

## EDUCATION AND LIBRARIANS' CHOICE OF LIBRARY PROFESSION AS A CAREER IN TERTIARY INSTITUTIONS

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BY

OBOT, IMAOBONG N. *Ph.D*  
LIBRARY DEPARTMENT,  
UNIVERSITY OF UYO, NIGERIA,

UZOEGBU, FIAT MARY  
TECHNICAL DEPT.,  
ALVAN IKOKU FEDERAL COLLEGE OF EDUCATION (AIFCE) LIBRARY, OWERRI  
IMO STATE, NIGERIA,

OKON, EFFIONG E.  
ACTING COLLEGE LIBRARIAN,  
MARITIME ACADEMY OF NIGERIA, ORON

&

OKORO, CHINYERE PRISCILLA  
ALVAN IKOKU FEDERAL COLLEGE OF EDUCATION,  
IMO STATE, NIGERIA.

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### ABSTRACT

*The study investigated education and Librarians' choice of library profession as a career in tertiary institutions in Akwa Ibom and Cross River States of Nigeria. It sought to examine education and its relationship with librarians' choice of library profession as a career. The survey design was used for the study. The hypothesis was tested using the Pearson Product Moment Correlation statistical technique and the relationship was established to be significant at 0.05 level. Findings revealed that education had a significant relationship with librarians' choice of library profession. The results of data analysis showed a high positive correlation (0.68) between education and librarians' choice of career. The study concluded that education was a strong determinant of librarians' choice of career. This paper recommended among other things that tertiary institutions should offer equal opportunities to librarians for further education for specialisation in their chosen career.*

**KEYWORDS:** Education, Librarians' Choice, Library Profession, Tertiary Institutions.

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### Introduction

The initial establishment and development of libraries precipitated the necessity to educate people whose career choices were in the library profession. In any profession, no issue is more contentious than the form of professional education and training required of its practitioners (Aguolu + Aguolu, 110011). Since the world is fast becoming a global village, there is need for librarians as professionals to be versatile. Thus, academic library management should as much as possible, create a balanced atmosphere between library manpower and technological and educational advances. The training and education of librarians has therefore remained

incontestable and incontrovertible as this has invariably enhanced educational as well as national development.

The library profession has been proliferated with individuals who dabble into it with a view to obtaining a diploma course and becoming professionals overnight. In law for example, a political scientist or anybody who takes up a diploma course in law, cannot claim to have the legal knowledge that his counterpart has, who holds a degree in law plus the professional qualification. A geologist who takes nine months' diploma course in engineering cannot be very much of an engineer. This also holds true for many other professions. Nnaji (IMDL) asserted that the best librarians are those who, having chosen the profession because they wish to work in libraries in preference to anywhere else, proceed to get themselves equipped with the theory of that profession. Since librarianship is a profession that requires insightful knowledge so as to keep library patrons satisfied, there is therefore the need to educate librarians as information brokers/gatekeepers for effective service delivery and career development.

Every individual who has attained a certain level of education is encouraged to set high aspirations for himself and to work hard to achieve these goals. People are increasingly made to become aware of the prestige that goes along with a successful career choice.

### **Objectives of the Study**

To examine the relationship between education and librarians' choice of the library profession.

### **Research Questions**

What relationship exists between education and librarians' choice of the library profession?

### **Hypothesis**

Education has no significant relationship with librarians' choice of the library profession.

### **Significance of the Study**

The significance of this study in general is that it will determine how education and librarians' choice of library profession relate. This study will be useful in preparing interested and intending librarians from varied backgrounds to appreciate the prospects in educational advancement in the library profession. It will also be useful to the Nigerian Library Association and other professional regulatory bodies in training and educating library professionals in academic environments.

### **Education and Librarians' Choice of Career**

In recent times, many Nigerian graduates find it difficult to find a job or choose one after graduation from tertiary institutions. The present socio-economic situation in Nigeria has made it very difficult for graduates to choose occupations that are in tandem with what they read in school or occupations that give opportunities for advancement. While it is easily possible for a new graduate in Medicine, Engineering or Law to immediately get jobs and be given opportunity for advancement, it is not very true for most other disciplines. However, the library and information science field has in recent times, assumed a more serious professional status in Nigeria. The field which has produced many distinguished librarians and information experts are distinctive among themselves by subject, tradition, service and status (Lawal, 11010).

The necessity of educating and training people whose career choices were in the library profession succeeded the initial establishment and development of libraries. No issue is more contentious than the form of professional education and training required of its practitioners (Aguolu and Aguolu, 110011). This may in turn form the basis for an individual's choice of such a profession as a career. By education of library professionals, we should examine the librarian, the librarian in training as well as individuals who have chosen the profession as a career. Ikoro (1100114) subscribed to this when he enumerated the different categories of staff training as follows: There are different types of staff training and development programmes such as simple orientation, organized visits to other libraries, seminars

and conferences, participatory management, internal or in-house training programmes, short courses and formal professional education. Others are library trainee, industrial training for library student, staff manual for self-development research/sabbatical leave.

There has been an increasing awareness among library and information practitioners concerning the future of the profession over the next decades. Oduagwu (1100) stated in addition to this that the need for (staff) training cannot be over-emphasized, pointing out that such training improves efficiency and morale, provides for succession and raises the standard of personnel, etc.

One of the most important as well as recent aspects of librarianship in this century has been the emergence of library schools as a potent factor in training librarians, shaping new philosophies and new attitudes about choosing the profession as a career. Thus a library school in a developing country, as it is in a developed country, also assists in giving leadership and unity to the profession (Dean in Lawal, 1100111). One way of ensuring unity in the profession is to transform the teaching learning process by harnessing and integrating information and communication technology into library education and training in Nigeria (Igwe, 1100x). To support this, Karisiddappa (1100v) was of the view that the contemporary scenario predominated by information and knowledge perspectives indicate a pressing need to educate and train the Library and Information manpower towards a sustainable professional competence. Therefore, all tertiary institution Library and Information Science education and training programmes should be so structured to meet the manpower needs of the present technological age as well as the evolving information society. This will invariably have a positive influence on individuals' choice of the profession as a career.

Interest in the choice of librarianship as a profession began to emerge in the 1110's with the growth of university-based professional courses for librarianship. The education of librarians is associated with the social and political history of Nigeria, and this has had tremendous influence on the choice of the profession as a career by its citizenry. Ojo-Igbinoba (1111x:1111) lent credence to this fact by asserting that political awareness on the part of the citizen and other political activities and developments have affected, sometimes negatively affecting the field of librarianship as well. Before Nigeria gained independence, people who aspired to become librarians went to Great Britain to qualify for the A.L.A certificates because there was no library school. Librarianship was essentially a non-graduate profession as there were relatively few graduates in the country generally (Nzotta, 1111111). The author stated further that with independence, came the establishment of many educational institutions at all levels and access to education became more liberalized. Many graduates drifted into various professions, and this was invariably a welcomed development for the library profession. There is however no gainsaying the fact that many graduates who drift into librarianship in this country do so for want of some career to cling to, while waiting for "better" prospects. Some may not have studied library science as a course in the university but chose the profession as a level ground to study their courses in depth. Nnaji (11111:11111) stated that "some would like to work in the library because it affords them the comfortable environment in which to study their subject in greater detail".

In Nigeria, different professions have regulatory bodies which influence the academic and professional preparation of their practitioners. Lawal (11001:111) stated that in professional education, the raising of standards of qualifications for entry to the profession is another mark of a strong professional association. The author stated further that "in principle, concern with education and training should be one of the preferred priorities of a professional association; but in practice, the ideals are sometimes difficult to attain where for instance the association has no authority from government to control its education system or even influence the trends through the usual accreditation schemes". Ogunjide (1100x) supported this view when he posited that all professional organisations function also as a welfare organization, and its educational and training programmes should be particularly concerned with

this. It is partly as a welfare programme that the library association should see to it, by its education and training programme, which all its members are trained to do their job better, are adequately rewarded for improved services and are therefore happy at their jobs. Thus the profession would be able to maintain high standards of efficiency, and professional service which will invariably attract members of the public to join the profession.

The controversy about qualifications and status in the profession would have been unnecessary if employers, library schools and librarians were guided in their assessment of the qualifications by the entry requirements, the duration and orientation of the courses and the course contents (Ojo-Igbinoba, 1998). However, more universities and similar tertiary institutions do offer equal opportunities to librarians for further training for specialization as is offered to teaching staff, and this has seemed to influence the greater decisions made in the choice of library profession as a career. A study by Anwana (1998) revealed that most preferred occupations were teaching (100.0%); law (10.0%), nursing (19.0%), business administration (3.8%), and medicine (1.5%). The reason they gave outside interest in the occupation, desire to help people, good prospects for promotion and good salary was better training opportunities. This is basically true of the fact that people go in search of careers that will afford them higher educational opportunities.

### Methodology

The survey research design was used for this study. The study covered eight tertiary institutions in Akwa Ibom and Cross River States of Nigeria. The population of the study comprised all the professionally trained librarians in the tertiary institutions in Akwa Ibom and Cross River States, chosen for the study. The tertiary institutions that formed the population of the study were eight in number as shown in the table below:

Table 1:

#### Population as classified by tertiary institutions

Tertiary institutions	Population of librarians	Sample of librarians	Percent (%)
University of Uyo, Uyo	118	118	100
College of Education, Afaha Nsit	1	1	100
Akwa Ibom State University	1	1	100
Maritime Academy, Oron	11	11	100
Akwa Ibom State Polytechnic, Ikot Osurua	11	11	100
University of Calabar, Calabar	111	111	100
Cross River State College of Technology	1	1	100
College of Education, Akamkpa	1	1	100
<b>Total</b>	<b>86</b>	<b>86</b>	<b>100%</b>

#### Administrative Record of each Institution (100%)

The total population of 86 librarians were used as sample for the study. The use of the entire population was based on the fact that the population is small and accessible. The distribution and sample of librarians in tertiary institutions in Akwa Ibom and Cross River states are presented in the Table 1 above. The instrument used for data collection for this study was a researcher-developed questionnaire titled Education and Choice of Library Profession as a Career (ECLPCQ). The hypothesis was tested using Pearson Product Moment Correlation Coefficient (PPMC) at 0.05 alpha level.

### Results and discussions

#### Hypothesis One:

Education has no significant relationship with librarians' choice of the library profession.

In testing this hypothesis, education in the profession is the independent variable and librarians' choice of library profession is the dependent variable. The result of Pearson Product Moment Correlation Analysis in Table II was used in determining the relationship between the two variables. The decision is taken at 0.05 alpha level of significance.

**Table 2: Pearson Product Moment Correlation Coefficient (PPMC) summary of analysis of scores on education/training and the librarians' choice of library profession (N = 86)**

Variables	$\sum X$	$\sum X^2$	$\sum XY$	$r_{xy} (Cal)$	df	$r_{xy} (Crit)$
	$\sum Y$	$\sum Y^2$				
Education (X)	IIIIIIII	IXIXXM				
Librarians' choice of library profession (Y)	IIIIID	IXIIIIIO	IXIIID	0.10*	DV	.110

\* Significant at  $p < .05$  alpha

In Table II, the calculated correlation coefficient,  $r_{xy}$ , for the relationship between education and librarians' choice of library profession is 0.10, and its corresponding critical value,  $r_{xy(crit)}$ , at df DV and  $p = 0.05$  alpha is 0.110. The calculated value of 0.10 is positive and is greater than its critical value 0.110. This indicates that there exists a significant positive relationship between education and librarians' choice of library profession. With this result, the null hypothesis, education has no significant relationship with librarians' choice of library profession, was rejected.

## Discussion:

The results in Table II showed that there is a significant positive relationship between the two variables. That is, education is a significant determinant of librarians' choice of their profession. The 0.10 calculated correlation index indicates a moderately high positive correlation.

The observed positive correlation between education and librarians' choice of their career agrees with Anwana's (IMDV) study which revealed that all of the most preferred careers like teaching (100.0%), law (100.0%), nursing (100.0%), business administration (100.0%) and medicine (100.0%) was because of better educational opportunities among other things. Nnaji (IMDL) also observed that the best librarians are those who had been adequately equipped with the educational aspect of their profession. Similarly, Aguolu and Aguolu's (10001) assertion that in any profession, no issue is more contentious than the form of professional education and training required of its practitioners underscores the importance of education in the choice of library and information science as a career.

## Major Findings

The result of the data analysis summarized in Tables II yielded the following findings: There exists a high positive correlation between education and librarians' choice of library profession (index = 0.10). This indicates that education is a strong factor in librarians' choice of their profession.

## Conclusion

Based on the findings in this study, one can conclude that, education is a strong determinant of librarians' choice of career.

## Recommendations

From the results of this study, the following recommendations were made:

1. There should be an awareness programme on the requirements and possible educational opportunities for people who intend to choose library and information service as a career.

- ii. Tertiary institutions should offer equal opportunities to librarians for further education for specialization in their chosen careers.
- iii. The Librarians Registration Council of Nigeria (LRCN) and the Nigerian Library Association (NLA) as well as the National Association for Library and Information Science Educators (NALISE) should rise up to the challenge of drawing up an acceptable policy that will govern Library and Information Science education and training programmes for Nigerian tertiary institutions.
- v. All tertiary institution management must make provision to prepare librarians through computer training programmes, seminars and workshops in order to assume the proactive role in coping with the dynamics of Information and Communication Technology to encourage higher productivity.

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