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RESTRUCTURING LIBRARY AND INFORMATION SCIENCE RESEARCH AS A PRACTICAL APPROACH FOR NATIONAL DEVELOPMENT IN NIGERIA

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ABSTRACT

Purpose: *In Nigeria, many research efforts and particularly in Library and Information Science (LIS) have not been practically focused to yield desired results for national development. Thus, the need for restructuring of LIS Research to meet the global developmental growth metrics. This study focuses on restructuring LIS research as a practical approach for national development in Nigeria.*

Design/methodology/approach: *A survey research design is adopted for this study while the postgraduate LIS students in two selected universities in Nigeria constitute the study population. The choice of postgraduate students is appropriate as a result of high notch topics and high impact nature of research topics and the quality process of postgraduate research in Nigerian library schools. A purposive and total enumeration was adopted to sampled 225 respondents using a self-designed questionnaire to elicit information. Collected data were analysed using frequency counts and percentages of IBM Statistical Package in Social Sciences (SPSS) version 21.*

Findings: *Findings from the study revealed in-depth and adequacy of the LIS postgraduate research components while the majority of the respondents disagreed that the research methods on the programmes are practically oriented for National development. It also showed that the research is relevance but are not presented to appropriate establishments for implementation towards National development. Similarly, the findings indicated that LIS PG research is capable of enhancing national development and are practical towards national development with respondents supporting the need for LIS postgraduate research restructuring for national development.*

Practical implication*: Restructuring* of *postgraduate research in LIS will promote development through effective information service delivery through a guided and implementation of research findings and promote accelerated development considering the significance of information in the society.*

Originality/Value: *Therefore, the study recommended postgraduate in LIS curriculum overhauling, regular training and workshops for lecturers involving in postgraduate programmes and regular seminar for postgraduate students in the areas of research for national development.*

Keywords: *Library and Information Science (LIS), National Development, Practical Approach, Research, Restructuring, Postgraduate*

Paper type: *Empirical Research*

Introduction

The advent of library and information science in Nigeria can be traced to 1959 when the Institute of Librarianship was established at the then University College Ibadan, an affiliate of University of London but now University of Ibadan. The emergence of the Institute was the aftermath of 1953 UNESCO seminar resolutions which among others was to set up a formal institute for the training of personnel in the field of librarianship (Adeyemi and Adewumi, 2018)

Presently, library and information science is one of the major courses offered at many institutions of higher learning in Nigeria be it university or polytechnic. As more tertiary institutions are established, more library and information science programmes are floated to attend to the need for qualified personnel in various libraries in Nigeria. The

polytechnics run National Diploma (ND) and Higher National Diploma (HND) programmes while many universities run bachelor to doctorate degrees in LIS.

In Nigeria and world over, the universities have the primary responsibilities of producing high-level manpower through learning, teaching, community services and particularly research. According to the Federal Republic of Nigeria National Policy on Education (2013:26), higher education is expected to:

> *Contribute to national development through high-level relevant manpower training; provide accessible and affordable quality learning opportunities; provide high-quality career counselling and lifelong learning programmes that prepare students with the knowledge and skills for self-reliance and the world of work; reduce shortages through the production of skilled manpower relevant to the needs of the labour market; promote and encourage scholarship, entrepreneurship and community service, forge and cement national unity; and promote national and understanding and interaction (FRN, 2013:26)*

Deducing from the above, research specifically is a major academic activity which involves both the students and academic staff in the universities. The undergraduate and postgraduate students cannot graduate without any form of research as it is one of the fundamentals. Research has been described by various scholars in different perspectives but towards the same goal. It is a systematic process of investigating the purpose of having a solution to an identified problem. Onyene and Anunmu (2001) defined research as "a process of finding out a solution or answer to problems." They explained further that it is a planning process towards seeking and getting desirable information leading to the provision of plausible answers to reasonable questions. Thus, the knowledge gained from concrete and sincere research enables the researcher to categorize, describe, explain, evaluate, compare, correlate, predict and control his environment, events, circumstances, phenomenon, etc. and thereby contributing to national development.

Ibrahim, Babalola and Ahmed (2017), opined that systemic method or technique of gathering and analysing data designed to contribute to knowledge. Any research activity that is well planned or designed and systematically carried out usually transforms into valuable and enhanced output. Connell (2012) believed that strict compliance with all the processes of research design is one of the most important considerations in achieving good research.

In actual or practical research, the problem affecting a particular establishment is articulated with a thorough systematic investigation while the findings are published and disseminated to the appropriate establishment for implementation. The implementation of such findings usually enhances job productivity in such an establishment. Perhaps, why many nations of the world depend on the research outputs from the institutions of higher learning for their growth and development. This suggests that research output is sine-qua-non to national development. Without any doubt, research is a key factor in national development as no significant headway can be attained where there is low or no well-focused research.

Library and informant science or librarianship is a major field and profession that is not left out in research activity in the world and particularly Nigeria. Nnadozie, Igwe and Nwosu (2017) perceived Library and Information Science (LIS) as a field of study responsible for the education and training of the specialized human resources needed to man libraries, bibliographic agencies and allied information institutions. It is a branch of knowledge that deals with management and dissemination of information for the continuous and enrichment of intellectual human capital.

Furthermore, LIS is a discipline that equips the students and professionals with relevant skills in information resources' selection, acquisition, processing, preservation, organisation, dissemination and retrieval. These unique skills made LIS multidisciplinary in nature as it trains professionals in the field to serve all other professionals in terms of information resources provision and services. In all types of libraries, LIS professionals geared towards providing the right information in the right format to the right user at the right time. It is in this recognition that Igwe, Ugwuogu and Issa (2017) acknowledged that LIS is multidisciplinary in scope and nature because libraries and librarians serve all branches of knowledge, all professions, and all classes of individuals in the society.

Like any other profession, LIS students do embark on research which accumulates empirical knowledge through the measurement and surveying of natural phenomenon. A practicable LIS research can play a pivotal role and as factors which helps in the development of a society. For a continued and effective service delivery and particularly user satisfaction, LIS research becomes very imperative. In other words, LIS research is fundamental to professionals, educators, students and more especially the postgraduates. The syndrome of "publish or perish" is still in place as academic librarians and lecturers cannot be promoted to a higher level except they satisfied the publication requirement. The undergraduates and postgraduates must have to meet the pre-requisite for graduation in form of research through projects, dissertations and theses respectively. Specifically, a postgraduate student at the doctoral level has no option to this investigative research. It is quite unfortunate that in some years back, there was no policy statement that the postgraduate students should present the output of their research in conferences or publish it in a reputable journal for the dissemination of the findings. In recent times, however, most library schools have made a directive to postgraduates to publish their research outputs for the benefit of the target establishment and national development.

By design, any form of research must be purposeful, practical and focused to address an existing problem to provide a useful solution that can enhance national development. This entails that right from identification of the problem (lacuna), formulation of research topic objectives of the study to the period of administering the instrument, data analysis and implementation of the findings, the sincerity of purpose (real/practical efforts) is required to promote national development. A research that is baseless or crudely carried out has nothing to add to the nation.

Good research must be very timely in terms of its topic, investigation, completion, findings and implementation. A research that is not conducted and completed at the right time has little or no benefit to contribute to society. In Nigeria, literature has shown that many postgraduate students do not complete their research on time. For instance, Aina (2015) examined factors affecting the timely completion of a doctoral degree in library and information science in Nigerian universities. The study revealed that the average period of completion was seven years. The average period of seven years for doctoral research in Nigerian Library schools is not an encouraging matter, though the factors responsible for this are diverse.

Furthermore, effective and practical teaching of research methods course facilitates effective learning and quality research output. The National Policy on Education (2004) asserted that "no nation can rise above the quality of its teachers". This assertion informed that the quality of lecturers in the research areas will dictate the status of students. The practical approach to research teaching in terms of identification of the problem, formulation of a topic, articulation of statement of the problem, the objective of the study, methods of choosing the appropriate research design, instruments, population, sample size through the appropriate

sampling technique and the statistical analysis is very fundamental**.**

The advent of information and communication technology has added to the enhancement of the research effort. The information searching and accessibility have been facilitated but this depends on the degree of information literacy competence of individuals, lecturers and particularly postgraduate students. A skilled postgraduate student tends to access relevant materials in different formats and at the right time but this has been a barrier to some students who are still analogue.

Information literacy skills in ICT are inevitable, this is because many information resources today are published electronically and the only way to exploit them is to be skilled digitally. In the study of Anunobi and Udem (2015), many LIS postgraduate students in the south-east Nigerian universities do not possess high information literacy competencies. This scenario of information literacy incompetence on the part of some postgraduate students is not encouraging more so that a good research effort demands such skills to retrieve needed materials as well as the ability to use the software application for statistical analysis.

Given the foregoing, it has been observed that postgraduate research activities in LIS in Nigeria have not been practically carried out not targeted to a specific establishment. The findings of such research are also not usually disseminated to the concerned organization while the outcomes of the study are not seriously implemented thus leading to low national development in Nigeria, This study, therefore, agitates for the restructuring of LIS research as a practical approach for national development in Nigeria.

Statement of the Problem

Research output is a fundamental determinant of the growth and development of any country in the world. This is so because; it is a tool that identifies bottlenecks in industry, establishment, institution or ministry and thus providing lasting solutions to such challenges. The findings of a study that is objectively carried out and forwarded or disseminated to appropriate or target establishment can improve or transform its productivity very significantly. In other words, the influence of LIS research to national development cannot be overemphasized.

However, it has been observed that many LIS postgraduate research activities which suppose to address the challenges of certain establishments have not been well focused and practical enough to yield the needed results. This is so because the findings of most research efforts are not usually forwarded to the concerned establishments while those forwarded are not effectively implemented to improve the national development. This study, therefore, demands a restructuring of postgraduate LIS research as a practical approach for national development.

Objectives of the Study

The primary objective of this study is to examine the postgraduate library and information science research as a practical approach for national development in Nigeria. The specific objectives are to:

1. Determine the components of the research methods course for LIS postgraduate program in Nigeria;
2. Examine the teaching effectiveness of the research methods course for LIS postgraduate program in Nigeria;
3. Establish the relevance of LIS research topic on the targeted institutions/organizations;
4. Determine the influence of LIS postgraduate research outputs on national development in Nigeria;
5. Examine the degree of the practicability of LIS postgraduate research in Nigeria;
6. Determine the need for restructuring of LIS postgraduate research practically for national development

Methodology

A survey research design was adopted for the study while postgraduate LIS students in two selected universities in Nigeria constitute the study population. Because the population is not large, a purposive and census of 225 postgraduate students were used. The choice of postgraduate students was considered appropriate as a result of high notch topics and imperative nature of research topics and the quality of postgraduate research in Nigerian library schools.

A self-designed questionnaire was adopted to elicit data while copies of the questionnaire were physically administered by the researchers. Collected data were analysed using frequency counts, percentages and descriptive tools of IBM Statistical Package in Social Sciences version 21.

Presentation of Results

Table 1: Components of research methods course for LIS postgraduate programme in Nigeria

S/N	Items	SA	A	D	SD	Mean	SD
1	The components of LIS research method course taught at postgraduate level is well in-depth.	102 (48.6)	6 (2.9)	102 (48.6)	-	3.46	.56
2	Knowledge derived from LIS research method course component is adequate for me to embark on research independently.	108 (51.4)	90 (42.9)	12 (5.7)	-	3.46	.61
	Grand Mean Value					**6.92**	
	Average Grand Mean Value					**3.46**	

**Mean < 2.5 = Not enormous/adequate; Mean >2.5 =Enormous/adequate*

Table 1 shows the enormity of the research methods course for LIS postgraduate programme in Nigeria. It is shown that 48.6% and 2.9% of the postgraduate students strongly agreed and agreed respectively that LIS research method course taught at postgraduate level is well in-depth while 48.6% of the students disagreed. It is further shown that 51.4% and 42.9% of the students strongly agreed and agreed that knowledge derived from LIS research method course is adequate to embark on research independently while 5.7% disagreed. It is shown from this result that the postgraduate students acknowledged that the research methods course for LIS is adequate in terms of scope and knowledge derivable. Considering the average grand mean value of 4.46 (4.46 > 2.5), it is shown that the research methods course for LIS postgraduate programme in Nigeria is enormous/adequate.

Table 2: Teaching effectiveness of research methods course for LIS postgraduate programme

S/N	Items	SA	A	D	SD	Mean	SD
1	LIS research method course lecturers are very effective in teaching.	84 (40.0)	114 (54.3)	6 (2.9)	6 (2.9)	3.31	.68
2	The lecturer of LIS research methods is always practically oriented during their teaching.	-	24 (11.4)	78 (37.1)	108 (51.4)	3.26	.66
	Grand Mean Value					**6.57**	
	Average Grand Mean Value					**3.23**	

**Mean < 2.5 = Not Effective; Mean > 2.5 =Effective*

Table 2 shows the teaching effectiveness of the research methods course for LIS postgraduate programme in Nigeria. It is shown that 40.0% and 54.3% of the students strongly agreed and agreed respectively that LIS research method course lecturers are very effective in teaching while only 2.9% of the students disagreed and strongly disagreed. The mean value of 3.31

further indicates that the effectiveness of the course lecturers. Similarly, 37.1% and 51.4% of the students disagreed and strongly disagreed respectively to the notion that the lecturer of LIS research methods are always practically oriented during their teaching with a mean value of 3.26 while 11.4% of the students disagreed. The indication is clearly shown from the average grand mean value (3.23 > 2.5) for this result that teaching of research methods course for LIS postgraduate programme in Nigeria has not been effective in terms of a practical approach.

Table 3: Relevance of LIS research topic on the targeted institutions/organizations

S/N	Items	SA	A	D	SD	Mean	SD
1	The topic of my research is always targeted to a particular establishment	48 (22.9)	120 (57.1)	42 (20.0)	-	3.03	.66
2	The problem(s) noticed in an establishment predetermined my embarking on research.	42 (20.0)	156 (74.3)	12 (5.7)	-	3.14	.49
3	LIS research findings are usually presented to the appropriate establishment for implementation,	-	42 (20.0)	90 (42.9)	78 (37.1)	3.23	.77
	Grand Mean Value					**9.4**	
	Average Grand Mean Value					**3.13**	

**Mean < 2.5 = Not Relevant; Mean > 2.5 =Relevant*.

Table 3 shows the postgraduate students' assessment of the relevance of LIS research topic on the targeted institutions/organizations. As shown in the result, 22.9% and 57.1% of the students strongly agreed and agreed respectively that the topic of their researches are always targeted to a particular establishment/institution while 20.0% disagreed. Likewise, 20.0% and 74.3% of the students strongly agreed and agreed respectively that their researches were being spurred by problem noticed in an establishment/institution while only 2% disagreed with this. It was disagreed and strongly disagreed by 42.9% and 37.1% of the students that LIS research findings are usually presented to the appropriate establishment/institution for implementation, high productivity and national development while 20.0% of the students disagreed. Also, the average grand mean value of 3.13 was obtained which is greater than the cut of point of 2.5 (3.13 > 2.5) which indicated that the research findings are not usually presented to the appropriate establishment/institution for proper implementation and national development.

Table 4: Effectiveness of LIS postgraduate research on national development in Nigeria

S/N	Items	SA	A	D	SD	Mean	SD
1	My research is capable of enhancing national development.	102 (48.6)	108 (51.4)	-	-	3.49	.51
2	I believe that no significant development can be attained in a nation without well-focused research in LIS.	144 (68.6)	42 (20.0)	18 (8.6)	6 (2.9)	3.54	.78
3	Indeed, LIS research has not made much significant impact on national development in Nigeria.	60 (28.6)	54 (25.7)	66 (31.4)	30 (14.3)	2.69	1.05
4	LIS research findings are specifically disseminated or published for national development.	66 (31.4)	78 (37.1)	48 (22.9)	18 (8.6)	2.91	.95
	Grand Mean Value					**12.63**	
	Average Grand Mean Value					**3.16**	

Mean < 2.5 = Not Effective; Mean > 2.5 =Effective

Table 4 shows the effectiveness of LIS postgraduate research on national development in Nigeria. As shown in the result, 48.6% and 51.4% of the students strongly agreed and agreed respectively that research is capable of enhancing national development. It was also strongly agreed and agreed by 68.6% and 20.0% of the students respectively that no significant development can be attained in a nation without well-focused research in LIS. Though, 8.6% and 2.9% of the students disagreed and strongly disagreed to this notion. It was further strongly agreed and agreed by 28.6% and 25.7% of the students respectively that LIS research has not made much significant impact on national development in Nigeria while 31.4% and 14.3% of the students disagreed and strongly disagreed respectively. LIS research findings are specifically disseminated or published for national development had 31.4% and 37.1% of the students that strongly agreed and agreed respectively while 22.9% and 8.6% disagreed and strongly disagreed. Judging from the average grand mean value of 3.16, it can be concluded that LIS postgraduate research has been effective for national development in Nigeria.

Table 5: Degree of the practicability of LIS postgraduate research in Nigeria

S/N	Items	SA	A	D	SD	Mean	SD
1	Statements of the problem of many research efforts in Nigeria are well articulated and well-focused.	72 (34.3)	-	18 (8.6)	20 (57.1)	3.23	.61
2	I usually carry out a feasibility study before identifying a research problem	-	78 (37.1)	6 (2.9)	126 (60.0)	3.34	.54
3	Questionnaire/interview schedule/observation checklist as a research instrument is directly linked to research questions/hypotheses.	114 (54.3)	96 (45.7)	-	-	3.54	.51
4	LIS research instruments are usually administered at the appropriate establishment/institution.	108 (51.4)	78 (37.1)	18 (8.6)	6 (2.9)	3.37	.77
5	Analysis of LIS research is primarily based on the data collected.	126 (60.0)	66 (31.4)	12 (5.7)	6 (2.9)	3.49	.74
	Grand Mean Value					**16.97**	
	Average Grand Mean Value					**3.39**	

Mean < 2.5 = Not practicable; Mean > 2.5 =Practicable

Table 5 shows the postgraduate students' assessment of the degree of the practicability of LIS postgraduate research in Nigeria. It is shown that 34.3% of the students strongly agreed that the statement of the problem of many research efforts in Nigeria are well articulated and well-focused while 8.6% and 57.1% had a contrary notion of disagreed and strongly disagreed. Also, 37.1% of the respondents agreed that they embarked on feasibility study before identifying a research problem while 2.9% and 60% disagreed and strongly disagreed respectively. It was strongly agreed and agreed by 54.3% and 45.7% of the students that research instruments such as questionnaire/ interview schedule/observation checklist are directly linked to research questions/hypotheses.LIS research instruments are usually administered at the appropriate establishment/institution had 51.4% and 37.1% that strongly agreed and agreed while 8.6% and 2.9% disagreed and strongly disagreed. It was further strongly agreed and agreed by 60.0% and 31.4% of the students that analysis of LIS research is primarily based on the data collected, whereas, 5.7% and 2.9% disagreed and strongly disagreed. The average grand mean value of 3.39 (3.39 > 2.5) suggests that LIS postgraduate research in Nigeria is practicable.

Table 6: Need for the restructuring of LIS postgraduate research practically for national development

S/N	Items	SA	A	D	SD	Mean	SD
1	There is a need for the overhauling of the LIS research methods course for a more practical approach.	66 (31.4%)	78 (37.1%)	6 (2.9%)	24 (11.4%)	2.80	1.11
2	The LIS research methods lecturers should improve on their teaching techniques through a more practical approach.	60 (28.6%)	96 (45.7%)	12 (5.7%)	42 (20.0%)	2.83	1.07
3	There is a need for more information literacy course to be incorporated in the LIS curriculum.	42 (20.0%)	114 (54.3%)	12 (5.7%)	42 (20.0%)	2.74	1.01
4	The management of the university should create an annual assessment form for postgraduate students to relate the performance of their lecturers and supervisors.	54 (25.7%)	102 (48.6%)	6 (2.9%)	48 (22.9%)	2.77	1.09
	Grand Mean Value					**11.14**	
	Average Grand Mean Value					**2.79**	

**Mean < 2.5 = There is no need for restructuring; Mean > 2.5 =There is a need for restructuring.*

Table 6 shows the opinion of LIS postgraduate students on the need for restructuring of LIS postgraduate research practically for national development. As shown in the table, 31.4% and 37.1% respectively strongly agreed and agreed that there is the need for the overhauling of the LIS research methods course for a more practical approach while 2.9% and 11.4% disagreed and strongly disagreed. Also, it was strongly agreed and agreed by 28.6% and 45.7% of the students that the LIS research methods lecturers should improve on their teaching techniques through a more practical approach whereas; 5.7% and 20.0% disagreed and strongly disagreed to this need. On the need for more information literacy course to be incorporated in the LIS curriculum, 20.0% and 54.3% of the students strongly agreed and agreed respectively while 5.7% and 20.0% disagreed and strongly disagreed. Also, while 25.7% and 48.6% of the students strongly agreed and agreed that the management of the university should create an annual assessment form for postgraduate students to relate the performance of their lecturers and supervisors, 2.9% and 22.9% disagreed and strongly disagreed. With the average grand mean of 2.75 which is greater to a cut off of 2.5, it is therefore shown that LIS postgraduate students subscribed for the need to have LIS postgraduate research restructured for national development.

Discussion of Findings

The in-depth and adequacy of the LIS postgraduate research components as evident in the study is significant since the essence of Postgraduate studies is the penetration of knowledge in the research studies for the further divulging of all the skill gained towards improving the national development. The finding is in tandem with Ani, Ngulube and Onyancha (2017) that captured the fluctuating and unpredictable trend in the annual publication output in LIS research in Nigeria. It, therefore, portends the need for potential dynamism of LIS postgraduate research components in Nigeria. Georgy, (2009) emphasized on practice and theory through Placements and practical training in libraries and other information agencies for LIS students contrary to the result from this study where respondents pointed to the non-practicality of the research methods in the LIS postgraduate research programme For the effectiveness of research skills for national development there is increased need for more effective teaching of both theory and practical research skills that must be enshrined in the curriculum of LIS postgraduate programmes and directed for national development in Nigeria.

The relevance of LIS postgraduate research to the national development in Nigeria was popular among the respondents. However, the enactment and reconciliation to the relevant establishments for implementation towards National development was noticed Flexibility of LIS postgraduate research for relevance and integration into national development is a key index and metric for establishment in the third world countries including Nigeria (Wirek-Ando, 2020).

LIS postgraduate research is capable of enhancing national development through conscious practical presentation and implementation of action research that are funded and conducted with the vision and goal of the country. Cooksey and McDonald (2011) shared the experience of postgraduate research posited that findings from well-articulated research if properly documented and implemented can contribute meaningfully to the national development of its targeted country.

Results from the study revealed and support for the need for LIS postgraduate research restructuring for national development in Nigeria. Babu, Oyedipe, Ajakaiye and Ajoni (2017) while reflecting on the need for agricultural research in Nigeria for national development pointed to the restructuring of structure, funding and cost benefits. The similar stimulus for LIS postgraduate research will make it contribute meaningfully to Nigeria national development.

Conclusion

The importance of research activities on national development cannot be over-emphasized. The library and information science research especially at postgraduate level, if effectively taught and practically carried out will promote library development through effective information service delivery. Any nation whose libraries are guided by good research findings will no doubt promote accelerated development considering the significance of information in the society.

Recommendations

Based on the findings, the following recommendations are made:

1. The LIS research method lecturers should improve on their teaching techniques by ensuring more practical approaches that could promote effective research skills of postgr
2. aduate students.
3. The essence of any research work is for its findings to be adequately and appropriately presented to the target establishment or institution for implementation. The institution's management and heads of library schools in Nigeria are therefore implored to facilitate the dissemination of postgraduate research findings to the target establishments to enhance more national development in Nigeria.
4. The postgraduate lecturers/supervisors are encouraged to give more adequate attention during the teaching and writing of statement of the problem by students. The necessity of research and the articulation of the problem are very fundamental to be given appropriate consideration during the various guides to students.
5. For a good research effort, a feasibility study by postgraduate students is very imperative. Thus, supervisors of postgraduate researches are advised to make it mandatory for postgraduate students to conduct a feasibility study with proven evidence before proceeding further in their research works. This will discourage poor or non-researchable effort.
6. The postgraduate students who are on full time for master or PhD programme are implored to be more serious by making themselves available as full-time students instead of shuttling between the institution and their places of work. Timely completion of postgraduate research depends to a great extent on the level of commitment students attached to it.
7. The knowledge in the use of statistical software is very important to research just as the role of research to national development. Consequently, postgraduate students are enjoined to acquire more knowledge and skills on statistical software application for a better research output or high productivity.

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