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TRANSFORMING THE CURRICULUM FOR NEW ERA LIBRARIANS IN TERTIARY INSTITUTIONS: A STUDY OF FEDERAL UNIVERSITY OF TECHNOLOGY MINNA, NIGERIA

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Abstract

This study investigated the transformation of curriculum for new era librarians in the Department of Library and Information Science, Federal University of Technology Minna, Nigeria. The motivation for the study is to ascertain whether library schools possess resources and receive employers' feedback of graduates. The overall objective is to transform (with little adjustment/update) the existing program/ curriculum leading to new (LIS) program with 50:50 to 60:40 (ICT: library science components). Documentary research design was employed with the use of student handbook, a file containing employers' rating of Library and Information Technology (LIT) graduates; National Universities Commission (NUC) 2018 Benchmark Minimum Academic standards (BMAS), and approved academic brief (Bachelor of Technology Library and Information Science, 2021). Documentary analysis was carried out. Descriptive statistical tools (frequency counts and percentages) were used to analyze the data. Tables (tabulation) were used to contain data and information. Documents that does not contain data were supported by narration thus both qualitative and quantitative data were used to analyze the results of the study. The major findings reveal high level of performance on the part of LIT graduates and that the existing and approved curriculum contain ICT components. The conclusion is that the approved curriculum will equip the 21st century librarians with required ICT skills and competences that would enable them to compete with their counterparts in other parts of the world and enable the graduates to work in organizations other than libraries and information centers. It was recommended that: modern ICT facilities and current textbooks and references books be acquired.

Key words: Curriculum transformation- Emerging trends- Library and Information Science Education –Nigeria- Undergraduate program

INTRODUCTION

Library can be perceived as the collection of books, non-book and literary materials kept for consultation. It can also be perceived as building containing collection of books and other learning resource organized and kept for use. Library is usually established with set objectives which according to Abubakar and Batagarawa (2021) are to: -

- i. Identify, select and acquire information material relevant to the needs of its clientele.
- ii. Determine the information need of users through the studies of its immediate community and environmental scanning.
- iii. Properly organize materials using the existing information organization tools for easy access.
- iv. Preserve for future generation all information materials stored in it.

The Importance of library cannot be underrated as its roles are link to knowledge acquisition dissemination and use; provision of services to users and enhancement of human relationship as well as library cooperation and resource sharing among libraries thus saving libraries from the problem of information scarcity (Saka, Aliero and Ibrahim, 2022)

The need for relevant curriculum arises from the fact that it would at the end produce graduates that can withstand the complexities, and complete in the 21st century labor market (self-employment). This very important especially that in Nigeria employment into governmental into private organization has become more difficult to come-by. Hence tertiary institution in Nigeria now offer entrepreneurship as one of the General Studies (GST) courses and some tertiary institutions offer it as a degree course of study.

The B. Tech Library and Information Technology program began in 2001/2002 session in the then School of Science and Science Education (SSSE), Federal University of Technology, Minna, Nigeria. The objective of the program is to develop manpower in Library and Information Technology, in order to meet the demands of managing modern information institutions in the digital age. In 2001, the Department of Library and Information Technology was established as an addition to the existing Departments in the School of Science and Science Education (SSSE). The Department had the National Universities Commissions Pre-Accreditation Resource Verification visit in 2002. Based on the visit by the NUC, the Department of Library and Information Technology emerged and started running her undergraduate program in full force.

The undergraduate program Library and Information Technology had NUC Interim accreditation in 2006 and in 2008 had full accreditation. For the Department to meet up with the trends of 21st century, in 2009 the Department was relocated from SSSE to School of Information and Communication Technology (SICT). To ensure hitch-free accreditation, the Department was reverted to School of Science and Technology Education (SSTE) in 2014 where it had another NUC full accreditation status. The National Universities Commission Benchmark Minimum Academic Standard (2018) stipulates that undergraduate curriculum in Nigerian Universities should have the minimum number of 160 credit units and a maximum of 180 credit units (with respect to core and electives courses, and Students Industrial Work Experience Scheme-SIWES) as part of graduation requirements (NUC, 2018). For prospective LIT professionals to fit into modern world, the Department was finally relocated to School of Information and Communication Technology (SICT) in the last quarter of year 2015. With the proposed undergraduate program, the NUC mandated that the name of the department and program be changed to library and information science under School of Science and Technology Education (SSTE), then the NUC (2018) BMAS be used as working document for the new/ revise curriculum for 3 year B.Tech Library and Information Science Program. The term curriculum is used to denote the out planned for specific period of time depending on program and course of study such as certificate, diploma, higher diploma, degree and higher degree respectively.

ORGANOGRAM / ORGANIZATIONAL STRUCTURE OF THE DEPARTMENT OF LIBRARY AND INFORMATION SCIENCE, FEDERAL UNIVERSITY OF TECHNOLOGY MINNA, NIGERIA

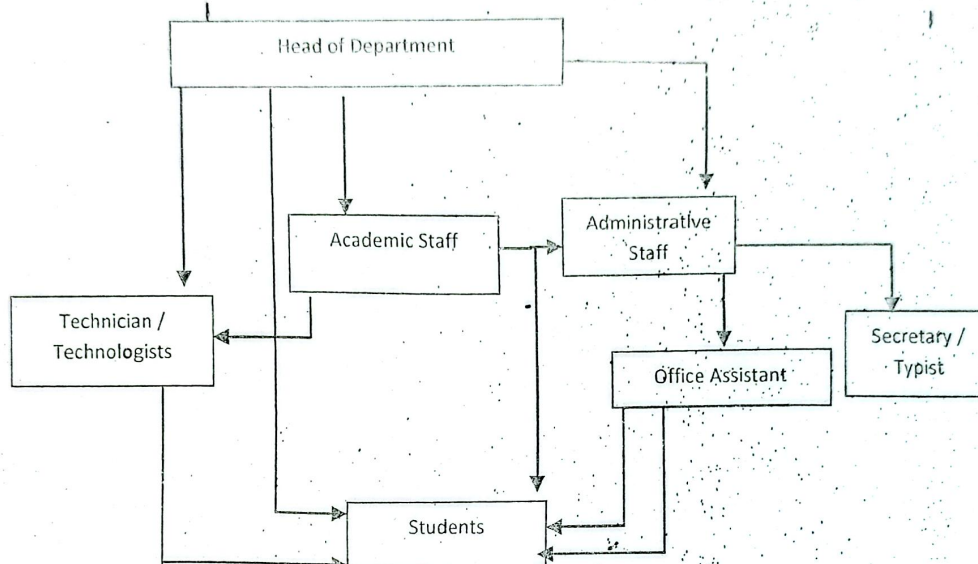


Figure 1. Organogram/Organizational Structure

Sources: Federal University Technology Minna (2019), NUC accreditation document 2019

The nature of organizational structure showed that the academic and administrative head of the department is at the apex and below him/her are the technologists, academic and administrative staff and down to students, office assistant and secretary/typist. In this contemporary age, prominence is accorded to practicals in the ICT laboratory.

1.1 STATEMENT OF THE PROBLEM

Library schools are charged with the responsibility of training the prospective LIS professionals, the required skills and competencies to meet the need of 21st century librarianship and labor market. This can only be possible if the curriculum is design and review to contain the aspects of skills and competencies which are embedded in the ICT components. The curriculum of any discipline is subjected to timely and regular review whereby restructuring, modification, addition, deleting and changes are made, more so that Makoa and Mekhubu (2022) opined that there are additional new and important topics in the new curriculum. Thus Isah, Salman & Adekeye (2021) posits that LIS students and professionals are to be equipped with skills and competencies to enable them withstand the challenges of the 21st century labor market

LIS education in Nigeria started in 1959 with the establishment of first library school at the then university college, Ibadan, Nigeria and now known as department of Library, Archival and Information studies (LARIS) under faculty of education, university of Ibadan Nigeria. According to Abubakar and Maidabino (2022), "at present, there are 37 LIS schools in Nigerian Universities (i.e Federal, State and private" and that "some colleges are now offering LIS program at various levels". (Abubakar and Maidabino, 2022)

One begins to wonder whether undergraduate curriculum of any library school contains ingredients such as resources, employers' feedback on the graduates' performance and attitude. The study seeks to find out the employers' rating of graduates of the existing program as well as the components of the existing and approved undergraduate programs and the resources needed to support the running of the approved program.

1.2 AIM AND OBJECTIVES OF THE STUDY

The aim of this study is to determine the transformation of the existing and approved undergraduate program in LIT/ LIS and the curriculum requirements for producing prospective 21st century librarians in Federal

University of Technology, Minna, Nigeria. The specific objectives of the study are to: -

1. identify the employers' rating of Library and Information Technology graduates between 2007 and 2019;
2. assess the curriculum components of the existing and approved undergraduate program;
3. identify the types of resources available to support the implementation of the approved undergraduate Library and Information Science program.

The structure of this paper is in the following parts:

- Literature review
- Research methodology
- Result and discussion
- Conclusion and recommendations
- Acknowledgement

2. LITERATURE REVIEW

Ibraheem and Aduku (2018) conducted a study to assess the undergraduate degree programs in Library and Information Science schools in Northern States of Nigeria. Survey method was used and the population of the study consists of all library and information science schools recognized by National Universities Commission (NUC). Simple random sampling method was used to select university-based library schools. Questionnaire and documentary sources were the instruments used in data collection while descriptive statistics was used in data analysis and interpretation. Results showed the need for continue reviewing of the curriculum to be in line with the contemporary age, while emphasis is laid on the current information technology courses.

Okon, Asukwo and Mbu (2019) examined the restructuring and reviewing of LIS Schools curriculum in Nigeria with special emphasis on ICT components in relation to job market. The study employed descriptive survey using old and new generation library schools in south-south Nigeria. Both online and the printed copies of brochure were used to identify ICT courses offered. The study discovered that many library schools do not offer ICT courses; have ICT laboratories and thus the curriculum could not prepare graduates for job market. It further discovered inadequacies in funding, qualified educators in ICT competency.

In a study to assess the entrepreneurship opportunities and preferences among LIS graduates in university libraries in North Central geo-political Zone of Nigeria, Amidu, Mohammed and Ayodele (2019) conducted a study to determine "entrepreneurship opportunities and preferences among library and information science graduates in university libraries in North Central Nigeria". Survey research design was used with the population LIS graduates in selected university libraries in the geo-political zone. Closed-ended questionnaire was used to collect data. Descriptive statistics was used to analyze data. Results showed that lecturing top the list in the area and type of available and preferred entrepreneurial opportunities in university libraries. LIS graduates were satisfied with training received in library administration, cataloging and information as well as resource management.

On the issue of LIS curriculum, Isah, Salman and Adekeye (2021) Investigated the perception of LIS educators on the integration of technology – driven curriculum in five library schools in Kwara State, Nigeria. Survey research design was adopted and the target population of 50 LIS educators in the five library schools with the state. However, 35 LIS educators was selected due to ongoing strike at the time of this study. Questionnaire and interview schedule were the data collection instruments used for the study. The study reveals that Internet and website design, database management system, online information retrieval, library information and infopreneurship were the major areas of ICT information in the curriculum. It was discovered that integration of technology-driven curriculum is suitable for professional development, while the available ICT facilities are: slides/power point presentation, printers, laptops, public address system/ mini-microphones and overhead/ LCD multimedia projected. The emerging trends include: cloud computing, big data analytics, artificial intelligence, and Virtual reality. Challenges discovered are: underfunding, theory-oriented LIS curriculum, obsolete ICT equipment and facilities and ill-equipped ICT laboratory.

Tella, Uwaifo, Abduldayan, and Ukwoma (2022) investigated library education and training in Nigeria (1996-2022) with a view to developing a framework for skills needed by LIS graduates to be able to function and relevant in the fourth industrial revolution. Documentary analysis and

of course qualitative approach was used. Findings reveal adequate curriculum contents in part but poor perception by students since they cannot apply the acquired skills in their place of work. For LIS graduates to be functional and relevant in terms of skills, they need: critical thinking, complex problem –solving, coordinating with others, people management, service orientation, judgment and decision – making, etc.

Mole and Dim (2022) wrote a position paper on the need for the training of library and information professionals for self-employment opportunities in Library and Information Science field. In Nigeria, federal government have established entrepreneurship centers, while some tertiary institutions offer full programme in entrepreneurship. The LIS curriculum in Nigerian library schools have restructure their curriculum to integrate entrepreneurship for self-reliance such that graduates will be graduating with mindset of being job creators. The rational for LIS professionals to be self-employed is due to unemployment rate and decline in Nigeria economy and scanty employment opportunities. Areas of self-employment for librarians include: information brokerage, information consultancy, indexing and abstracting, cataloging and classification of information resources among others. However, continues self-development and keeping up-to-date are the two complementary role expected from librarians.

4. RESULTS AND CONCLUSION

The results from the documentary analysis are presented in Tables 1, 2 and 3 reflecting the specific objectives of the study

TABLE 1: EMPLOYERS' RATING OF EXISTING LIBRARY AND INFORMATION TECHNOLOGY GRADUATES (2007-2019)

S/N	Organization (Employer)	Controlling/Regulatory Body	Nature of job	Rating of Graduates' performance
1.	Central Bank of Nigeria Headquarters Abuja	Central Bank of Nigeria (CBN) (Federal Ministry of Finance)	Library service	High
2.	National Examinations Council (NECO)	Federal Ministry of Education	Admin/ library service	High
3.	Prison, Immigration, Civil Defense,	Federal Ministry of Interior	Security service	High
4.	Military (Air force, Navy, Army)	Federal Ministry of Defense	Security service	High

3. RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

Documentary research design was used for the study and it involves document analysis which are official publications of the university and department thus, include: student handbook of 2018/2019 and 2021 session; a file containing employers' rating of graduates of the existing program (2007-2019), undergraduate revised academic brief (curriculum) of 2019 and NUC completed application form for the establishment of the approved Library and Information Science undergraduate program and available teaching facilities for the approved undergraduate program.

Student handbook also contains list of existing academic and non-academic staff, their qualifications, course titles/structure and synopsis as well as core and electives courses, etc. File containing list of various organizations where LIT graduates are currently serving and employers' rating. The NUC completed form for the proposed program containing number of resources with 10 year projection; available relevant information resources and facilities in university library. The last document is a departmental document containing available teaching facilities in library school. All the above listed/enumerated documents were used for the study. Statistical methods used in the study was the simple tabulations; and use of frequency and percentages as the case of staff in library school.

5.	National Information Technology Development Agency (NITDA)	Federal Ministry for Communications and Digital Economy	ICT/ Library Service	High
6.	Universities, Polytechnics, Colleges of Education, Monotechnics	State/Federal Ministry of Education, NUC, NBTE & NCCE	Admin/Academic Services	High

Source: Employers' rating of LIT graduates (2007-2019).

KEY

NBTE: National Board for Technical Education

NCCE: National Commission for Colleges of Education

The existing LIT and approved LIS curriculum and program prepare students to work in libraries, information centers and virtually in all establishments with information centers being attached to them. Some of the graduate's work as librarians, administrators and security personnel and according to Musa (2021), the employees (institutions and companies) are expected to appraise the graduates. This is as a result of the rich curriculum covering library, ICT and administrative components and to Isah, Salman and Adekeye (2021), each library school is responsible for the inclusion of both quantitative and qualitative ICT components in the curriculum.

TABLE 2: COMPONENTS OF UNDERGRADUATE CURRICULUM

a. Existing Library and Information Technology Curriculum

Mode of Entry	UTME	200 Direct Entry	300 Direct Entry
University General Courses	13	13	13
School/Faculty Course ICT /Education	46	35	31
Department Course/ Elective Course	120	110	99
SIWES	2	2	2
Total	181	160	145

Source: - FUT Minna 2018/2019 undergraduate student handbook (LIT)

The existing LIT curriculum is in the ratio of 50:50 i.e. 50% Library Science and 50% ICT components

TABLE 2B APPROVED LIBRARY AND INFORMATION SCIENCE CURRICULUM

Mode of Entry	UTME	200 Direct Entry	300 Direct Entry
Department Core Courses	111	107	70
ICT Core Courses	39	34	23
General Studies/Education courses	13	11	9
Basic Science	12	2	-
Elective Course	10	7	5
SIWES	2	2	2
Total	187	163	109

Sources: FUT Minna 2018/2019 Undergraduate Student Handbook LIT

FUT Minna (2019). NUC Accreditation Self - Study Form Section B

b : Revised Academic Brief B.Tech Library and Information Science Curriculum February, 2021.

b. FUT Minna 2021 Undergraduate Student Handbook LIS Department

Holders of HND in library and information science are to be admitted to the B.Tech LIT program through 300 level and the total credit units for graduation is 109 which may be attributed to the fact that majority of departmental core and elective courses were offered at HND level. It is also possible that HND candidates admitted may be required to take Basic science and add more elective courses

from related department/courses and/or unrestricted elective courses from other departments within the university to meet the minimum graduation requirement as stipulated in the NUC/BMAS 2018 edition.

UTME Candidates are holders of "O" Level certificates/qualifications (WAEC, SSCE, or equivalents) are subjected to entrance examination which is normally conducted by Joint Admission and Matriculation Board (JAMB) and are required to pursue 5-year undergraduate program. **Direct Entry (DE)** candidates to 200 Level are holders of "A" Level qualifications (National Diploma, Nigeria Certificate in Education and/or Interim Joint Matriculation Board (IJMB) qualifications are to pursue 3 or 4-year undergraduate program; while DE admission through 300 level, candidates are holders of Higher National Diploma (HND) qualification and are required to pursue 2 or 3-year undergraduate program in conventional and specialized universities respectively. Regardless of the mode of admission into undergraduate program, "O" level qualifications, ND, HND, NCE, IJMB, etc. the admission is through JAMB-being regulatory body. Whether the admission is through UTME or direct entry, the "O" level subjects credit requirement of English, Mathematics, Physics and any other two from Economics, Chemistry or Biology. The inclusion of "Physics" as mandatory "O" level requirement must be met; this is because the library school is located in University of Technology.

Towards meeting the challenges of information age, courses are broken to synopsis and within the synopsis ICT components have been injected and now have proposed 60:40 i.e. 60% of ICT components and 40% of Library Science components. This means more than the number of core, elective and department courses but the ratio concentrates on the synopsis. The quantity of synopsis of the ICT components is 60% while that of library science component is 40% respectively. The 60:40 ratio of ICT and library science components is looked at on the basis of the synopsis but not on the number of courses alone. Few education courses are included in the revised academic brief because the new program/department is domiciled in School of Science and Technology Education (SSTE).

TABLE B. RESOURCES TO SUPPORT THE APPROVED UNDERGRADUATE LIBRARY AND INFORMATION SCIENCE PROGRAM/CURRICULUM

Table 3a: Faculty Members

Faculty Members	Number	Percentage %
Professor	4	15
*Associate Professor	6	23
Senior Lecturer	1	4
*Lecturer I	2	8
*Lecturer II	5	19
Assistant Lecturer	5	19
Graduate Assistant	3	12
Total	26	100

* Include adjunct staff

Source: Revised Academic Brief (curriculum) B.Tech LIS February 2021.

NUC Application form for the establishment of new academic programs in Nigerian Universities, February, 2021.

Student handbook, LIS 2021

From Table 3, it is evident that the approved undergraduate program is fully equipped with teaching staff which cut across various ranks and has met both undergraduate and postgraduate program requirements as stipulated in the document for things needed for resource verification of undergraduate and postgraduate program respectively. Some of the academic staff specializes in pure Library Science while others specialize in Library and Information Technology, Computer science and teach in the existing Department of Library and Information Technology undergraduate and postgraduate program respectively.

Out of 26 academic staff for the approved program, four are adjunct lecturers from Departments of Computer Science, Cyber Security Science and Information and Media Technology respectively. From the four lecturers, one is an Associate Professor, one is Lecturer I and two are Lecturer II respectively. They are to teach ICT courses relevant to LIS undergraduate program.

With the quality and quantity of academic staff in the existing/approved undergraduate program/department, there is hope that the undergraduate program in the Department will successfully take-off in 2021/2022 respectively. This is because the academic staffing situation in library school has met the requirement for resource assessment more so that candidates have been admitted to the 2021/2022 session through JAMB CAP. As part of standards for the establishment of library schools and preparation for resource verification for the proposed undergraduate and postgraduate programs, a minimum of six academic staff with at least one Professor/Reader, two senior lecturers and three lecturers 1 and below are required. For postgraduate programs the requirements are: a minimum of six academic staff with at least one Professor and two senior lecturers while the rest should be Ph.D holders capable of teaching any PG degree.

* Part or four of the academic staff are adjunct staff from related departments (Computer Science, Cyber Security Science and Information and Media Technology) within the same university. They are to teach relevant ICT courses in the approved LIS department. Within the ranks of Associate Professor, Lecturer 1 and Lecturer II; four of the academic staff are adjunct from the above stated but related departments in School of ICT in the same university.

TABLE 3B: ADMINISTRATIVE AND TECHNICAL STAFF

Support Staff	Nature	Number
Principal Data Processing Officer I	Administrator	1
Executive Officer	Administrator	1
System Analyst II	System Administrator	2

Source: Revised Curriculum B.Tech LIT 2021.

In the area of non-teaching staff, there exist two technical staff and two administrative staff,

These are the support staff that carryout both administrative and technical functions in the department. The technologists assist in translating theory to practical training using ICT laboratory.

TABLE 3C: AVAILABLE RELEVANT INFORMATION RESOURCES IN UNIVERSITY LIBRARY

Resources	Collection Strength
Textbooks	4, 849
Journals	17,790
Computers	250
Database	AGORA, Hinari; ProQUEST, Science Direct, etc.

Source: Completed NUC document, February, 2021.

The university library uses Library of Congress (LC) classification scheme and Z-class allocated to librarianship. Textbooks, journals and databases were available and adequate while computers are housed in the e-library unit for students' use and practical purposes.

TABLE 3D. AVAILABILITY OF TEACHING FACILITIES IN THE EXISTING DEPARTMENT

Types of Teaching facility	Quantity
Computer and Networking devices	28
LC	2 sets
DDC	2 sets
LC List of Subject Heading	2 sets
AACR ₂	2 sets
SLSH	2 sets
Projector	2 sets
Book/journals	1, 354

Source: NUC document February, 2021

As at now, the Department possessed the above listed teaching facilities which are currently being put to use in teaching and consultation by undergraduate students. In the area of sources of funding the proposed program, in the first 10 years in terms of the current expenditure include: government allocation through NUC, University and donor agencies while for capital expenditure, the source of funding will be through government via NUC, University and TETFund /PTDF respectively (NUC, 2021).

DISCUSSION OF MAJOR FINDINGS

Research Objective one sought to investigate the employers rating of LIT products between 2007 and 2019. The study revealed quite a number of organizations that employed LIT graduates. No wonder librarianship is a multidisciplinary and interdisciplinary in nature and so its graduates can work in any department, organization or field of human endeavor. This finding disagrees with the findings by Okon, Asukwo and Mbu (2019) and Tella *et al* (2022). The former co-researchers discovered that LIS graduates reported that many library schools could not prepare graduates for job market coupled with inadequacies in funding, staffing as well as ICT competency. The latter co-researchers discovered adequate curriculum contents in part but graduates cannot apply the skills acquired in their place of work

The second research objective was achieved through document analysis of the curriculum components of library school both existing and the approved undergraduate program which have not only go beyond the NUC Benchmark but also meet the employers' market needs with more ICT components to address 21st century phenomenon. This finding conform that of Ibraheem & Aduku (2018) and Isah, Salman and Adekeye (2021) respectively. Ibraheem and Aduku (2018) reported the need for continuing review of curriculum in line with contemporary age, thus with emphasis on current information technology courses. Isah, Salman and Adekeye (2021) reported the major areas of ICT integration to include; Internet and website design, database management system, online information retrieval, library automation and infopreneurship.

The third research objective was achieved by identifying the types of resources available to support the implementation of the proposed undergraduate program/curriculum to run library information technology program. Teaching, administrative staff/technologist; information resources in the University library and the teaching facilities were all adequate. These resources have met the NUC requirements. This finding is not in conformity with the research reported by Ibraheem & Aduku (2018) reported the need for continuing review of curriculum in line with contemporary age thus, with emphasis on current information technology courses.

CONCLUSION AND RECOMMENDATIONS

From the results and discussion, the implication is that a well-structured academic department is a function of quality teaching, research and learning and that the graduates are likely to compete with counterparts in the rest parts of the world. Rich curriculum with reasonable ICT components/facilities means that in future the library school will produce graduates that would be in better position to apply ICT to library operations and services as well as related fields. With the adequate human, information and material resources, there is going to be innovations in librarianship. Library and Information Science is one option in undergraduate program and is concerned with the study of processes involved in the generation, production, distribution and use of information in libraries and information related institutions with emphasis on the application of technology in all library operations and services

Recommendations

Based on the major findings and discussion of results, the study recommended government, management of universities, polytechnics, monotechnics and colleges of education having library schools and library schools in particular, proprietors of library schools and stakeholders in the information profession in Nigeria should endeavor to;

1. Procure and supply modern ICT facilities, current textbooks and reference book; ICT facilities such as laptop computers, all-in-one computers, as well as internet facilities, current but relevant textbooks in the field of librarianship.
2. Adequate funding of LIS program. The management of University based library school is expected to commit adequate funds to support under graduate LIS programme in the area of ICT laboratory, conduct of research, organization of conferences and workshop.
3. There should be timely review of LIS curriculum; the review should be once in five years.

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