

PERCEPTION AND ATTITUDE OF UNDERGRADUATES TOWARDS INNOVATIVE COURSES IN THE LIBRARY SCHOOL CURRICULUM IN SELECTED LIBRARY SCHOOLS IN SOUTH-WEST, NIGERIA.

By

OSISANWO, Temitope A. Ph.D

and

AFOLABI, Opeyemi Ebenezer

Abstract

The study was conducted to examine the perception and attitude of undergraduate students towards innovative courses in the library school curriculum in selected library schools in South-west, Nigeria. Descriptive survey research design and total enumeration technique was adopted to select 241 undergraduate population of 3 selected library schools in Southwest, Nigeria. Out of 241 copies of questionnaires administered, 229 were returned, collated and found useful for the study. Statistical Packages for Social Sciences software version 20 was used to analysis data using descriptive statistics such as frequency, percentage, mean and standard deviation. Findings revealed that the major innovative courses in the library school curriculum are automation and information centre, information structure and system, web publishing, information retrieval technologies, information system and networks, web document management, management of electronic resources and desktop publishing. The findings also revealed that undergraduates displayed a positive perception and attitude towards innovative courses in the library school curriculum. The study recommended that there is need for National Universities Commission (NUC) and Librarians Registration Council of Nigeria (LRCN) to come to round table to harmonize the LIS curriculum benchmarks in line with global practices in order to prepare the LIS graduates for career practice in the 21st Century.

Keywords: Perception; Attitude; Library and Information Science; Library school; Curriculum; Innovative courses; Undergraduates.

Introduction

The concept of education is such that, there is no universal or acceptable description for it. It all depends on the angle from which it is viewed from. Education according to United

Nations Educational, Scientific, and Cultural Organisation (2021) can be viewed as a process of facilitating learning which involves the acquisition of skills, morals, values, beliefs and personal character. The structured system of education requires the various elements that would make it function optimally. Such elements include teachers, lecturers, students, physical/digital structure, educational resources, and curriculum.

Curriculum as viewed by Alebiosu (2005) in Obilo and Sangoleye (2015) is as an instrument that dictates the affairs of every educational system. It is the vehicle through which knowledge and other learning activities are disseminated. Curriculum involves helping the learner acquire knowledge or experience.

Today, as our societies are becoming more and more diverse so does the information. In response, some library schools have reconsidered the issues of diverse communities and the ways that LIS education and library training need to incorporate technology competencies, knowledge and practices. These technology competencies will encourage the adoption of innovative courses in the Library and Information Science program.

Innovative course as described by Zare, Sarikhani, Salari and Mansouri (2016) is a systematic course based on technology, organization, and management which bestows upon the students the ability to learn via internet and facilitate their learning. Innovative course makes use of telecommunications technology to get information to achieve the teaching and learning objectives. Innovative course refers to the use of systems of electronic education such as computer, internet, multimedia disks, electronic magazines, virtual newscasts, and etc. whose

purposes are to reduce time and expenses and achieve better, faster, and easier learning (Zare and Sarikhani, 2016).

The effective inclusion of innovative courses into the educational system is a complex, multifaceted process that involves not just technology indeed, given enough initial capital, getting the technology is the easiest part, but also curriculum and pedagogy, institutional readiness, teacher competencies, and long-term financing, among others (Velmurugan & Kannan, 2011).

The use of innovative resources in teaching and learning positively impacts the delivery of LIS modules. Some of the new approaches, methods, techniques and instructional resources/tools of teaching/learning, when innovatively used, not only make it easier for students to learn. But also insidiously acquaints students with the innovative tools. LIS researcher along with depending on print sources also refers a lot of innovative resources due to various advantages of innovative resources. Libraries also have started depending on and providing innovative information services along with traditional services. However, the significance or magnitude of these issues and challenges vary between countries and institutions, presumably due to socio-political and economic environments (Suresha and Narayanaswamy, 2017). Hence, this study therefore tends to examine the perception and attitude of undergraduate towards innovative courses in the library school curriculum in selected library schools in Southwest Nigeria. The study would be limited to three (3) library schools which are Tai Solarin University of Education, Lead City University and University of Ibadan.

Statement of the Problem

It is noted that curriculum for innovative courses in library and information science profession usually mirrors what is being offered to train students. Since it is highly imperative to prepare students in library and information science for leadership in the new age, revisiting and revising the curriculum curricula becomes important, in order to avoid producing half-baked graduates. Students would indeed be equipped with what they need to succeed and thrive after they obtain their master's degrees in library and information science. Bearing this in mind, the perception and attitude of students may vary. Hence, there is need to examine the perception and attitude of undergraduate towards innovative courses in the library school curriculum in selected library schools in Southwest Nigeria.

Research Questions

The following research questions were answered in order to guide the study.

- i. What are the various innovative courses in the library school curriculum in selected library schools in Southwest, Nigeria?
- ii. What is the perception of undergraduates towards innovative courses in the library school curriculum in selected library schools in Southwest, Nigeria?
- iii. What is the attitude of undergraduates towards innovative courses in the library school curriculum in selected library schools in Southwest, Nigeria?

Literature review

Mittermeyer and Quirion (2013) investigated the innovative skills of undergraduate students entering Quebec University, Canada using the ACRL standards as its theoretical framework. Data gathering was conducted by means of questionnaire containing 20 questions grouped under five themes - concept identification, search strategy, document types, search tools, use of retrieved results. They found out that many students appeared to misunderstand or were totally unaware of the basic elements of library research.

Roberts (2017) reported on innovative teaching and learning experience in the School of Engineering at the University of Western Sydney, in Australia, in which teaching and library staff developed innovative components for first year unit of study in Engineering and Industrial Design Practice. The course provided an introduction to library and innovative skills, such as defining information need, locating and evaluating information resources and ethically using resources in written papers and reports, delivered through classroom and peer tutoring sessions. The success of the course resulted in a new revised engineering curriculum.

Issa, Amusan & Daura (2019), in a study focused on the University of Ilorin library, reported that the library has provisions for students to use e-library resources, in addition to a computer section with Internet connectivity that students can use for accessing the resources. They also reported most students are aware of the e-library resources but do not use them because they lack the skills, as they had not been formally and comprehensively taught the use of e-library resources, as the teaching of innovative is embedded in a "General Studies" course.

Innovative augments students' competency with evaluating, managing, and using information. It is increasingly important in the present era of information explosion (Odede, 2018). Innovative skills are important because of the rapid growth of information systems and information resources. In studies, work or other activities students are likely to be faced with an increasing range of information sources available through libraries, in online specialist databases, and on the internet. But all this information raises questions about how to search for and locate what they need, as well as issues about the quality, accuracy and reliability of the information. A large quantity of information on its own does not make students better informed; the onus is to be critical and skilful users of that information and the sources to which they have access. The key skill of innovative is intended to develop their critical awareness and competences in handling information and information systems (The Open University, 2016).

Innovative skills will help students to achieve this target in a broader sense, in student centered learning. When children are educated with the necessary innovative skills, consequently, the society becomes information literate (Ranaweera, 2008). Also, IFLA Global Vision Discussion, (2017) corroborated that innovative can enhance lifelong learning and give children and adults the skills they need to survive and thrive in a global information society. In addition, Cooney and Hiris (2003) as cited by Osman (2017) concurred that ILS leads to independent learning and creates a greater responsibility on the learner of becoming dynamic thinker with creative, analytical and efficient mind instead of mere regurgitation of facts.

Methodology

Descriptive survey research design was adopted for this study. The population of this research study comprised final year undergraduates in the Department of Library And Information Science in three (3) selected library schools in Southwest, Nigeria, which are Tai Solarin University of Education with population of 170, Lead City University with 25, and University of Ibadan with 46. Total enumeration sampling method was used to capture the entire respondents due to its small population.

A validated, self-designed and close-ended questionnaire was used as the instrument in gathering data from the respondents. The questionnaire comprised two (2) main sections. Section A comprised demographic information of the respondents while section B comprised items related to the various innovative courses in the library school curriculum; section C comprised items related to the perception of undergraduates towards innovative courses in the library school curriculum; section D comprised items relating to the attitude of undergraduates towards innovative courses in the library school curriculum in selected library schools in Southwest, Nigeria.

Results

Research Question 1: What are the various innovative courses in the library school curriculum in selected library schools in Southwest, Nigeria?

Table 1: Various innovative courses in the library school curriculum

Items	Frequency	Percentage
Automation and information centre	221	96.5
Information structure and system	207	90.4
Web publishing	199	86.9
Information retrieval technologies	196	85.6

Information system and networks	196	85.6
Web document management	193	84.3
Management of electronic resources	189	82.5
Desktop publishing	188	82.1
Introduction to information science	183	79.9
Multimedia librarianship	182	79.5
Website design	181	79.0
Digital libraries and preservation	175	76.4
Multimedia application in libraries and information services	168	73.4
Computer system and data processing	168	73.4
Contemporary technology libraries	167	72.9
Internet information resources	162	70.7
Information science and modern technology	160	69.9
Computer in libraries	158	69.0
Multimedia resource	156	68.1
Database management	149	85.1
Introduction to computer studies	143	62.4
Multimedia information resources	138	60.3
Computer application to library process	135	59.0
Basic computer operations	130	56.8
Information network	126	55.0
Computer and data processing	121	52.8
ICT in libraries and information centres	118	50.7
Information and development with technology	109	47.6
Information Technology	105	45.9

Result in table 1 showed the various innovative courses in the library school curriculum. The result shows that majority 221(96.5%) of the respondents indicted Automation and information centre, 207(90.4%) indicated Automation and information centre, 199(86.9%) indicated Information structure and system, 196(85.6%) indicated Web publishing, 196(85.6%) indicated Information retrieval technologies, 193(84.3%) indicated Information system and networks, 189(82.5%) indicated Web document management, 188(82.1%) indicated

Management of electronic resources, 183(79.9%) indicated Desktop publishing, 182(79.5%) indicated Introduction to information science, 175(76.4%) indicated Multimedia librarianship.

This finding is in line with the study of Oparah (2016) who observed that there was no uniform or harmonised curriculum for Nigerian University Library and information science schools. Each operated its own curriculum. According to him, the newer LIS schools appear to operate modified curricula of the older schools. A review of the curricula of these schools shows that while some emphasize more library science courses, other strive to strike a balance between library science and information communication technology. In the later case, innovative technology application to library and information services appears to be accorded appreciable emphasis.

Research Question 2: What is the perception of undergraduates towards innovative courses in the library school curriculum in selected library schools in Southwest, Nigeria?

Table 2: Mean Responses on Perception of undergraduates towards innovative courses in the library school curriculum

Items	Mean	St.D	Remark
I have a competitive advantage over people not exposed to innovative courses	3.45	.609	Significant
Experience gained in the innovative course will definitely prepare me for employment in library and information science field in future	3.34	.475	Significant
My exposure in LIS schools has adequately prepared me for the 21st century library	3.19	.502	Significant
My ICT skills have improved greatly after taking innovative courses	3.17	.752	Significant
I can now assist library users to locate relevant materials in the OPAC	3.14	.640	Significant
I can effectively digitized library collections if such opportunities present itself in the future	3.14	.494	Significant
I can work in an automated library as a result of my exposure to innovative courses	3.11	.460	Significant
The curriculum has not prepared me to function effectively as a librarian in the nearest future	3.09	.869	Significant

I can now assist library users to locate electronic information resources after being exposed to innovative course	3.05	.515	Significant
I don't have a flair for innovative courses	2.97	.749	Significant
LIS schools are wasting their time introducing innovative courses	2.94	.914	Significant
I can now design a website after taking innovative courses	2.94	.764	Significant
Before taking the innovative courses, I couldn't use software, but now I can work with library software	2.84	.738	Significant
I can now use a library software to manage the collection of a library	2.82	.696	Significant
Average Mean	3.09	.656	Significant

Result in table 2 showed average mean of 3.09 is greater than the criterion mean of 2.50 indicating that all the items of measuring the perception of undergraduates towards innovative courses in the library school curriculum were significant. The results show the respondents affirmed that they believe they have a competitive advantage over people not exposed to innovative courses ($\chi = 3.45$); experience gained in the innovative course will definitely prepare them for employment in library and information science field in future ($\chi = 3.34$); exposure in LIS schools has adequately prepared them for the 21st century library ($\chi = 3.19$); their ICT skills have improved greatly after taking innovative courses ($\chi = 3.17$); they can now assist library users to locate relevant materials in the OPAC ($\chi = 3.14$); and they can effectively digitize library collections if such opportunities present itself in the future ($\chi = 3.14$).

The result shows that with an average mean of 3.09 which is greater than 2.50 minimum level of perception of undergraduates towards innovative courses is positive. Thus, undergraduates displayed a positive perception towards innovative courses in the library school curriculum.

The result is consistent with the study of Kundak (2017) who investigated final year LIS students' motivations for enrolling in LIS programs, perceptions of LIS profession and LIS

program they enrolled. The study revealed that employment opportunities and influence of an individual (mentor, professor, family or friend) were the major factors behind their choice of profession. Majority of students had decided to pursue their LIS degree at the time they had to make a choice based on their university entrance exam scores.

Research Question 3: What is the attitude of undergraduates towards innovative courses in the library school curriculum in selected library schools in Southwest, Nigeria?

Table 3: Attitude of undergraduates towards innovative courses in the library school curriculum

Items	Mean	Std. Dev	Remark
Innovative course will facilitate information discovery	3.43	.586	Significant
Possessing innovative skills is prestigious	3.42	.606	Significant
Innovative course will improve access to a vast information base	3.38	.578	Significant
Innovative course will enhance my academic performance	3.34	.476	Significant
Possessing innovative skills makes me confident	3.34	.566	Significant
Innovative course will facilitate easy communication of information	3.32	.585	Significant
I believe it is easy to be innovative	3.30	.636	Significant
Innovative courses are valuable to my academic success	3.30	.743	Significant
Innovative course has positively affected my peer influence	2.46	.848	Non-signif.
Innovative course will make me comfortable with library and information systems	2.39	.926	Non-signif.
Innovative course is a necessary skill in my academic pursuit	1.92	1.206	Non-signif.
Possessing innovative skills is an idea	1.70	.826	Non-signif.
Average Mean	2.94	0.715	Significant

Result in table 3 showed average mean of 2.94 is greater than the accepted mean of 2.50.

A total of 8 items were significant while 8 items was non-significant. The results show that the respondents affirmed that they believe innovative course will facilitate information discovery ($\chi = 3.43$); possessing innovative skills is prestigious ($\chi = 3.42$); innovative course will improve

their access to a vast information base ($\chi = 3.38$); innovative course will enhance their academic performance ($\chi = 3.34$); and that possessing innovative skills makes their confident ($\chi = 3.34$)

The result shows that with an average mean of 2.94 which is greater than 2.50 minimum level of attitude of undergraduates towards innovative courses is positive. Thus, undergraduates displayed a positive attitude towards innovative courses in the library school curriculum.

The finding is similar to that of Cronin (2007) who noted that in Library and Information Science (LIS) education, there is a trend towards an increasing focus on information technologies (an inevitable result of massive technological advances), users' perspectives, and multi-disciplinarily. Cherry, Duff, Singh & Freund (2011) further opined that there are new career opportunities for LIS graduates as new positions are opening up in areas such as knowledge management, information architecture (research data management and digital humanities while LIS education is transforming, the debate over the education is intensifying. Strategic decisions such as the changes in the structure, scope and focus of individual LIS schools/programs require not only a careful examination of literature regarding the flux in the discipline, but also data collected from related stakeholders (such as employers, LIS students, graduates, and professors)

Conclusion

Based on the findings of this study, it was concluded that the major innovative courses in the library school curriculum are automation and information centre, information structure and system, web publishing, information retrieval technologies, information system and networks, web document management, management of electronic resources and desktop publishing.

Undergraduates displayed positive perception and attitude towards innovative courses in the library school curriculum.

Recommendations

Based on the findings, the following recommendations were suggested:

1. The existing faculty members should be trained to cope up with the new requirements of LIS schools.
2. Nigerian government should come forward through her agents to provide financial help to the LIS schools for developing essential infrastructures to provide hands on experience to the students
3. There is need for NUC and LRCN to come to round table to harmonise the LIS curriculum benchmarks in line with global practices in order to prepare the LIS graduates for career practice in 21st Century
4. More skill related courses should be infused, accorded compulsory status (core) and be split for effectiveness with provision for practical; technology should be injected into all conventional library science courses.
5. Highly technology-related information science courses could run through 2 semesters in each session to enable all aspects of the course be treated sufficiently; information Science could be made an option for specialization in the undergraduate LIS curriculum
6. LIS schools should share uniform curriculum with the same information science components that will serve as a guide to students, lecturers and the entire members of the community for a

harmonized library and information science education in Nigeria; IT skills should be priority criteria when recruiting graduate staff that will teach in library schools.

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