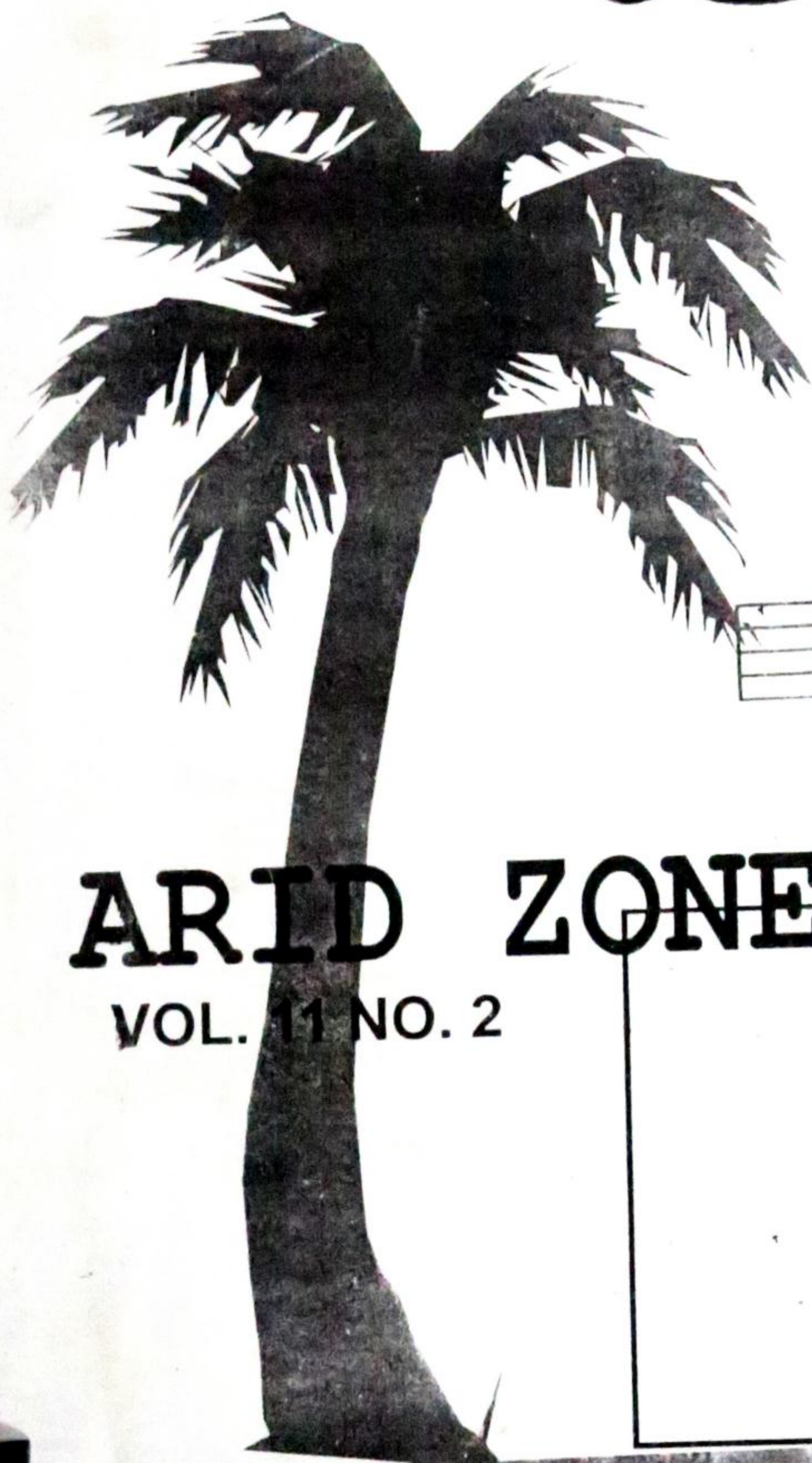




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THE FACTORS INFLUENCING THE CHOICE OF LIBRARY STUDIES AS A COURSE OF STUDY

By

Dr. W. Fola Adio¹ and M. L. Akanbi²

Abstract

Choosing a course of study at higher institutions is complex. How is the choice influenced? The study aimed at finding out the factors influencing the choice of library studies as a course of study by undergraduates of sandwich programme at Kwara State College of Education Centre of University of Ado-Ekiti. A panel survey of the entire library studies undergraduates was carried out. The data were collected by Questionnaire administration technique and analysed by using percentages, computing weighted responses and t-test. The choice was influenced by many factors. 72.7% decided to make the choice after their graduation from College of Education. Several reasons accounted positively for the choice. However, with varying degree of influence, self-desire, parents, other relations and others also exerted positive influence on the choice of the undergraduates. There is no significant difference between gender satisfactions among the students in their choice. The respondents preferred mostly to practice in Academic library to being a teacher.

INTRODUCTION

Choosing a course of study at tertiary institutions, universities in particular for one who is not aware of existing job opportunities and their entry requirements is complex. For a person to have fulfilled life, the type of occupation one goes into is very important. In most cases the occupation or career that one engages in is dependent on one's choice of course of study at higher institution. Sometimes one chooses a course of study through chance, ignorance, advice from parents, relatives or inadequate or lack of counsel.

University of Ado-Ekiti, in Ekiti State of Nigeria, had affiliated centres, one of which is Kwara State College of Education, Ilorin, Nigeria. In order to fulfill aspiration of many prospective candidates for admission, a variety of courses were on their programme of studies among which is Library Studies which was later changed to Library and Information Science. University of Ado-Ekiti offered the courses on sandwich through the affiliated centres during long vacations. This gave candidates ample opportunities to apply for courses of their choice which may lead to their life career.

Statement of Problem

There has been a growing concern in the way people enter and voluntarily exit from the world of work. This can be attributed to lack of career satisfaction and inappropriate career choice. This stemmed from the choice of courses of study at higher institutions.

Nigeria is growing fast in developing curriculum at her education institutions. The number of courses available for studies had increased greatly. With inadequate or lack of knowledge about self, courses and job options, students face a great deal of problems in the choice of courses that would lead them to their future career. As a result when these individuals gain admission into higher institutions, they end up with study courses other than which they applied for. What factors influenced the choice of library studies as a course

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study by the sandwich students of University of Ado-Ekiti, Kwara State College of Education, Ilorin, Centre?

Objective of the Study

This study aimed at finding out the factors that influence the students in the choice of library studies as a course of studies.

Scope of the study:

The study investigated the choice of library studies as a programme of study at undergraduate level and covered the entire population of undergraduates that offered Library Studies on Sandwich programme at Kwara State College of Education, Ilorin, in affiliation to University of Ado-Ekiti, Ado-Ekiti, Ekiti State, Nigeria between 1998 and 2010 contact sessions.

Significance of the Study:

Apart from the report of the study contributing to the literature on the subject, the findings highlight the factors surrounding the choice of the course at undergraduate level. This is capable of stimulating and guiding the choice of library studies among other prospective candidates and developing interest in librarianship as a career in life.

Literature Review

Agumanu (1991) identified factors that influenced the students in Imo State University Library School, Owerri, Nigeria to select a library career. He revealed that choice of library studies was not influenced by scholarships in the field, for most students were paying through parental assistance. Also, library studies did not seem to be a typical first choice for the students. 80% initially chose other courses but got into library school because of their unsuccessful attempts to gain admission in their first choice. Job opportunity and love of reading were noted among their reasons for choice of library studies while librarians in their families influenced their choice. Some even perceived degree in library studies as a basic qualification that will facilitate their going into business.

Moremi (1984) aimed to identify major factors that should have the greatest emphasis when advising youths on choice of career and posited that society has the greatest influence on the choice of career. He conclusively stressed the need for school guidance counselor in the choice of career.

Domiye & Frank (2000) discussed the need for creating career awareness among secondary school students through career fair stated and that career selection is a critical issue for secondary school students who might not be aware of the existing occupation in the labour market. They concluded that it is important that career information be made available to students through career fairs.

Ordu (2005) posited that there is no significant difference between males and females career choice of students of Delta University Abraka, Nigeria and there is no significant difference between the students of different age in their choice of career. Ordu (2001) also retreated that lack of job satisfaction leads to poor productivity which hampers the growth of nation.

Nzotta (1982) revealed that 1978 postgraduate students of University of Ibadan, Nigeria chose librarianship for reasons similar to those found in literature. However, they made up their minds after obtaining the first degree. They discussed their choice with practicing librarians and were encouraged by most other people with whom they came in contact to take up the career. He stated that there was no adequate publicity to make the potential recruits aware of profession and recommended the efforts should be intensified towards publicizing librarianship as a profession by using mass media.

Kagu (1997) stated that vocational counseling in Nigerian school system was yet to make desired impact because students expressed apparent ignorance about choice of subjects and possible careers. According to Denga (1982), gone are the days when education was regarded as an insurance policy for any type of job and notion that a graduate was generally qualified for a variety of jobs that were available.

Carew (1997) and Oladele (1997) stated that career implies a chosen pursuit in life or a sequence of positions, jobs and occupations a person engages in during his working life or throughout his life time. Further, Carew (1997) posited that providing career information to students is necessary now-a-days because of changing nature of jobs and their requirements. He therefore, recommended the under listed kind of things or behaviours that are required by students who wish to choose careers in the future or pursue further studies.

- Appreciating work as a valued and enduring social institution.
- Accepting the responsibility for one's career planning.
- Awareness of the consequences of decisions and maturity to accept them.
- Capacity or ability to deal selectively with the environment by either modifying or adopting it.
- Knowing about educational and occupational resources.
- Understanding and appreciating the data about oneself and the data for one's self assessment.
- Understanding the inter-relatedness of occupations and the occupations as a major determinant of one's life style.

Ipaye (1978) stated that most adolescents begin to think about their career plans early in adolescence and progressively became more realistic as the time is moving into the world of work get closer. Onayase and Onayase (2005) investigated the relationship between the Relationship between personality types and career choice of secondary school students in Nigeria. The results showed that there were significant relationships between the artistic, social enterprising and investigative personality types on one hand and career choice on the other. However, no significant relationship existed between the realistic and conventional personality types and career choice.

The literature review above on the subject of study is not exhaustive. If one may go by the view of expressed by the various scholars, one would realize that the issue of choice of course of students at higher institutions poses research problems.

Methodology:

Research Questions

1. What factors influence the sandwich students of University of Ado-Ekiti, Kwara State of Education, Ilorin centre in the choice of library studies as a course of study?
2. What are the relative influences of the factors identified in "1" above?

Research Hypothesis

H₀: There is no significant difference in the gender perception of choice of library studies as a course of study.

Research Design: The study is a panel, survey approach and Ex-post research design is adopted. Ex-post research is a systematic empirical study in which the researcher did not in any way interfere with the subjects or and variable of the study.

Population and Sample: The population consisted of all library science students of the affiliated centre. In view of the small population, all the undergraduates offering the course from 1978 – 2010 contact sessions were pooled for study. This totaled one hundred and fifty four (154).

Data Collection Technique

Questionnaire technique was used in collecting the data using Questionnaire as tool. The tool was in two main sections. Section A contained Demographic variables with close end questions while section B was made of questions indicative of factors of influence on the choice of course of studies mainly with close end questions and only 2 open end questions. The questionnaire was pretested on one-quarter of the pioneering students for reliability. For validity, it was given to 2 experts in guidance and counseling and 2 in librarianship. Based

the comments of the experts, some of the items in the instrument were restructured before pretesting for reliability.

The questionnaires were personally administered to the students and retrieved on the spot. This facilitated the return of the questionnaires, eliminated the problem of un-return and made response rate 100%.

Data Analysis Techniques

The responses were tallied as raw scores which were converted into frequencies. The analysis employed percentages, Weighted Responses Concept and t-test statistics. The data was presented in tabular form for clarity and easy interpretation. Percentage was to give an overview of the data at a glance, t-test was employed to test the hypothesis at degree of freedom 152 and at 0.05 level of significance. The weighted response was adopted to arrive at the consensus opinion of the respondents on the relative effect of the factors under consideration. The qualitative data was converted to quantitative data on a 3 point Likert Scale of rating from -1 to +1 for the reasons of choice and 5 point scale of rating 1 – 5 for the influence of individuals on the choice.

Findings and Discussions

Demographic variables of the Respondents: The respondent were students of Kwara State College of Education and from various States of Nigeria which include Kogi, Ekiti, Ogun, Kwara, Oyo, Delta, Ogun, Edo and Niger. Kwara State indigenes topped the list with 34% following by Kogi with 22% and Oyo 18%. Both sexes sought library studies as a course of study with slight difference in their proportion which is approximately 4:5. 65.9% were married with 1 – 4 children each. The age ranged between 20 – 50 years with 75.6% between 20 – 40. 95.4% of the respondents had some working experiences, out of which 7.7% was in teaching while 9.4% in library work. The working experience in library spans between 1 – 15 with bimodes of 6 – 10 years and 11 – 15 years. 64.9% of the respondents are holders of Nigerian Certificate in Education, 9.1% with grade II Teachers Certificate and 24% with diploma in library science.

Period of decision-making on the choice of course.

Table 1: Distribution of Respondents by Period of decision-making

Period of decision making	1 st Thought		Final Decision	
	Freq	100%	Freq	100%
Before Secondary School	4	2.6	0	0
During Secondary School	10	6.5	12	7.8
Working after Secondary School	26	16.9	4	2.6
While on College of Education	26	13	26	16.9
After Graduation from COED	94	61	112	72.7
TOTAL	154	100	154	100

Source : Author's field work, 2010

The above table indicates the period in life during which the students first thought of and made final decision on choice of a course in librarianship. Those who revealed that their first thought and final decision to take up a career in librarianship after their post secondary education indicated that their decision was sequel to library use at their various institutions. However, this was in contrary to the findings of American studies that many students decided on librarianship before completing college and to the late decision among postgraduates in Library Studies of University of Ibadan, Nigeria.

Reasons for the Choice

Table 2: DISTRIBUTION OF PERCEIVED REASONS FOR THE CHOICE

	REASONS	PERCEIVED DEGREE OF INFLUENCE						TW	AWR	Ranking
		HIGH		UNDECIDED		LOW				
		Freq	W	Freq	W	Freq	W			
1.	Liking for books & reading	128	+128	03	0	23	- 23	+105	+0.48	10
2.	Liking for meeting people	135	+135	7	0	12	- 12	+123	+0.8	2
3.	Liking for library environment	134	+134	3	0	17	- 17	+117	+0.76	4
4.	Previous working experience in library job	102	+102	24	0	28	- 28	+74	+0.48	10
5.	Escape from teaching	115	+115	4	0	16	- 16	+99	+0.64	8
6.	Escape from other kind of occupation	105	+105	21	0	28	- 28	+77	+0.5	9
7.	Intellectual stimulation	139	+139	2	0	13	- 13	+126	+0.81	1
8.	Personal Qualification	126	+126	16	0	12	- 12	+114	+0.74	5
9.	Good salary and promotion prospect in library	125	+125	12	0	17	- 17	+108	+0.70	7
10.	Opportunity to continue formal education	134	+134	6	0	14	- 14	+120	+0.78	3
11.	Financial aid/scholarship offered	102	+102	15	0	37	- 37	+65	+0.42	12
12.	Attractive personality of librarians	126	+126	14	0	12	- 12	+114	+0.74	5
13.	Need of job performance	87	+87	32	0	35	- 35	+52	+0.34	13

Source: Author's field work, 2010

From table 2, all the reasons put forward have positive AWRs ranging from +0.34 - +0.81 indicating that all the reasons have positive effect on the respondents in the choice of library studies as a course of study. The perceived reasons 7, 2, 10, 3, 8, 12 and 9 as having high Degree of influence on their choice, reasons 5, 6, 4, 1 with moderate degree of influence and reasons 3, 9 and 12 i.e library environment, Good Salary and promotion prospect in library and attractive personality of librarians are library oriented reasons and considered having high degree of positive influence on the choice of library studies as a course of study. However, the respondents preferred a single Bachelor Degree in Library Studies (BLS) to a combined Bachelor Degree in Education as B.Ed (Library Studies). The perceived reasons such as intellectual stimulation, liking for books and people compared favourably with

findings of similar studies of American Committee on recruiting and personnel (1952) and Nzotta (1983).

Influences on the Choice:

Apart from the reasons for choosing library studies as a course of study, there are other factors which are individuals also had influences on the choice. The individuals served as either motivators or otherwise on the decisions made by the respondents on their course of choice. The motivators reinforced the students' decision to choose library studies as a course of study. The consensus opinion of the respondents revealed that individuals had the influences on them in their choice of course. Such groups of individuals in descending order of the extent of their influences as deduced by their Average Weighted Responses (AWRs), are as follows to very great extent are self-desire (AWR = + 4.4); spouse (AWR = + 3.9), librarians; parents, other relations and co-workers (each with AWR = + 3.8). To fair extent are Library School undergraduates (AWR = + 2.4); other University students, Library School Lecturers and other University lecturers with AWRs = + 2.2 each.

This study further revealed that other individuals might not exert directly positive influence on the respondents' choice of course but showed positive attitude towards the choice. AWRs range between +4.6 - +3.1 with a mean of +4.2. The self-desire to choose the library studies as a course of study became dampened by the sudden change of the course end result from the anticipated award of Bachelor Degree of Library Studies (BLS) to a Bachelor Degree of Education with Library Science Hons. (B.Ed (Library Science)). This gave rise to progressive decline in student's enrolments for the course from 1998 to 2010 from 48 to 2. This implied that anticipated degree of award and a subsequent career are capable of influencing choice of the course. At the take-off of the programme, the respondents anticipated having a Degree of Bachelor in Library Science (BLS) which ought to qualify them for a full fledged librarians and not a Bachelor Degree in Education with Library Science option which would make them a teacher and limit their horizon in librarianship as a career. Having realized the change, 95.8% of the respondents felt disappointed and their self-desire became thwarted.

Publicity:

The respondents revealed that publicity on the library studies as a course in the university and which is capable of leading to a career in librarianship also aroused their interest in choosing it as a course of study. The publicity was effected by certain media which include publications on librarianship as a career. Advertisement of job vacancies in libraries, information on librarianship during career talk and Joint Admissions and Matriculation Board University Matriculation Examination Brochure. Advertisements of job vacancies in libraries exerted highest influence followed by the Examination Brochure.

Preference:

65% of the respondents indicated their preference to practice in Academic Library, 30% opted for library schools to lecture. Both group decided so, so as to live and work in academic environment. 49% of those that favoured working in academic library preferred university libraries to Polytechnic and College of Education Libraries. They premised their choice on the fact that in as much as they like working in an academic, they believed that the conditions of service in university libraries is the best of the three groups of academic library.

Perception of Choice:

One's perception of course, no doubt affects one's choice and the respondents greatly agreed in this.

Result of t-test on gender perception of choice:

There is no significant difference between male and female students perception of the choice of library studies as a course of study.

Table 3: Perception of gender perception of the choice of library course

Sex	N	X	SD	F	t-calculated	t-critical	P
Male	72	52.4	12.34	152	-16.52	1.85	0.05
Female	82	61.8	4.62				

Source : Author's field work, 2010

Observed female mean of 61.8 is greater than that of male of 52.4 indicates that female respondent's clearer perception of their choice of library studies as a course of study than their male counterparts. However, the null hypothesis is accepted $t_{\text{calculated}} = -16.52$ being greater than $t_{\text{table}} = 1.85$ at df 152, at 5% significance level. It is therefore inferred that despite the higher value of female mean, there is no significant difference between male and female students perception of the choice of library studies as a course of study.

Conclusion

The study revealed that the choice of library studies as a course of study by the students was influenced by a number of factors. The factors are not of equal weight in the influence. Some of the influences are personal, some are library or the professional, some are economic and some are humanitarian or social oriented. All these influences are not surprising in view of that no one is an Island entire of himself. Individuals live within and are bound to be influenced by others in their choice. The influence of personal factors on the choice of course would not be over-emphasised. This is because personal interest and ability for a course are capable to promote satisfaction on a course, success in the course and eventual retention of a career in that course of study.

There is no doubt that the choice of a course of study at higher institutions is a major problem among prospective candidates for admission into the higher institutions. This is because of lack of necessary information required to guide them in their choice of a desired course. Parents, relatives, environment, friends and so on have influence on the choice of course among the youth. Some parents influence the youths into choosing specific career to keep the family line and some became of the name they will gain from such occupations. Librarianship is not an exception to this. Individuals should desist from the practice. Rather awareness on the available courses in the higher institution should be created early in the life of the youth to sensitize the youths on the course. This can be through career fairs for the Nigerian Secondary School Students to make them aware of the existence of different job opportunities that can emanate from the courses of study in the labour market. Finally, many youths, the would-be undergraduates in Nigeria are still ignorant of what Library studies is and job opportunities that may arise from the course or its relevance to their intended careers. Efforts should be geared towards creating awareness on the youth. This is to stimulate the youths along the desired course, reduce the frustrations and problems antecedent to wrong choice of course of study among the youths.

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