RETHINKING THE EDUCATION AND TRAINING OF NIGERIAN LIBRARY AND INFORMATION SCIENCE PROFESSIONALS IN A CHANGING SPHERE

By
Prof. Bappah Magaji Abubakar[1]
Amina Suleiman Hamza, CLN[2]
Rukayya Suleiman Hamza[3]
[1] Department of Library and Information Science,
Bayero University, Kano, P.M.B. 3011, Kano, Nigeria
E-mail: bmabubakar.lis@buk.edu.ng; magaji02@yahoo.com; bmagaji02@gmail.com
Phone: +234 806 351 4814
[2] Department of Library and Information Science,
Northwest University, Kano, Nigeria
E-mail: suleiman.amina@rocketmail.com
Phone: +234 803 355 3420
[3] Department of Library and Information Science,
Faculty of Education, Northwest University, Kano, Nigeria
E-mail: rukayyasuleimanhamza@gmail.com
Phone: 0903 021 2222

Abstract
Over the past few decades, Library and Information Science (LIS) education and training, particularly in developed countries, have experienced rapid transformation and structural changes as a result of globalization and the increasing integration of Information and Communication Technologies (ICTs). Consequently, LIS education and training in developing countries must be reconsidered if they are to remain relevant in the changing information environment. The main objectives of this paper are to discuss the need to reposition Nigerian LIS education and training in line with global trends, examine the historical development of LIS education in Nigerian universities, and provide an overview of its current status. The paper compares LIS education and training in developed and developing countries. It also examines the challenges confronting LIS education and the profession in Nigeria, including inadequate government funding, insufficient infrastructure and learning resources, the proliferation of LIS schools without adequate regard for established standards, inconsistencies in nomenclature, and the inappropriate organizational placement of LIS departments in Nigerian universities. The paper proposes strategies for strengthening LIS education and the profession, particularly through the development of a robust and dynamic curriculum that reflects global requirements. It recommends that Nigerian LIS education and training be refocused and modified in accordance with global best practices.

Keywords: LIS education, training, curriculum, global trends, Nigerian universities

Introduction

Library and Information Science education is a broad concept that encompasses both library education and information education. LIS education in Nigerian universities has experienced considerable expansion and development, particularly in student enrolment, the establishment of new programmes, and the adoption of new modes of delivery since the establishment of the first formal university-based LIS programme in 1959.

One of the most significant developments in contemporary society is the use of technology to collect, store, process, and disseminate information. These activities are central to the effective functioning of modern libraries. Libraries require well-trained and competent staff to provide quality services to their users. Training, defined by the *Concise Oxford Dictionary* (2025) as bringing a person to a desired level of efficiency through instruction and practice, is therefore essential to the effective operation of libraries in both developed and developing countries. Abubakar and Abbas (2014) observed that LIS education has evolved and undergone fundamental changes, particularly during the last two decades, because of rapid developments in ICTs, the Internet, and other digital technologies. These developments have had significant implications for the LIS profession and have led to the emergence of new areas of study within the discipline.

The competencies required of contemporary LIS professionals include the ability to apply ICTs to information handling and processing, knowledge and information management skills, effective communication skills, and the ability to manage digital, multimedia, and web-based information resources. Hamza et al. (2025) observed that schools globally are continuously reviewing and redesigning their programmes in response to technological developments and globalization.

LIS education in Nigerian universities is an integral part of the global LIS education system. Therefore, changes in the structure, mode of delivery, curriculum, faculty requirements, and global direction of LIS education inevitably influence LIS education in Nigeria. Nigerian LIS education has recorded important developments in curriculum design, the establishment of library schools (Saka, 2015), and academic collaboration in research, project supervision, and teaching.

According to Kerr and Stewart (2019), significant changes in LIS education over the past several decades have influenced the roles, responsibilities, work environments, and competencies of information professionals. Abubakar (2021) further noted that, as a result of globalization, LIS has become an interdisciplinary field incorporating areas such as information science, computer science, information systems, knowledge management, information architecture, digitization, content management, archives, and records management.

As the LIS profession enters a new phase, scholars have emphasized the need for LIS educators, practitioners, and students to acquire knowledge and skills that are relevant to the changing environment. These include ICT-related competencies and the ability to work effectively in digital information environments. Raju (2019), for example, observed that LIS professionals with both technical and pedagogical skills have become increasingly important in a digitized information environment. The COVID-19 pandemic and the emergence of the "new normal" also redefined the LIS educational landscape. These developments encouraged the adoption of hybrid learning, which combines print and electronic resources, as well as Library 2.0 services based on social media and other interactive platforms. Such approaches can contribute to the social, economic, and environmental sustainability of LIS education and services.

Mo, Seon, Park, and Kim (2020) observed that universities regularly update their curricula to respond to internal and external environmental changes. However, the same cannot always be said of LIS curricula in Nigeria. Salubi (2017) and Edegbo (2011) identified several challenges, including inadequate coverage of emerging technologies, inconsistencies in course content and delivery, a widening gap

between classroom instruction and workplace realities, and a lack of innovation. These issues must be addressed to ensure that graduates of Nigerian library schools acquire competitive knowledge and skills.

This paper provides an overview of LIS education and training in Nigeria, with particular emphasis on university-based LIS education. It examines the historical development and current status of LIS education in Nigeria, discusses global trends, compares LIS education in developed and developing countries, and examines the challenges confronting LIS education and the profession in Nigeria.

Historical Development of LIS Education in Nigeria

Nigeria is located on the western coast of Africa. It covers an area of approximately 924,000 square kilometres and is bordered by Niger Republic to the north, Chad and Cameroon to the east, the Gulf of Guinea to the south, and the Republic of Benin to the west. Nigeria has the largest population in Africa and is one of the world's largest Black nations. It is endowed with considerable natural resources but remains heavily dependent on petroleum. A significant proportion of the population continues to live in poverty and lacks adequate access to basic services (World Bank, 2017). The Nigerian education system has been affected by several challenges, including inconsistent educational policies, weak policy implementation, inadequate funding, and poor infrastructure. Nigeria's National Policy on Education traditionally operated within the 6-3-3-4 structure, comprising six years of primary education, three years of junior secondary education, three years of senior secondary education, and four years of university education. This framework provides the general structure within which education is organized in the country.

The history of LIS education in Nigeria can be traced to the UNESCO seminar on the "Development of Public Libraries in Africa," held at the University of Ibadan in 1953. The seminar recommended the establishment of a limited number of high-quality library schools in Africa to provide professional training at the leadership level (Abubakar, 2021). Before this period, librarianship education was obtained mainly abroad, particularly in the United Kingdom and the United States. The qualifications obtained were often non-degree qualifications, such as the British Library Association examinations. In addition, many librarians working in Nigerian libraries at the time were expatriates. The first formal LIS programme in Nigeria was established in 1959 at the University College Ibadan, now the University of Ibadan. The programme was established with financial assistance from the Carnegie Corporation of New York, which had shown interest in developing the library profession in Nigeria. In 1957, the Corporation sent Harold Lancour to assess the library situation and recommend ways in which it could support library development.

Following his survey, Lancour recommended the establishment of postgraduate-level library education. This led to the creation of the Institute of Librarianship, now known as the Department of Library, Archival and Information Studies, at the University of Ibadan. The programme initially offered a diploma in librarianship.

The second library school in Nigeria was established at Ahmadu Bello University, Zaria, and commenced with an undergraduate programme. Subsequently, other LIS schools were established at several Nigerian universities, including:

i. Bayero University, Kano, in 1977;
ii. University of Maiduguri, in 1978;
iii. Imo State University, in 1981; and

iv. University of Nigeria, Nsukka, in 1983.

From the beginning of the 1990s, the number of LIS schools in Nigeria increased significantly. Since then, several federal, state, and private universities have established LIS programmes. LIS education, as part of the Nigerian education system, is evaluated by the National Universities Commission (NUC). Accreditation is based on several quality indicators, including curriculum content, the quantity and quality of academic staff, teaching and learning facilities, equipment, library resources, computer laboratories, and funding. The NUC uses the Benchmark Minimum Academic Standards (BMAS) as a major instrument for accrediting LIS programmes (NUC, 2007). Accreditation generally considers programme philosophy, aims and objectives, academic content, degree programmes, core and compulsory courses, course titles and descriptions, assessment procedures, personnel, library resources, and computer laboratories (Diso & Njoku, 2007). LIS education in Nigeria has expanded considerably, with many public and private universities offering bachelor's, master's, and doctoral programmes. However, LIS departments are housed under different faculties, including education, social sciences, management sciences, information and communication, and other related faculties.

The names and nomenclature of LIS programmes also vary (NUC, 2014; Abubakar & Auyo, 2019, as cited in Abubakar, 2021). Initially, many departments were called Departments of Library Science or Library Studies. More recently, several have adopted names such as Department of Library and Information Science or Department of Library and Information Sciences. Courses listed in the NUC Benchmark Minimum Academic Standards (2014), as cited in Abubakar (2021), include:

i. Introduction to Library and Information Studies;
ii. Introduction to Information Science;
iii. Information in Libraries and Society;
iv. Introduction to Library and Information Resources;
v. History of Libraries and Information Centres;
vi. Library and Information Centre Visits;
vii. Introduction to Bibliography;
viii. Organization of Knowledge;
ix. Library and Information Services to Rural Communities;
x. Management of Libraries and Information Centres;
xi. Library and Information Services for Children and Adolescents;
xii. Serials Management;
xiii. The Information User;
xiv. Information Literacy; and
xv. Indigenous Knowledge Systems.

Since the beginning of the twenty-first century, LIS schools have continued to proliferate in federal, state, and private universities. Examples include the Federal Universities of Technology in Minna and Yola, the University of Benin, the University of Calabar, the University of Ilorin, the University of Lagos, Umar Musa Yar'Adua University, Tai Solarin University of Education, Kwara State University, and Babcock University, among others (Abdulganiy, 2020).

Global Trends in LIS Education

Historically, LIS education prepared professionals for employment in librarianship, information management, archives, and records management. However, the convergence of professional fields and the changing employment environment have created new information-related roles and responsibilities in public and private organizations worldwide. The information society has expanded the presence of information-related roles across different

sectors. As a result, the employment opportunities available to LIS graduates are no longer limited to traditional libraries. An increasing number of graduates now work in both traditional and non-traditional information environments (Cherry et al., 2011; Genoni & Smith, 2005; Johnson, 1998; Partridge et al., 2011).

LIS Education in Pakistan

Several studies on LIS education in Pakistan have identified weaknesses in curriculum design and implementation (Ahmad & Mahmood, 2011; Ameen, 2006, 2007, 2013; Warraich et al., 2016). Some studies reviewed LIS curricula and the competencies required by librarians by consulting employers, alumni, and experienced professionals (Mahmood, 2002, 2012; Mahmood & Shafique, 2012). Other studies examined job advertisements to identify job titles, required qualifications, and essential skills. Mahmood (2012) developed a list of competencies required by academic librarians, validated the list with chief librarians, and compared the competencies with LIS curricula. The study identified significant gaps between the competencies required in the workplace and those provided through LIS education.

Warraich and Ameen (2011) examined the views of senior and younger LIS professionals regarding employability skills and compared these skills with their representation in the curriculum of the University of the Punjab. The major problem identified was the inadequate implementation of the curriculum. These studies generally called for reforms in LIS education and training to meet the changing requirements of the profession.

LIS Education in China

LIS education in China consists of undergraduate, master's, and doctoral degree programmes, as well as correspondence and short-term training programmes. Before 1999, undergraduate programmes constituted the main form of LIS education and generally combined general university education with LIS specialization.

At the beginning of the twenty-first century, master's programmes expanded and doctoral programmes were introduced at leading institutions such as Peking University and Wuhan University (Yang, 2004). Chinese LIS master's programmes are generally of two types: professional and research-oriented. The professional programme is comparable to the Master of Library and Information Science degree in the United States, whereas the research-oriented programme has no exact equivalent in the United States. Beginning in 1992, many LIS schools in China replaced "Library and Information Science" with "Information Management" in their institutional names. The change reflected the growing importance of information management in the emerging knowledge economy.

LIS Education in the United States

The Master of Library and Information Science (MLIS) programme forms the foundation of professional LIS education in the United States. It is generally required for individuals seeking professional employment as librarians. Some universities introduced undergraduate programmes in the 1980s with a strong orientation toward information technology. These programmes differ from many undergraduate LIS programmes in China because their graduates are often employed in the information technology sector, both within and outside libraries.

Doctoral education in LIS in the United States has a longer history than in China. Established LIS schools, including the University of Illinois and the University of Pittsburgh, offer doctoral programmes in LIS. Newer doctoral

programmes are often interdisciplinary and may use titles such as Information Studies. The interdisciplinary nature of these programmes is reflected in collaboration with other academic departments. Such collaboration may involve courses taught by non-LIS faculty members or students taking courses outside their home departments. Many LIS schools have removed the word "library" from their names, although the master's degree accredited by the American Library Association continues to retain the term in its title.

Online and Technology-Based LIS Education

LIS schools in the United States, China, and other countries have increasingly adopted online and blended modes of education. Some schools now operate fully online programmes. Price (2017) reported that 31 of the 65 ALA-accredited MLIS programmes, representing 47.7 percent, were offered entirely online. Blended learning, which combines online and face-to-face instruction, is also increasingly popular because it enables students to benefit from both modes of course delivery. As a result, traditional face-to-face courses are becoming less dominant in many LIS schools. Chunxiang et al. (2019) identified several emerging courses in LIS schools in China, including:

i. Readers' advisory;
ii. Informetrics;
iii. Interactive information technologies and services;
iv. Organizational behaviour;
v. Cloud computing applications;
vi. Data mining;
vii. Information security;
viii. Internet business models;
ix. Natural language processing and text mining;
x. New media;
xi. Webometrics;
xii. Database and data mining;
xiii. Text information processing;
xiv. E-commerce systems;
xv. Human-computer interaction;
xvi. Information behaviour;
xvii. Information ethics;
xviii. Institutional repositories;
xix. Social informatics;
xx. Web mining;
xxi. Information ecology;
xxii. Information management in e-commerce and e-government;
xxiii. Network security technologies;
xxiv. Social information resource optimization; and
xxv. Data mining applications.

LIS Education in Africa

In many African countries, LIS education initially focused mainly on librarianship. The objective was to produce competent librarians capable of managing different types of libraries. Related fields such as documentation, archives, records management, and information management were not initially given sufficient attention. The first regional library school in Africa was established in Ghana in 1944 with support from the Carnegie Corporation and the British Government. The school operated for one year before it was closed (Saka, 2015). A later library school was established in Ghana in 1961 as the Ghana Library School. Its programmes included diploma programmes in librarianship and archives administration, graduate diplomas in library studies and archival studies, and a Master of Arts in Library Studies. In 2001, the school changed its name to the Department of Information Studies in response to the requirements of the new economy, which demanded graduates with knowledge and skills in information management and its applications.

The department subsequently offered programmes including:

i. Diploma in Librarianship;
ii. Diploma in Archives Administration;
iii. Bachelor of Arts in Information Studies;

iv. Master of Arts in Library Studies;
v. Master of Arts in Archival Studies;
vi. Master of Philosophy; and
vii. Doctor of Philosophy.

Although the curriculum has undergone several changes, it has been argued that the education and training of professional librarians in Ghana has not always adequately reflected current national needs and professional challenges. In South Africa, the South African Library Association initially offered a correspondence-based librarianship course modeled on the British system. Graduates received an associateship qualification. In 1952, the programme was taken over by the University of South Africa and incorporated into its distance-learning system. The University of Pretoria established a Department of Librarianship in 1938 and initially offered a diploma programme. Bachelor's and master's degree programmes in librarianship were introduced in 1951. The University of Cape Town followed by establishing a related programme in 1939 (Hood, 1962, as cited in Otike, 2017).

Library schools in South Africa have expanded their programmes to include archives and records management, information technology, publishing, and knowledge management (Ocholla & Bothma, 2007, as cited in Otike, 2017). Institutions such as Moi University, the University of Pretoria, the University of KwaZulu-Natal, and the University of Zululand have contributed to this development. Some schools have shifted from traditional library science to knowledge management and related fields. Advanced qualifications are also available at honours, master's, and doctoral levels. The development of university-based professional LIS education in South Africa reflects the international trend of providing professional training within universities, while paraprofessional training is generally offered by non-university institutions.

LIS Education in Nigeria within the Changing Global Environment

The teaching and learning of LIS in Nigeria have not developed as rapidly as the global information environment requires. This is partly due to constraints affecting the adoption and effective use of emerging technologies in library service delivery, teaching, and learning (Abdulrazaq & Ladi, 2017). Many Nigerian university libraries continue to rely on manual methods for resource acquisition, management, dissemination, teaching, and learning. Diso and Njoku (2007) identified several constraints affecting ICT adoption in Nigerian libraries, including political instability, inadequate infrastructure, illiteracy, insecurity, poor reading culture, and weak policy formulation and implementation.

Okojie (2008) emphasized that ICT integration, curriculum review, and the provision of standard facilities should be priorities in LIS education. Technology has transformed teaching and learning by making curricula more dynamic and learner-centred. Projectors, interactive boards, video conferencing, social media, and digital communication platforms have made teaching more flexible and accessible.

Hargreaves, as cited in Adeogun (2003), described contemporary education systems as "porous and permeable" because technology has reduced the limitations of time and distance. Traditional classroom boundaries have expanded into a digital environment in which students and teachers require new skills to navigate the Internet effectively. Despite these developments, Aina (2007) observed that many Nigerian library schools continued to rely on traditional library courses and teaching methods, even in the era of new technologies. This suggests that Nigerian LIS education requires substantial curriculum reform and improved technological infrastructure.

Major Global Trends in LIS Education

The contemporary information profession has undergone a major paradigm shift. The main forces driving this change include rapid advances in information technology, the evolution of education systems, changing user needs, and the increasing diversity of information users. .Globalization, borderless and cross-border education, e-learning, digital integration, and ICT development are major drivers of change in LIS education worldwide. Smith (2012) observed that twenty-first-century LIS education seeks to increase the diversity of students and faculty members while preparing students for new roles and institutional contexts.

Major trends in contemporary LIS education include:

i. Greater emphasis on the demands of the employment market;
ii. The application of core curricula across LIS schools, with limited local variations;
iii. Increased integration of information technology into LIS programmes;
iv. The introduction of computer and ICT-related courses;
v. The demand for IT-competent graduates who can work in "libraries without walls";
vi. Changes in the names and structures of traditional library schools;
vii. A shift from a multidisciplinary to an interdisciplinary professional orientation;
viii. The introduction of new and revised courses;
ix. The inclusion of data curation, digital preservation, museum informatics, community informatics, media literacy, and youth services;
x. The use of computerized cataloguing, databases, and information technologies;
xi. Increased emphasis on research methods and formal research training; and
xii. Greater use of online, blended, and distance-learning approaches.

Comparison of LIS Education in Developed and Developing Countries

Librarianship has passed through several developmental stages, from the pre-industrial and industrial eras to the post-industrial information era. LIS education is essential to societal development because information contributes to human, economic, political, social, and technological advancement. Institutions responsible for educating and training library and information professionals are therefore important to national development. Libraries cannot function effectively without appropriately trained and dedicated personnel (Gonghchi, 2008). Education and training are consequently fundamental to both the LIS profession and the development of society. The information profession has experienced increasing diversity in employment opportunities over the past several decades. The emergence of the information economy has created new career opportunities beyond traditional libraries. The twenty-first century has introduced new developments and challenges in all areas of human activity, including LIS education.

One of the defining characteristics of contemporary librarianship is the application of ICT. Modern libraries acquire, organize, preserve, and provide access to digitized documents and electronic resources. They also offer services such as Internet access, database searching, online information services, electronic reservations, virtual reference services, photocopying, audiovisual services, online networking, and electronic query services. In several developed countries, libraries and information centres are interconnected through national and

international networks. These networks facilitate resource sharing, digital access, and cooperation among institutions. Digital collections have also increased in importance. A study cited as Mike (2020) reported that digital collections accounted for approximately 60–70 percent of collections in libraries in the United Kingdom, while physical collections accounted for approximately 20–40 percent. This trend reflects the information preferences of many students and other users who belong to the Millennial and Generation Z age groups.

In Pakistan, LIS education has increasingly competed with computer science, information systems, and software development in the provision of IT knowledge and skills (Abdulganiy, 2012). In China, LIS education has expanded to include information management, data-related fields, and technology-based programmes. In the United States, many LIS schools have developed strong links with computer science and information technology programmes. Hu (2013), in a study of fourteen LIS schools in the United States, reported that seven of them offered IT-related degrees or had merged with computer science or information technology programmes. Examples included the merger of the School of Library and Information Science at Indiana University with computer science and informatics programmes, and the adoption of the Master of Science in Information at the University of Michigan.

The University of Illinois at Urbana-Champaign introduced IT-oriented programmes such as data curation, socio-technical data analytics, and digital libraries. Several LIS schools also participate in Web-Based Information Science Education (WISE), which enhances the quality, accessibility, and diversity of online LIS education. In many developing countries, however, information professionals and LIS educators face difficulties keeping pace with developments in LIS education. While libraries in developed countries increasingly use automation and digital technologies for selection, acquisition, processing, preservation, organization, and service delivery, manual methods remain common in some developing countries, including Nigeria. This situation represents not only a challenge but also a threat to institutions that continue to rely entirely on manual operations. The curricula of some library schools do not adequately prepare graduates for the changing demands of the profession. Professional preparation must therefore take global developments into account and provide graduates with the skills required to function effectively in contemporary information environments.

LIS education in Botswana has made considerable progress. The Department of Library and Information Studies was established in 1979 to provide certificate and diploma training for paraprofessional staff. It has since expanded to the doctoral level and gained recognition as an important centre for library and information education in Africa (Priti & Jorosi, 2015). Nevertheless, the department still faces the challenge of integrating fully into emerging global models such as iSchools and Web-Based Information Science Education. Many institutions and information centres in sub-Saharan Africa continue to struggle with ICT infrastructure and access. Akintunde (2004) attributed these challenges to poverty, inadequate infrastructure, shortage of expertise, and weak national information policies. The success of library schools in developed countries is closely associated with the integration of ICT into their curricula and the availability of appropriate teaching and learning facilities.

Russell (2000) noted that library schools in developed countries make extensive use of technologies such as interactive boards, online curriculum materials, electronic assignments, online assessment, and videoconferencing.

Although distance and correspondence education have contributed to the development of LIS education, many LIS schools in developing countries continue to operate with inadequate infrastructure and limited institutional support (Raju, 2004; Chawner, 2015; Kaur, 2016). Variation among LIS programmes may be beneficial when it reflects the unique strengths and expertise of individual institutions. However, excessive variation can create inconsistencies and prevent graduates from acquiring the core knowledge and skills required of LIS professionals.

This is a major concern in Nigerian library schools. Some LIS educators lack adequate ICT knowledge, while others who possess ICT knowledge may not have the practical ability to teach it effectively. Similarly, computer scientists employed in LIS schools may lack sufficient knowledge of librarianship and information science. This can affect the quality of instruction and the competence of graduates.

Challenges of LIS Education and Training in Nigeria

LIS education and training in Nigeria face several challenges. The major challenges include the following:

1. Inadequate Funding: LIS education is part of the Nigerian education sector, which has experienced persistent underfunding. Successive governments have not provided adequate financial support for education, resulting in deteriorating facilities, inadequate learning resources, and declining educational quality (Abubakar, 2015; Abubakar & Harande, 2016; Diso & Njoku, 2007).

2. Inadequate ICT Infrastructure: Many Nigerian library schools lack sufficient computers, reliable Internet access, modern laboratories, software, and other ICT facilities. The teaching methods adopted by some schools are therefore unable to meet contemporary requirements. Inadequate facilities limit the development of students' ICT skills and reduce their preparedness for modern library and information services (Saka, 2015).

3. Transformation of Information Resources: Information resources have changed significantly from traditional print materials to electronic and digital formats. Although print materials remain important, many resources are now produced, stored, accessed, and distributed electronically. Library schools that focus only on traditional collection development and information management methods may fail to prepare graduates for contemporary practice.

4. Inadequate Teaching and Learning Environment: Poor teaching and learning facilities create an unfavourable educational environment. Inadequate classrooms, laboratories, libraries, equipment, and Internet access can hinder the development of competent LIS professionals. Graduates of institutions without appropriate facilities may be ill-prepared to provide modern information services.

5. Weak Policy Implementation: Nigeria has developed educational policies, but the major challenge lies in their effective implementation. As Makinde (2005) observed, implementation often becomes the stage at which many policies fail. There is also insufficient involvement of relevant stakeholders in curriculum development and review.

6. Limited Commitment by Professional Associations: Professional associations have an important role to play in strengthening LIS education. However, their involvement in curriculum development, advocacy, accreditation, professional development, and institutional cooperation has not always been sufficient.

7. Divergent Curricula: Although many library schools meet the NUC Benchmark Minimum Academic Standards, they are often free to add, restructure, or modify courses. This has resulted in variations and disparities in the content of LIS programmes (Alhassan & Ahmed, 2015). Studies by Saka and Ahmed (2015) and Saka and Aliyu (2015) found that Nigerian library schools operate divergent curricula. These differences may arise from variations in institutional philosophy, vision, objectives, course content, and administrative arrangements (Kalu & Obasi, 2014). Excessive divergence can limit the development of a common professional identity and reduce the global competitiveness of graduates.

8. Low ICT Literacy among Faculty Members: Some LIS faculty members do not possess adequate ICT knowledge and practical skills. This affects the quality of training provided to students and limits the ability of LIS schools to introduce emerging technologies into their programmes.

Strategies for Strengthening LIS Education and Training

The following strategies may help strengthen LIS education and training in Nigeria:

1. Library schools and training institutions should respond proactively to developments in technology, the information society, and the employment market. LIS education should prepare graduates for both traditional and emerging information roles.

2. LIS curricula should be regularly reviewed to incorporate emerging areas such as digital libraries, data curation, information architecture, knowledge management, information security, digital preservation, web technologies, research data management, artificial intelligence, and information analytics.

3. LIS educators require regular training and retraining because knowledge and technology are dynamic. Staff development programmes, workshops, conferences, fellowships, and short courses should be provided to improve faculty members' professional, pedagogical, research, and ICT competencies.

4. LIS programmes should include practical and entrepreneurship-oriented courses that can prepare graduates for self-employment. Possible areas include publishing, information brokerage, consultancy, records management, digital content creation, knowledge management, database services, and information technology services.

5. Practical sessions should be clearly defined and adequately supported. LIS education should not be predominantly theoretical. Students should have regular access to computer laboratories, digital library platforms, cataloguing systems, databases, archives, records centres, and other professional environments.

Kamba (2011) observed that many LIS curricula are overly theoretical because of inadequate laboratories and poor Internet access. Improving practical training would help bridge the gap between classroom instruction and professional practice.

6. Universities should provide well-equipped ICT laboratories, reliable Internet connectivity, relevant software, digital library platforms, and modern teaching aids. Institutions without adequate laboratories should be supported to establish and maintain them.

7. LIS schools should increase cooperation and resource sharing with libraries, information centres, archives, professional associations, technology companies, and other external organizations. Such collaboration could provide students and staff with access to equipment, expertise, internships, research opportunities, and professional networks.

8. Regulatory bodies and professional associations should ensure that new LIS programmes meet established standards before they are approved. Accreditation should be conducted regularly and should emphasize curriculum relevance, faculty competence,

infrastructure, practical training, research capacity, and graduate employability.

9. Professional associations should play a more active role in curriculum review, policy advocacy, continuing professional development, accreditation, research collaboration, and the promotion of ethical and professional standards.

10. LIS schools should establish partnerships with institutions in Nigeria and other countries. These partnerships could support staff and student exchange, joint teaching, collaborative research, shared online courses, and access to international professional networks.

Conclusion

LIS education and training in Nigeria have expanded significantly since the establishment of the first university-based programme in 1959. However, the rapid development of ICTs, globalization, digitization, changing user expectations, and the emergence of new information-related careers require further transformation.

The experience of LIS schools in developed countries demonstrates the importance of integrating ICT, online and blended learning, interdisciplinary collaboration, digital information management, data-related competencies, research, and practical training into LIS education. Although some developing countries have made progress, many continue to face challenges related to inadequate funding, poor infrastructure, weak policy implementation, limited ICT expertise, divergent curricula, and insufficient professional collaboration.

1. LIS educators should receive regular training and retraining to improve their ICT, pedagogical, research, and professional competencies.
2. Universities and relevant government agencies should provide adequate funding for LIS education, including ICT laboratories, library resources, Internet

Nigerian LIS schools should therefore be repositioned to provide education and training that reflect contemporary professional realities. Existing ICT laboratories should be adequately equipped, while institutions without laboratories should establish them and provide trained personnel to manage them. Adequate funding should be provided for teaching facilities, learning resources, research, Internet access, and staff development.

Universities offering LIS programmes should also ensure that their human, material, financial, and technological resources are sufficient to meet modern educational and professional requirements. As observed by Karisiddappa (2004), the contemporary information and knowledge environment creates an urgent need to educate and train library and information personnel for sustainable professional competence.

Recommendations

Based on the discussion, the following recommendations are made:

1. Library schools and LIS training institutions should regularly review their programmes to reflect technological developments, changing user needs, and global professional trends.
2.
3. LIS curricula should incorporate emerging areas such as digital libraries, information technology, data management, knowledge management, digital preservation, information security, artificial intelligence, and information analytics.
   connectivity, software, teaching equipment, and research support.
3. LIS programmes should provide students with more practical training through laboratory work, fieldwork, internships, professional visits, and collaboration with libraries, archives, records centres, and information technology organizations.

4. Entrepreneurship and self-reliance courses should be introduced to prepare LIS graduates for employment and self-employment in areas such as publishing, information brokerage, consultancy, records management, and digital content services.
5. The NUC and professional associations should develop stronger mechanisms for ensuring uniformity in core LIS competencies while allowing institutions to maintain relevant areas of specialization.
6. Professional associations should become more actively involved in curriculum development, accreditation, advocacy, continuing education, research collaboration, and professional development.
7. LIS schools should establish stronger institutional, national, and international partnerships to promote resource sharing, staff exchange, joint research, and online learning.
8. The organizational placement and nomenclature of LIS departments should be reviewed to promote clarity, professional identity, administrative support, and conformity with established academic standards.

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