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**CAREER GUIDANCE AND LIBRARY AND INFORMATION SCIENCE
DISCIPLINE AMONG SECONDARY SCHOOL STUDENTS IN ILORIN,
NIGERIA**

Jacob, Priscilla Ayooluwa, PhD

Department of Library and Information Science
University of Ilorin, Ilorin, Nigeria
jacob.pa@unilorin.edu.ng

Fagboola, Olaronke PhD

Department of Library and Information Science
University of Ilorin, Ilorin, Nigeria
faith1931@yahoo.com

Ojo, Othniel Kayode

Department of Library and Information Science
University of Ilorin, Ilorin Nigeria

Abdulkareem, Mulikat Yetunde PhD

Department of Library and Information Science
University of Ilorin, Ilorin Nigeria

ABSTRACT

This study investigated career guidance and library and information science (LIS) discipline among secondary school students in Ilorin, Nigeria. The variables examined were students' awareness of LIS as a potential career, the existence of career guidance practices for senior secondary students, and the factors that influences students' choice of career in LIS. Utilizing the descriptive survey research design, the study gathered data from 735 senior secondary students in Ilorin, Kwara State. The results uncovered that a significant number of students demonstrated strong awareness and interest in pursuing career in LIS. The level of awareness and interest that influence students' career aspiration in LIS were interactions with librarians, experiences in the school library, personal interests, family and peer influence, educational opportunities, economic prospects, technological advancements, and guidance from teachers and counselors, and participation in library excursions and engagement in career guidance programs at schools. The study proposed a comprehensive approach to enhance awareness and guidance for senior secondary school students

interested in LIS careers. Recommendations include collaborative campaigns by educational institutions, libraries, and stakeholders to underscore the importance and diverse opportunities in LIS. It advocates for investments in well-equipped school libraries with professional librarians to positively impact student perceptions.

Keywords: Career aspiration, Library and Information Science, Secondary School Students in Ilorin, Kwara State

INTRODUCTION

The choice of career plays a crucial role for every student, and it goes a long way in determining their level of success in life. People often love to build their careers according to their choice of interest. Library and information science (LIS) discipline is a fast-evolving course in higher institutions of learning in developed and developing countries. With the upgrade of Web 1.0 to Web 4.0 which has led to information explosion and data smog, there is a need for information centers to acquire authentic information. Thus, the growth of libraries and information centers necessitated that professional librarians and information scientists be at the forefront of information management. Despite the availability of resources and the setting up of libraries in the country, the library profession appears to be the least popular choice of students as compared to other professions like medical sciences personnel (doctors, pharmacists, surgeons, anatomists, and physiologists), engineers, lawyers, architects, journalists, and newscasters (Soon, 2020). Nevertheless, the LIS discipline is the one that requires technical, professional, and advanced formal education. However, it is surprising how it is given least concern by the people (Poole et al., 2021).

Library and information science is a career choice that is dedicated to serving the public interest by providing authentic information to the right user at the right time (Kikon et al., 2018). It is a profession that is concerned with the application of knowledge, creation, acquisition, processing, and organisation of information to users at the appropriate time, thus, contributing to the development of society (Mugot, 2012). Jokilehto (2017) opined that LIS involves the preservation and transfer of knowledge in all recorded forms across time and space for the benefit of humankind. LIS is a service-focused field that holds great importance within both the educational system and society as a whole, thus, making it the right career choice for students' academic journey.

Generally speaking, most students get attracted to some so-called lucrative courses for different reasons. Some choices of career are based on parental and peer influences, and advice given by counselors (Damilola et al., 2018). Other choices are based on the public

image of the discipline, expected salaries or income, and career competition from other disciplines (Poole et al., 2021). According to Sharma (2019), LIS is a service-oriented profession. It has been observed that most librarians who find themselves in the field do not plan to study the course. The case is still the same today, as most students do not have an interest in taking on LIS as a career because it seems like a less recognised discipline in society.

Igbinsosa (2017) maintained that people, particularly students, do not like to pursue a career in LIS. This may be because they are ignorant of the fact that librarians are the brains behind the successful stories of students who become lawyers, pilots, engineers, medical doctors, and the like. Igbinsosa further argued that with advancements in technologies, librarians are no longer limited to the library, but have improved roles in different areas such as curator, programmer, consultant, webmaster, and database manager. Theresa (2015) explained that a lot of factors could be responsible for students choosing a career of study over the other, some of these factors could be institutional while some may be as a result of mentorship.

Heinz (2015) emphasized that a student's career selection may depend on various factors. These include their Ordinary Level (O'Level) results, the required cutoff score for their desired course of study, and the student's performance in the post-Unified Tertiary Matriculation Examination (UTME). Quinlan and Renninger (2022) elaborate further that, from assessment, many students often lack a clear understanding of the ideal career path they should pursue and do not have connections to the right people that will guide their career choice. Consequently, they frequently rely on guidance from friends, who often neglect to take their strengths and weaknesses into account. This ideology may have been reflected in the field of LIS, as most of the students do not have an interest in the programme but accidentally found themselves in it. Therefore, one begins to wonder if LIS is a dumping ground for candidates who could not be admitted to study their preferred courses possibly because of their low scores in the unified admissions examination or their low educational profile. For students to be admitted to the LIS department in most institutions in Nigeria, for example, he/she must meet the specific admission requirements and have at least credit in five subjects, including English and Mathematics, which will constitute the entry profile of the student. Thus, it is expected that secondary school students should be given proper guidance on the requirements for training in their career choices.

Akin (2016) maintained that career guidance is critical for students. This need has become more important in recent years with the impact of accelerating technological change and global competition in higher institutions of learning, that is, colleges of education, polytechnics, universities, and the work environment. According to Sinz (2018), it has

become very important for schools to offer career guidance to their students in order to make them more informed about their educational and career choices. This will help ease the burden on university educators. Career guidance helps students select their subjects of specialization which later on helps them choose choosing their vocation in contemporary society.

The choice of an occupation is central to career education. This is evident because any good preparation would lead to a successful career in the world of work. Strictly speaking, career education is conceived as an attempt to link the school with the world of work, thereby ensuring the smooth transition of students from full-time studentship to full-time gainful employment. The average Nigerian student is often faced with a lot of problems in the process of deciding which career path he is to choose, especially in his secondary education phase, and teachers at this level play an important role in students' career guidance by assisting them in subjects' selection and providing knowledge on different career opportunities. Owing to the importance of teachers in secondary school, students' career guidance becomes an avenue that helps to shape their minds in discovering what could be regarded as a perfect match for a life career (Preble, 2017). Students individually lack adequate self-awareness, meaning they may not possess accurate insights into their strengths and weaknesses. Additionally, they may also lack a sufficient understanding of the potential opportunities awaiting them in the world of work. Similarly, the wide variety of subjects offered in schools and the diversities of professions and vocations obtainable in the labor market often compound the problem of lack of job awareness and essential ingredients of life job identification for the student (Agbaje, 2017).

Most students cannot sincerely answer a simple question of why they chose their course of study. Many factors may be responsible for this. One of such could be that the course does not appeal to them. The awareness that young people may have of what LIS is may also come from the common knowledge of librarians been older men and women involved in stamping, stuffing, and shelving of books (Abban & Saan, 2021) and this has affected the image of the profession.

Though LIS as a profession is essential in today's society, with the diversity and complexity of the role librarians play, there seems to be inadequate recognition of the discipline. The profession seems to lack the prestige and glamour benefitted by some other professions. The problem of the lack of new, young talent entering the LIS profession may be due to public perceptions of libraries and librarians. Most students nowadays cannot sincerely answer a simple question of why they chose their course of study. Many factors may be responsible for this.

One of such could be that the course does not appeal to them. It is hoped that this study brings new insights to the field and could add to the body of knowledge. This research therefore is intended to investigate career guidance on LIS science discipline among senior secondary school students in Ilorin, Kwara State.

Objectives of the Study

The specific objectives of the study were to:

- i. determine the level of awareness of LIS as a potential career among senior secondary school students in Ilorin;
- ii. ascertain the availability of career guidance practices for senior secondary students; and
- iii. determine the factors that influence students' decision in choosing a career in LIS.

Literature Review

Students make several decisions as they plan for a better future; one of them is a career choice. The choice of a potential career is often determined by the academic training a student receives in a higher institution of learning such as the polytechnic and university. Students often encounter some challenges when choosing a discipline that will lead to their career choice. A person's choice of career and academic discipline may pose dire consequences if wrongly taken. Such consequences include: low or no motivation to study, anxiety, stress, poor performance in school or at work, absence of career satisfaction and low productivity (Ekienabor, 2016; Demir, 2018; Ajayi, 2018). On the other hand, choosing the path to a right career can assure the student of excellent results, motivation to study and at work, high level of productivity and academic success (Nyame, 2016). Consequently, students, particularly those in secondary schools, require proper career guidance in making the choice of courses to study in the university, as this will lead them to their future career. If only students can receive the right information, and appropriate advice and guidance, they will make the right career decisions accordingly. Thus, career guidance is considered as a process that provides support to individuals at different stages of their lives, assisting them in making wise career choices and planning their professional paths (Roy, 2020). It helps students to understand their selves, by undertaking a reflective exploration of various aspects of their personalities. This process assists students in understanding their inherent strengths, abilities and limitations. It also brings about self-reflection, and identification of the students' desires and ambitions.

However, career guidance covers more than just self-reflection, but also provides a wide range of tools and expertise to support the career development of people (Kruthoff, 2019).

It provides necessary information to make informed decisions on choice of academic disciplines, courses to undertake and career choices. This process is inclusive and provides support to students who are about to start their educational journey, as well as, professionals who desires to make changes in the middle of their careers (Maluleke, Powell & Pillay, 2022).

Many universities and higher institutions of learning across the globe offer programs in LIS. This is so because the programme offers students the opportunity to gain knowledge in collecting, organising, preserving, and disseminating information. LIS is an interdisciplinary field that includes aspects of information science and technology, communication science and technology, education, management, psychology, and lots more (Kulish, 2023). As a result, the LIS profession offers employment opportunities in virtually every sector, and is recently regarded as one of the best career prospects for students (Wilson, 2017; Ramírez-Montoya, Andrade-Vargas, Rivera-Rogel & Portuquez-Castro, 2021). In today's information-driven world, LIS stand out as an important profession, considering that it is internet age where every employer requires the expertise of an information specialist. While information may seem abundant and accessible to everyone, the challenge lies in delivering the right information to the right individuals at the right time. This is where the role of an information specialist becomes essential in various organisations (Sokil, 2023).

One of the fundamental factors that influence career choice is awareness. In a study conducted by Luanne (2016), it was revealed that there were little evidences that the society gives high prestige and glamour to the LIS profession. Since LIS is a field that plays an important role in information management, organization, and dissemination in the modern information-driven world; the level of awareness of LIS as a potential career among students is a topic of great importance. LIS is a dynamic and evolving field that plays a crucial role in managing and disseminating information in various settings, including libraries, information centers, schools, organisations, and the digital cyberspace (Lascano, 2021). Nevertheless, many secondary students are not fully aware of the career prospects and opportunities that LIS offers.

Several studies highlight the importance of students being aware of a career option before considering it seriously. Ocholla (2019) found that students who were aware of LIS as a discipline were more likely to consider it as a career. This emphasizes the role of career guidance programs and information dissemination in schools. Bebung (2019) also in a study on the level of awareness of high school students in the province of Laguna on the LIS Profession revealed that the level of awareness of the LIS among the students is moderate. It may be inferred from the finding that the LIS course is not very popular among the

students. Beben's study further revealed that female students were more aware of the profession and, all the students, regardless of their family income status, had the same level of awareness of the LIS discipline.

Furthermore, the research findings of Laascano (2021) indicate that a significant number of senior secondary school students have limited awareness of LIS as a potential career option. Just as the minority students often have little understanding of the responsibilities associated with careers in LIS (Nomaguchi, & Milkie, 2020). The low level of awareness of relevant disciplines like LIS can be attributed to the limited number of individuals enrolling for the course (Caroll, 2022; Shah, Pei, & Chen, 2023). Consequently, this indicates that the LIS course lacks widespread popularity and requires more focused promotion efforts. This lack of awareness has substantial implications for students' career decision-making processes. Effective career guidance programs in secondary schools can significantly impact students' awareness of LIS as a career option. It is also essential to inform students that the LIS profession has advanced to accommodate a wide range of roles, including digital librarians, data analysts, information architects, and knowledge managers (Magesan, McMin, & Terry, 2020). Some of the critical roles LIS play includes: knowledge organization and preservation of data and knowledge (Gupta, Singh, & Kundra, 2019). Inchara, Gayathri and Priya (2019) emphasised on the importance of exposing students to LIS at an early stage. It is believed that this will make a significant impact in enhancing awareness and consideration of the LIS field as a career option. This early exposure can help students recognise LIS as a viable and exciting career path, potentially dispelling misconceptions or reservations they may have.

Having access to comprehensive knowledge on career paths can be invaluable. Career guidance practices involve laying a good foundation for students beginning from their basic classes. The practice of career guidance was introduced in 1964, but was not familiar to the general public until the late seventies (Childs, Afbpss & Lewis, 2019). Career guidance is a comprehensive process designed to assist individuals including students in making informed decisions about their careers. The practice comprises of a wide range of activities and services aimed at helping students and interested individuals explore and navigate their career options. This career guidance practices includes: career counseling, career orientation or education, providing information about different careers, career search techniques, educational pathways, visits to different organisations, self-assessment, and job market trends.

The career counseling focuses more on providing personalized form of support to students facing specific career choice related challenges (Childs et al., 2019). Career counseling often

involves a one-on-one or small group sessions with trained career counselors. Career counselors are professionals with specialized training in career development and counseling techniques (Hippman & Davis, 2016). The primary focus of career counseling is to provide in depth guidance to help students overcome their challenges and also make meaningful career decisions (Niles & Harris-Bowlsbey, 2017).

Organizing career guidance in a school system requires significant tactics and skills. One common career practice in school is the career education or orientation. The career education goes beyond merely helping students find an admirable job; it involves organizing a career program for students with the aim of equipping them with an understanding of self-knowledge and the world of work. Self-knowledge is considered a critical component of an individual's personality and plays a significant role in career decision-making. Low self-knowledge has been identified as a key factor contributing to poor career decision-making among Nigerian adolescents (Kiener, Gnehm & Backed-Gellner, 2023).

It is vital for students to have a deep understanding of available professions in order to make informed career choices. This understanding will cover aspects such as interests, aptitudes, temperament, and educational achievements (Hegyi-Halmos, 2016). Thus, career guidance in schools will help students develop career building competences, including self-knowledge, which can assist them in overcoming difficulties and taking advantage of opportunities in the job market (Nehass & Zarhbouch, 2022). It is also important for students to develop their ability to make informed decisions. This will assist them in choosing an appropriate educational and career path. According to Brass et al. (2023), early training, guidance and education on career choice will help learners develop this decision-making ability (Brass, Kennedy, Gabriel, Neil, Devis & Leonard, 2023).

The roles of school guidance counselors encompass planning career development interventions to support students in making well-informed choices. These activities serve to empower students in effectively managing the various aspects of their career development, including career maturity and decision-making. Career guidance and counseling are therefore deliberate efforts aimed at enhancing different facets of a student's career development, as they progress through various stages (Kettunen, Lindberg, Nygaard & Kardal, 2020). These practices also help students get ready to transition to higher institution with positive minds. Lai-Yeung (2014) aver that career counseling is more supportive and a remedial to career choice decision.

Career orientation stands out as one of the most crucial guidance services that school counselors offer to secondary school students, as emphasized by Hamidah, Hanifa, and

Sawitri (2018). It is undeniable that the primary service areas of guidance and counseling encompass educational guidance and counseling, which assists students in making informed career choices, and vocational guidance to select and prepare for occupations aligning with their interests and aptitudes. To stimulate career interests effectively in courses such as LIS, counselors often advise students to visit libraries to have some short-term job tryout experiences. These experiences will help the career counselor in documenting students' preferences and performance, and students' interest in the work environments. This comprehensive approach according to Amoah, Kwofie and Kwofie (2015) help students identify congruent short term occupational choices so as to align them with their long-term career ambitions. Hence, career counselors help in sensitizing students on the importance of effective career choices.

The importance of making career choices cannot be overstated, especially in today's rapidly evolving world of science and technology where students constantly contemplate their future paths. Several factors determine the choice of LIS as a career option among students. Some of these factors include awareness of the discipline, interest of the students, flair for gender related occupations, delay in gaining admission into desired course, wrong media presentation of LIS profession, parental influence and lots more (Mbagwu & Ajaegbu, 2016; Kazi, Sharif & Ahmad 2017; Lascano, 2021; Johnson & Smith, 2023). The limited exposure students have about LIS field often affected their decision to settle for a career in this discipline. In many secondary educational systems, LIS is not a subject commonly included in the curriculum. As a result, students may not even be aware of its existence as a potential career path (Lorenzen, 2019). Consequently, they will not be able to make LIS as a choice of academic discipline to pursue.

Abata-Ebire, Ajayi, and Adetayo (2018), carried out a study investigating the career choice of LIS students in Federal Polytechnic Ede, Osun State. Findings from the study revealed that personal interest, seeking knowledge, and career expectations influenced students' choice of librarianship. The finding indicated that the students had a positive perception of librarianship as a career and desired to further their careers in it. Similarly, Posigha's (2021) study focused on understanding why students at Niger Delta University chose LIS as their field of study and how they performed academically in the program. The study included 45 year one students admitted in the 2019/2020 academic session. The findings revealed that many students opted for LIS because they did not receive admission to their preferred courses. This suggests that admission-related factors influenced their choice of LIS. Interestingly, the academic performance of the students in LIS was positive. However, the

study did not find a significant relationship between the factors that influenced the choice of LIS and the academic performances of the students.

Kazi, Sharif, and Ahmad (2017) also investigated factors influencing students' career choices. They found that gender and interest in the subject were the most dominant factors influencing career choices of students. Also, Mbagwu and Ajaegbu (2016), explored the influence of parents' educational background on career choice of teenagers among senior secondary school students. Findings from the study revealed that teenagers with parents from high educational backgrounds had an easier time making career choices. Students with high-educated parents tended to choose professional careers, while those with low-educated parents chose business careers.

Archison et al. (2021) examined the factors that affect students' choice of a career. The study revealed high salary expectations and job opportunities as the most important factors in choosing a career among the students. Ouanoa, Torreb, John, and Monevad (2019) identified institutional considerations (that is, whether to attend a polytechnic or university, and the prestige of the institution), decision-making, interest, peer influence, and future job opportunities as factors that influenced students' career decisions. To have a general knowledge Chiu et al., (2017), classified the factors that influence the selection of a career into three main categories, which are: external factors, professional factors and intrinsic factors. These factors have been considered and proven in different context and environments to influence students' career choices, including those related to LIS.

Observations also indicate that many students, particularly in the Nigerian context, possess limited knowledge about LIS as a potential career option. For most of these students, their entry into LIS programme in the university or polytechnic is not driven by a genuine interest in pursuing a career in the field; rather, they view it as an appealing avenue for advancing their education (Posigha, 2021). Furthermore, some students turn to study LIS only after been refused in other disciplines (Posigha, 2021). Consequently, it appears that for many of the students, the LIS profession serves as a stepping stone towards achieving their broader goal. This has, in turn, led to the emergence of numerous librarians and information scientists who may not experience the same level of glamour, admiration, or prestige that is often associated with other professions.

Students' interest and motivation play a central role in making career choice in LIS and other disciplines. Some students are motivated to pursue LIS by their interest in helping people acquire needed and right information, and by their passion for reading books. They believe that working in a library will provide them with the opportunity and time to indulge in

reading books that interest them. Davis (2019) suggests that students who have a genuine interest in serving others, organizing information, and promoting literacy are more likely to consider LIS as a fulfilling career. Identifying and nurturing such interests in students can be a critical part of career guidance. Likewise, negative perceptions from employers regarding LIS as a profession have discouraged many students from pursuing a career in this field (Rawayau, 2019). Some individuals wrongly believe that LIS involves arranging books on shelves, and that it is a female-dominated profession; this contributes to this negative perception.

Methodology

The study adopted the descriptive survey research. The population of the study comprises of 735 Students in senior secondary classes one, two and three (SS1-3) in Ilorin East Local Government area in Ilorin, Kwara State. Stratified random sampling technique was employed in selecting students in senior secondary school classes. From each selected school, a proportional stratified sample of students was surveyed. The sample size of 252 was determined based on the recommendation of Krejcie and Morgan (1970) table for determining the sample size of a known population. A structure questionnaire was employed in gathering data from senior secondary school students. The questionnaire comprises of four sections with items that elicited information on career guidance availability and the research objectives of the study. The validity of an instrument is the degree to which the instrument measures what it intends to measure. The research instrument demonstrated both content and constructs validity through expert reviews and pretesting. Reliability of the instrument was also tested giving Cronbach's alpha reliability coefficient ranging from 0.72-0.80 from the items in the three sections. Copies of the questionnaire were administered to the respondents by the researchers and research assistants. Two hundred and twenty-eight copies of the questionnaire were returned and found usable for the analysis. Data collected were analysed using descriptive statistics such as frequency distributions and percentages. Ethical guidelines were followed during data collection, ensuring informed consent, and anonymity for the respondents.

Results

Table 1 Presents results on number of students that received any career guidance on LIS discipline at school.

Table 1: Students that have received career guidance on LIS discipline at school

S/N	Have you received any career guidance or counseling at your school?	Frequency	Percentage (%)
1	Yes	96	42.1
2	No	132	57.9
	Total	228	100.0

Results on Table 1 revealed that 96 (42.1%) of the respondents attested that they have received career guidance or counseling on LIS discipline at their school. Results also showed that 57.9% of the respondents have never received career guidance or counseling on LIS discipline at their school. This finding indicates that LIS career guidance is available to a substantial portion of the students but is not universal.

Research question 1 seeks to determine the level of awareness of LIS as a potential career among senior secondary school students in Ilorin East local government area. Responses to this question are presented in Table 2.

Table 2: Level of Awareness of LIS as a Potential Career among secondary school students

S/N	Level of Awareness of LIS as a potential career	Very High F (%)	Moderately High F (%)	Low Awareness F (%)	Not Aware F (%)
1	I am aware that LIS can be pursued as a career	64 (28.1%)	77 (33.8%)	55 (24.1%)	32 (14.0%)
2	I have gained more knowledge of career opportunities in LIS	50 (21.9%)	64 (28.1%)	59 (25.9%)	55 (24.1%)
3	I have spoken with a counselor, librarian and someone working in the field of LIS about their career	31 (13.6%)	39 (17.1%)	45 (19.7%)	113 (49.6%)
4	My school had gone for an excursion before to a library	22 (9.6%)	36 (11.4%)	26 (11.4%)	144 (63.2%)

	(e.g., a public library) for which I partook				
5	Excursion improved my perception of LIS discipline as a potential career	26 (11.4%)	38 (16.7%)	42 (18.4%)	122 (53.5%)
6	My school has a standard Library and a professional school librarian that manages it	68 (29.8%)	50 (21.9%)	73 (32.0%)	37 (16.2%)
7	Counseling and orientation have shaped my knowledge and awareness of LIS profession as a potential career	42 (18.4%)	50 (21.9%)	76 (33.3%)	60 (26.3%)

Results in Table 2 on the levels of awareness of LIS as a potential career among students in the surveyed schools in Ilorin show that, 61.9% exhibit a very high or moderately high level of awareness of LIS as a potential career. As for gaining more knowledge of career opportunities in LIS, about 50% of the respondents indicate a very high or moderately high level of awareness. Furthermore, 49.6% of the respondents attested that they are not aware or have no discussion with a counselor or librarian and someone working in the field of LIS about their career. 63.2% of the respondents are not aware of participation in school excursions to libraries. Concerning the impact of these excursions on their perception of LIS as a potential career, results show that 53.5% of the respondents were not aware; suggesting that these students did not participate in any excursion to the library. 51.7% of respondents recorded they have a very high or moderately high access to standard school libraries with professional school librarians. Finally, 39.3% of respondents have a very high or moderately level of counseling and orientation that has shaped my knowledge and awareness of LIS profession as a potential career. This indicates that the school libraries and librarians are having impact of the career choice of some of the students.

Research question 2 seeks to ascertain the availability of career guidance practices for senior secondary students. Responses to this question are presented in Table 3.

Table 3: Availability of Career Guidance Practices for Senior Secondary Students

S/N	Availability of career guidance practices for senior secondary students	Available F (%)	Not Available F (%)
1	I attend career guidance programmes in my school	156 (68.4)	72 (31.6)
2	Our school conducts orientation on career choices regularly	160 (70.0)	68 (29.8)
3	I often have discussions with my school counselor or librarian about my future career choices	120 (52.6)	108 (47.4)
4	I feel that there is sufficient emphasis on career guidance in my school	155 (68.0)	73 (32.0)
5	Career guidance programs in my school have highly influenced my career aspirations and choices	152 (66.7)	76 (33.3)
6	My schools' career programme helps me know my strengths, weaknesses and potential for careers and job opportunities	61 (26.8)	167 (73.2)
7	My school counsellor has career counseling sessions with interested students	120 (52.6)	108 (47.4)
8	Our school library provides information about different careers and career search methods	152 (66.7)	76 (33.3)
9	We go on excursion to visit to different organisations, to orientate students on job opportunities	167 (73.2)	61 (26.8)

Results on Table 3 revealed that attendance at career guidance programs: 68.4% of respondents have attended career guidance programs at their, while 31.6% have never attended such programs. 70.0% of respondents attested that their school conducts orientation on career choices regularly, while 52.6% of respondents often have discussions with their school counselor, librarian and teachers about their future career choices. 68% attested that is sufficient emphasis on career guidance in their school. In terms of the influence of career guidance on aspirations and choices: 66.7% of respondents feel that career guidance has highly influenced their career aspirations and choices. However, most of the participants (73.2%) did not attest that their school's career program helps them know their strengths,

weaknesses, and potential for careers and job opportunities. The career guidance available to students in the schools surveyed is not effective enough to help the students understand their strengths and potential for job opportunities.

Research question 3 sought to determine the factors that influence students' choice of career in LIS. Responses to this question are presented in Table 4

Table 4: Factors that Influence Students' Choices of Career in LIS

S/N	Factors that influence students' choices of career in LIS	SA F (%)	A F (%)	D F (%)	SD F (%)
1	Personal interests	109 (47.8%)	96 (42.1%)	10 (4.4%)	13 (5.7%)
2	Family influence	63 (27.6%)	81 (35.5%)	64 (28.1%)	20 (8.8%)
3	Peer influence	42 (18.4%)	84 (36.8%)	58 (25.4%)	44 (19.3%)
4	Educational opportunities	72 (31.6%)	95 (41.7%)	39 (17.1%)	22 (9.6%)
5	Economic prospects	60 (26.3%)	103 (45.2%)	40 (17.5%)	25 (11.0%)
6	Responses to technological advancement	77 (33.8%)	98 (43.0%)	33 (14.5%)	20 (8.8%)
7	Librarian, teachers and school counselor's guidance	56 (24.6%)	87 (38.2%)	48 (21.1%)	37 (16.2%)
8	Employment and Career Opportunities	98 (43.0%)	70 (30.7%)	26 (11.4%)	34 (14.9%)

Results on Table 4 revealed the factors that influence students' choices of a career in LIS among students in the surveyed secondary schools. From the results, 89.9% of respondents strongly agreed or agreed that personal interests have influence in students' choice of a career in LIS. Results also revealed respondents strongly agreed or agreed that family influence (63.1%), peer influence (55.2%), educational opportunities (73.3%), economic prospects

(71.5%), technological advancement (76.8%), librarians, teachers and school counselors' guidance (62.8%) and employment and career opportunities (73%) are factors that influence students' choices of career in LIS. From the results, it can be deduced that personal interest, employment and career opportunities, educational opportunities and economic prospects are the key factors that influence secondary school students' choice of a career path in LIS discipline.

DISCUSSION

This section discusses the findings of the study on the three research questions: level of awareness of LIS as a potential career, availability of career guidance practices for senior secondary students, and factors that influence students' choices of career in LIS.

Based on awareness of LIS as a potential Career path, its findings of the study reveal that while a relative number of students had received career guidance in their school, the majority had never received any guidance. This finding showed low availability career guidance in secondary schools and indicates potential areas for further research and improvement in career guidance programs within secondary schools. Furthermore, findings on the level awareness of LIS as a potential career among respondents revealed that most of the students demonstrated a high level of awareness of LIS as a career path. Many had discussions with librarians and LIS professionals and participated in school excursions to libraries. These experiences appeared to have positively influenced their perceptions of LIS as a potential career. The findings align with Ocholla (2019) who discovered that students who had exposure to what LIS discipline entails were increasingly inclined to contemplate it as a potential career. This stresses the significance of career guidance initiatives and the dissemination of information within educational institutions. The findings of this study equally align with Ojo (2018) who posited that efficient career guidance initiatives within secondary schools have the potential to profoundly influence students' recognition of LIS as a potential career avenue. However, the findings of this study contradict Lorenzen (2019) study that revealed that LIS is often not integrated into the standard curriculum in many schools. Likewise, it contradicts Mugot (2009) who objected that there were relatively low enrollment numbers in LIS courses. These results suggest that LIS still lacks broad acceptance and requires more targeted promotional initiatives.

On the availability career guidance practices for senior secondary students, the findings of the study revealed that career guidance practices are moderately available to secondary school students in the surveyed schools in Ilorin. Findings show that majority of the students attended career guidance programs: attested that their school conducts orientation on career choices regularly, have discussions with their school counselor, librarian and teachers about

their future career choices, felt that career guidance has highly influenced their career aspirations and choices. The findings corroborate O'Connor (2018) argument that the principal duty of school counselors is to prepare students for the transition to college or university. Consequently, career guidance and counseling at the secondary school level encompass various activities designed to help students select subjects that align with potential career paths and introduce them to the realities of the professional world.

Most of the participants (73.2%) did not attest that their school's career program helps them know their strengths, weaknesses, and potential for careers and job opportunities. This indicates that career guidance available to students is either not sufficient or not effective enough to help the students understand their strengths and potential for job opportunities. In line with this, Dabula and Makura (2013) emphasized the significance of career guidance and counseling services in the context of economic development. They posited that absence of or low career guidance for secondary schools' students will hinder their skills development especially after these students complete their secondary education. This they noted often lead to a mismatch between education and income-earning potential. It therefore necessitates improvement in career guidance practices in secondary schools.

On the factors that influence students' decisions to choose a career in LIS, the findings show that personal interests were the most influential factor for a significant proportion of respondents (89.9%). Though family influence, peer influence and technological advancements were also considered as important influencing factors; employment and career opportunities, educational opportunities and economic prospects appeared as more influential determining factors for students' choice of a career path in LIS discipline. The findings of this study agree with Hewitt (2010) who noted that career choices can be influenced by intrinsic, extrinsic (such as parents' career preferences), or a combination of both factors. Many individuals are swayed by their parents' career preferences, while others are guided by the educational opportunities available to them. Some individuals follow their passion, prioritizing their interests over potential income, while others opt for careers that offer higher earnings prospects. Some existing literature also supports these findings stating that three main aspects of students' lives which are their environment, the opportunities available to them, and their personality traits, play a vital role in shaping their career decisions. Key factors among others that influence these career choices include career prospects, academic interests, and parental guidance, as highlighted in various studies (Odia & Ogiedu, 2013; Singh & Chander, 2013; Ojo, 2018; Lascano, 2021; Wilson & Patel, 2023).

Conclusion and Recommendations

In conclusion, the study revealed moderately high level of awareness of LIS as a career path for senior secondary school students in the surveyed schools. Furthermore, the availability of career guidance to the students has spurred genuine interest in pursuing a career in LIS. This interest is positively influenced by engagements with librarians, participation in school excursions to libraries, and access to school libraries staffed with professionals. Nevertheless, some of counseling and guidance approach used appeared ineffective on the students' career choice. This calls for more active initiatives among counselors in secondary schools. Factors such personal interests, family or parental influence, peer influence and technological advancements were identified as important in determining students' choice of a career path in LIS. Ultimately, the study underscores the importance of continued efforts to promote awareness, dispel misconceptions, and provide robust career guidance programs to encourage students to consider LIS as a viable and rewarding career option. It is recommended that secondary schools improve on offering career guidance programs that include information about LIS as a career option. Career counselors and educators should be well-informed about the LIS field to provide relevant guidance. Library schools and the academic library should be saddled with responsibility of addressing the awareness gap in secondary schools. Initiatives aimed at conveying the excitement of choosing LIS as a career should be developed. These initiatives can encompass a range of activities, including career orientation programs, outreach efforts, and collaboration with secondary schools.

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