significant difference between subject backgrounds of students who chose and those who did not choose LIS as first choice course

The *p*-value (0.095) is greater than the alpha (α) level of 0.05 (see Table 5). We therefore **do not** reject *H₀₁* and conclude that there is no significant difference between subject backgrounds in their influence on the choice of LIS as first choice course. In other words, the *F-calculated* was 2.21 while the *F-tabulated -F* (3, 70, 0.05) was 2.72. We therefore **do not** reject *H₀₁* since *F cal.* < *F tab.* This shows that there is no significant difference between subject backgrounds of those who chose and those who did not choose LIS as first choice course.

H₀₂: There is no significant difference between present perceptions of students who choose and those who do not choose LIS as first choice course

The *p*-value (0.699) is greater than the alpha (α) level of 0.05 (see Table 6). We therefore **do not** reject *H₀₂* and conclude that there is no significant difference between the present perceptions of those who chose and those who did not choose LIS as first choice course. In other words, the *F-calculated* was 0.360 while the *F-tabulated -F* (2, 71, 0.05) was 3.11. We therefore **do not** reject *H₀₂* since *F cal.* < *F tab.* This shows that there is no significant difference between the present perceptions of those who chose and those who did not choose LIS as first choice course.

Discussion of the Findings and their Implications

The findings on the demographic composition of the students and their parents were significant on a number of accounts relating to some previous studies. Both findings on the predominant age bracket of 17-21 and on the good mix of male and female were particularly similar to those found by Issa and Nwalo (2008); the implication of which is that the library school under study is populated by nearly equal number of both sexes, who are fresh and young, partly explaining why most of them were found to be unmarried. Their

Table 6. One-way ANOVA (F-Test) of students' present perception and the choice of LIS

Present Perceptions	N	$\bar{X}$ (mean)	S.D.	Cal. F-value	Probability (p-value)	F-tab.	D.F.
Satisfactory/Interesting/Good	49	1.86	0.35	0.360	0.699 (NS)	3.11	2
Challenging	23	1.91	0.29				
Unsatisfactory/No Interest	2	2.00	0.00				
Total	74						

NS = Not Significant at 0.05 alpha level

parental characteristics revealed that majority of their fathers were civil servants and their mothers, businesswomen/traders/artisans; possessing academic qualifications ranging from HND, BSc. to MSc. Pointed to the rather sound educational background of majority of their parents; especially the fathers who are mainly civil servants. Contrary to the findings of Issa and Nwalo (2008) however, these respondents came mainly from Arts and then Science subject background as against the predominant Commercial background of those in the previous study. That their 'O' level results were obtained at, mostly, first attempt and as recent as 2008 and 2007 respectively, possibly pointed in the direction of their academic potentialities.

Regarding their first choice courses, this finding was more like the previous ones in that Mass Communication, Law, and Accounting ranked higher, in that order, than LIS as their favourites. This simply supported previous findings about LIS not being a typical first choice course among prospective undergraduates in Nigeria; owing, in many cases, to the rather negative perception of librarianship. For instance, Agumanu (1989) found that librarianship was not a typical first choice for these students as 80% respondents indicated the initial choice of Law; while admission standard ranked highest among factors for its second choice demand. Even when Issa and Nwalo (2008) got some evidence of improved popularity of LIS among their respondents, they still insisted that it remains largely unpopular among prospective undergraduates in Nigeria when compared with such other courses as accountancy, medicine

and law. Thus this findings bother on the image of the profession in public view; some of which include Kantumoya (1993) who underscored the negative image of librarianship in Zambia while Awaritefe (1983) confirmed that users of library and the public in general do not appreciate librarianship as a profession, asserting that the public do not see librarianship as of equal importance as other professions with similar levels of academic qualification.

The outcome of his case study of attitude to librarianship upheld the hypothesis that the attitude to librarianship as a profession is negative; and therefore agreed with his initial assumption about the unfavourable attitude of the people toward librarianship. When Ajidahun (1997) conducted a study on students' perception of librarianship at the Ondo State University, Ado-Ekiti, it was borne out of an observed occurrence whereby "students treat librarians with ignominy and reproach without observance of courtesy and regards to their status", concluding that the lack of awareness has persistently given librarianship a bad image. Igbinosa (2007), Okoro (2009), Salaam and Owolabi (2010) and Obaseki, Ibrahim and Momoh (2010) all had findings pointing to the rather low popularity, negative image and poor perception of librarians and librarianship in the opinion of many.

On why respondents failed to make their first choice course, majority claimed ignorance while others adduced deficiency in requisite JAMB/Post JAMB/'O' Level as reasons; just as their initial reaction bothered on being 'sad' and 'uninterested'

when first introduced to the course. This was measured against their present perception, which was found to have improved considerably as majority now considered LIS as 'satisfactory/ interesting/ good' even as most claimed that it has prospect as they desire and indeed aspire to become Library Scientist/Information Broker mainly.

Notwithstanding the results of no significant difference between the subject background as well as present perception of those who chose and those who did not choose LIS as first choice course, a closer look revealed other dimensions. One, although *F*-test shows that there was no significant difference between subject backgrounds on the choice of LIS, students with *Science* background had the highest mean value (1.95). This implies that students with this background were *more* likely to choose other courses apart from LIS as their first choice course and students with *Commercial* background (mean value of 1.71) were *least* likely to choose other courses apart from LIS as their first choice course. Two, despite the fact that the *F*-test shows that there was no significant difference between present perceptions of students on the choice of LIS, students with *Unsatisfactory/ No Interest* perception had the highest mean value (2.00). This implies that students with this perception were *most* likely to choose other courses apart from library science as their first choice course while those with *Satisfactory/Interesting/Good* perception (mean value of 1.86) were *least* likely to choose other courses apart from LIS as their first choice course. Thus, the findings have far-reaching implications for stakeholders in library education, especially the library schools and the Nigerian Library Association.

CONCLUSION AND RECOMMENDATIONS

This study concluded that the peculiar situation under which the pioneering 200 level students came into the Department (i.e. on transfer) on

account of low academic standing leaves much to be desired considering the prevalent negative perception of librarianship as a dumping ground for unwilling, unmotivated and uninterested candidates who were already frustrated owing to their failure to secure their choice courses, as contained in the literature. This can only further worsen the already unimpressive image of the profession in the opinion of the public. However, since this is a pilot study and meant to be longitudinal, the conclusion hereby reached was without prejudice to future findings as the study progresses.

Therefore the following measures are hereby suggested in the interim:

1. Admission of prospective candidates into the department should be for only the willing and interested only. This can be achieved by ensuring that no transfer students are allowed into the Department any longer; especially when such is on the account of low academic standing.
2. Both the teaching and training in the Department should be deliberately geared towards retaining only the enthusiastic and committed students. To achieve this, non-performing students should be pressurized academically so that they can decide on time as to whether to continue with the course or not.
3. The Department should not encourage having too large a class of students at any point in time, as this will impact negatively on both teaching and training. This can be achieved by consciously resisting alluring temptation and/or pressure to admit more than 40 students at any given point so as to ensure thorough teaching and training for quality. Only then can the graduates be of the expected 'best fit' necessary for copy in today's ever-changing library and information workplace.

Limitations of the Study

This study was limited on a number of accounts primary of which is the rather small sample it worked with. Although this can be understood against the backdrop of the fact that the studied library school is a new one, with limited number of students in only two levels, this study sample places a great restriction on the possibility of drawing generalization from its findings beyond the studied library school. Furthermore, because this is only a perception study, it falls short of revealing any causal relationship between the students' socio-economic as well as parental educational background and the choice made, such that a future explanation of the choice decision could be known.

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KEY TERMS AND DEFINITIONS

Career Choice: The decision made by the students to opt for Library and Information Science as a course of study in the university towards future professional practice.

Initial Choice: Refers to the courses chosen by the students as the first choice.

Librarianship: The practice of the profession or career of the librarians.

Library Education: The system, structure and process of producing/training the professional librarians.

Library and Information Profession: An encompassing modern day term to refer to the practice of the librarians and other information practitioners.

Library Operations: The activities, undertakings and routines associated with the running of the different kinds of libraries; also known as Library Practice.

Library School: Institutions of higher learning where Librarianship is offered as a course of study; namely Department of Library and Information Science.

Perception: Refers to attitudes or disposition of the students towards undertaking library and information science as course of study.