Library and Information Science Programme and Poverty Alleviation in South-South-Zone, Nigeria

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ABSTRACT
This study assessed library and information science programme and poverty alleviation in South-South Zone of Nigeria. Two research questions and two null hypotheses guided the study. The study adopted survey research design. The population of the study consisted of 325 library and information science lecturers. The entire population was selected by purposive sampling techniques, because the population was not too large. Structured questionnaire with 19 items was used for data collection. The reliability of the instrument was determined by the use of split-half method using spearman rank order of correlation, while the co-efficient was further computed using the Spearman Brown’s Prophecy to be 0.84. Means and standard deviations were used to answer the research question, while t-test statistical tool was used to test the null hypotheses. The findings of the study revealed that computer soft-ware development skills and computer maintenance skills are highly possessed by students to alleviate poverty in South-South, Zone of Nigeria. It was recommended amongst others that curriculum planners should incorporate computer soft-ware development skills and computer maintenance skills perceived by lecturers into library and information programme both at the tertiary and secondary level of education.

Keyword: Library and Information Science Programme, Poverty, Poverty Alleviation, South-South Zone, Nigeria

INTRODUCTION
Library and information science programme plays a significant role in the educational achievement of any nation. The field of library and information science (LIS) is undergoing immense transformation and this has affected the landscape of library and information service delivery. In our contemporary society, where education has become the hub upon which economic development rotates, the place of library and information science cannot be ignored. Library and Information science programme is designed to assist students in the development of a wide range of skills in both library and media services that can lead to or enhance employment in the library field and other related industries. Library and Information science graduates are expected to possess technical skills in order to be relevant in the new information era. Today, we are living in a complex and hybrid information environment that is highly competitive and as such the graduates of library and information science ought to be fully equipped with the technical skill that will empower them to reposition themselves in the modern society where poverty is common. Library and Information science education in Nigeria today cannot be relevant without effective preparation of new generation of librarians and information professionals to effectively use the information and technology in their professional practices (Edegbo, 2011). Library schools according to Aina and Moahi (2009) are expected to impart the necessary library and information skills to their students so that after graduation, the graduates can be expected to function effectively in the libraries and other information related work settings with minimal supervision. Library and information science as a discipline is designed to produce information professionals that will competently serve different stakeholders for development. The graduates of library and information
science ought to be empowered through practical, technical and entrepreneurial skills. The graduates-to-be are expected to draw from the various technical well of knowledge and be equipped for job creation in this era where increased self-employment options are very necessary. Library and information science graduates therefore need to be given core technical and entrepreneurial training in relation to library and information services so that, on graduation, they can become self-employed instead of looking for white-collar jobs. Combes (2011) noted that new graduates are key stakeholders in Library and Information Science (LIS) and even in Library and Information Management (LIM) fields. According to Edegbo (2011) these self-employment options include: Publishing, development of computer software, production and sales of library equipment, information brokerage, bookselling business and computer maintenance. The publishing sector is a viable option for library and information science graduates. With proper entrepreneurship education, the graduates of library and information science will be better disposed to undertake ventures in publishing. They can also develop computer software that will be used specifically for specific tasks in libraries and information centres. Production of library equipment is another option available to graduates of library and information science. Graduates in library science can be involved in the production of audio visual equipment, catalogue cards, metal shelves and bookstands used in libraries and information centres. Graduates in library and information science can be involved in information brokerage and consultancy service whereby they will be re-packaging information for clients for a fee. Another option is the bookselling business. The graduates with the knowledge of librarianship are better disposed to serve the various libraries by supplying books to them and can as well liaise with management of tertiary institution to sell books to their students. In the operation of business centres and cyber café graduates of library science can take the option of running a business centre where computer related activities such as typesetting, computer training, graphic designs and photocopying services amongst others can be carried out.

Poverty is now an economic problem in our contemporary society. Poverty is the state of being very poor. Nweze and Ojowu (2012) asserted that poverty can be categorized into three namely: absolute poverty, relative poverty and subjective poverty. These three concepts formed the basis of poverty alleviation programmes in Nigeria. Absolute poverty is a situation where an individual or household is faced with limited financial resources and as a result, unable to meet necessities of life such as food, clothes, shelter and health and this is the foundation of the present study. In the words of Miller (2008), Plotnick and Skidmore (2008), Edegbo (2011), individual families or groups are considered to be in absolute poverty when they lack the resources particularly real income to obtain the types of diets needed to enjoy some fixed minimum standard of living determined by a giving society. Relative poverty is a situation where an individual or a household income is less than the average income of the population in the society being considered. The result is that the individual or household has goods and services which are lower than those of other persons or households in the society (Garuba, 2010, Oladunni, 2009). O’Connor (2009) opined that poverty can be conceptualized as a condition in which an individual or household is unable to meet the basic needs of life considered as minimum requirements to sustain livelihood in the given society,

Todaro and Smith (2009) recognized poverty in pure economic terms as the number of people living below an imaginary internationally specified minimum level of income, called the poverty line, which cuts across international groups. The view of Todaro and Smith (2009) was in tandem with Oladunni, (2009) who opined that poverty can be defined as a situation of insufficient income for securing basic necessities of life such as food, portable water, clothing and shelter. Plotnick and Skidmore (2008) opined that poverty is more than lack of income. It is also insecurity and inequality, poor health and illiteracy. Edegbo (2011 stated that poverty maybe classified into structural, economic, social and cultural deprivation. These dimensions of poverty exhibit a vicious cycle and account for the recurring decimal of poverty. In recognition of the dehumanizing nature of poverty and all the attendant social problems, many successive governments have introduced one or more programme(s) aimed at alleviating the scourge of poverty among the people of Nigeria.
According to Nweze and Ojowu (2012) poverty alleviation refers to sustained improvements in the living conditions of a particular group of people. They posited that poverty alleviation as a concept is closely related to development, which they described as process characterized by increased productivity, equalization in the distribution of social products and emergence of indigenous institutions whose relationship with the outside world are characterized by equity rather than by dependence or subordination. Poverty Alleviation can be referred to as sustained development. The aim of any poverty alleviation of any government is to achieve lasting improvement in the quality of life and not just short-term improvement that disappear at the end of the project cycle. Poverty alleviation therefore adapts properly to the natural environment by making appropriate improvement in the social value of people (Paul, 2007).

Those people who are in relative poverty have their resources far lower than those possessed by average individuals or households to the extent that they are in effect debarred from ordinary living patterns. Subjective poverty is a perception of respondents about their standard of living. The feeling of whether one is poor or not depends on the absolute minimum standard of living below which one is categorized as poor (Miller, 2008). Absolute poverty is the focus of this study because attempts made by the government to reduce poverty have led to the establishment of poverty alleviation programmes. Furthermore, in Nigeria and many developing countries, attempts by governments to address poverty have focused more on reducing absolute poverty. In Nigeria, most of the poverty alleviation measures or initiatives are embedded in entrepreneurship but have suffered several challenges culminating into their failure. Some of the schemes include National Poverty Alleviation Programme (NAPEP), Youth Empowerment Scheme (YES), Rural Infrastructural Development Scheme (RIDS), and Natural Resources Development and Conservation Scheme (NRDCS). In the attempt of the Lagos State government to alleviate poverty, entrepreneurship training and education have been included in the curriculum in university education. Similarly, training centers such as technical and vocational schools, and apprenticeship centres have been established to eradicate poverty in the state.

**Statement of the Problem**
The importance of library and information science (L.I.S) programme has been stressed by scholars in recent times as its many self-employment options can alleviate poverty. Available evidence showed that vast majority of library and information science students do not possess the required skills, knowledge and competencies required for computer soft-ware development and computer maintenance skills (Edegbo, 2011). Also, there seems to be a gap between the actual library and information science (L.I.S) skill possessed by students and skills expected of them for self-employment after graduation. A gap in knowledge is therefore created which needs to be filled empirically through this study.

**Purpose of the Study**
The purpose of this study was to assess library and information science education and poverty alleviation in South-South zone of Nigeria. Specifically, the study assessed:
1. Computer soft-ware development skills possessed by students to alleviate poverty in South-South, zone of Nigeria.
2. Computer maintenance skills possessed by students to alleviate poverty in South-South, zone of Nigeria.

**Research Questions**
The following research questions guided the study:
1. To what extent do students possess computer soft-ware development skills to alleviate poverty in South-South, zone of Nigeria?
2. To what extent do students possess computer maintenance skills to alleviate poverty in South-South, zone in Nigeria?

**Hypothesis**
The study was guided by two null hypotheses formulated and tested at 0.05 level of significance.
1. There is no significant difference in the mean rating of male and female lecturers on the effect of computer soft-ware development skills of students on poverty alleviation in South-South, zone of Nigeria.

2. There is no significant difference in the mean rating of male and female lecturers on the effect of computer maintenance skills of students on poverty alleviation in South-South, zone of Nigeria.

LITERATURE REVIEW

Library and Information Science and Poverty Alleviation

Musa (2009) saw the school library as a place where a full range of information resources and accompanying services are accessible to both teachers and students. Libraries represent a unified programme involving the use of audio-visual, printed sources and tools necessary to satisfy the educational needs and recreational interest of pupils, students and their teachers. This includes a variety of information resources such as textbooks, journals, reference books, multimedia resources etc., selected systematically, organized and disseminated to pupils, students and teachers with the sole aim of supporting and enriching the school curriculum (Umar, 2004). Musa (2009) maintained that library plays a crucial part in encouraging reading at the early stage by making available pictures, books, novels, magazines so as to ensure that early quality childhood care and education are achieved. The primary school level of education requires that such materials like text books, reference works and audio-visual resources should be sufficiently available in the library to support the curriculum thereby expanding learning resources. At secondary school level, the school library, through the guidance of teachers should help students to study independently.

Musa (2009) stated further that libraries and information centers are the pivot of academic excellence and also a tool for literacy education. This is because they provide all the relevant information resources necessary for sustaining teaching, learning and front line research for all the tiers of learning. Adama (2012) noted that the academic health, intellectual vitality and effectiveness of educational institutions in producing high quality graduates that will go into the labour market depend largely on the quality of information resources available in their libraries to support teaching and research.

In his view, Bello (2010), opined that access to free information has always played an important role in human life and as a basic human resource; its need therefore was never a subject of controversy. The free and equal access to information by every member of the society irrespective of racial, religion, geo-political, social, economic status is a fundamental human right. Accurate information should be provided to the people at the right time. Users of today’s libraries are looking for information that is crucial for individuals and national development. Additionally, information is a vital resource for problem solving and decision making (Karki, 2006)

Ezimwanyi (2011) posited that today the roles of libraries and professional Librarians are changing worldwide. They are no longer passive keepers and preservers of books rather they have evolved to become facilitators of information and lifelong learning opportunities with emphasis on identifying users’ sources and needs. Modern libraries, she further noted, are unfolding the community learning potentials by providing information on community issues, such as health, employment, continuing education and local history. Thus, equitable access to information through the modern information technology is essential to enable educated and informed citizens participate in a democratic global society.

Access to modern information technology is currently one of the most essential library services, thus Ezimwanyi (2011) stressed that Libraries are indispensable in any Information Society. He stated that libraries build capacity by effective use of information literacy and provide support and training for effective use of information resources including information communication technologies. This is very critical in promoting development agenda, because human resources are crucial to economic progress. They help to make the Millennium Development Goals a reality including the reduction of poverty. In summary, libraries and information centers are expected to provide information in form of current affairs, reference services, educational guidance, simple classification and explanation of such things as cause of
diseases, use and invention of medicines. They are also expected to conserve and preserve local artifacts including oral traditions.

METHODOLOGY

The study adopted survey research design. The questionnaire was used to elicit the opinions of lecturers. The study covered South-South, zone of Nigeria comprising of nine (9) tertiary institutions running library and information science programme. These institutions are: Rivers State University, Ignatius Ajuru University of Education, University of Port Harcourt, Niger Delta University, University of Uyo, University of Calabar, Cross Rivers State University of Science and Technology, University of Benin and Delta State University. The population of the study comprised of 325 library and information science lecturers. The entire population was selected by purposive sampling techniques because; the population was not too large. The instrument for data collection was a structured questionnaire developed by the researcher on a 4-point response scale of Highly Possessed (HP; 4), Moderately Possessed (MP; 3), Fairly Possessed (FP; 2) and Not Possessed (NP; 1). The instrument was validated by three experts. The reliability of the instrument was ascertained by split-half method, and its co-efficient was 0.84. Decision rule was as follows: item with the means between 3.50 and 4.49 was regarded as HP, 2.50 – 3.49 as MP, 1.50-2.49 as FP and 0.50 – 1.49 as NP. Data collected for the study were analyzed with means and standard deviations to answer the research questions, while t-test was used to test the null hypotheses.

RESULTS

Research Question 1: To what extent do students possess computer soft-ware development skills to alleviate poverty in South-South, zone of Nigeria?

Table 1: Mean Rating of Male and Female Lecturers on Computer Soft-Ware Development Skills Possessed by Students to Alleviate Poverty in South-South, zone of Nigeria

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>S/n</th>
<th>Computer Soft-Ware Development Skills</th>
<th>X</th>
<th>SD</th>
<th>Remarks</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1.</td>
<td>Ability to write educational programmes</td>
<td>3.91</td>
<td>1.30</td>
<td>HP</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2.</td>
<td>Select and evaluate subject specific educational software</td>
<td>3.31</td>
<td>1.35</td>
<td>HP</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3.</td>
<td>Develop computer assisted instruction software package</td>
<td>3.56</td>
<td>1.42</td>
<td>HP</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4.</td>
<td>Ability to develop software to teach a subject</td>
<td>3.71</td>
<td>1.43</td>
<td>HP</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5.</td>
<td>Ability to develop different instruction software</td>
<td>3.51</td>
<td>1.21</td>
<td>HP</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6.</td>
<td>Ability to develop software to evaluate instruction</td>
<td>3.62</td>
<td>1.41</td>
<td>HP</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7.</td>
<td>Develop presentation package software</td>
<td>3.56</td>
<td>0.41</td>
<td>HP</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>8.</td>
<td>Develop software to compute and keep students records</td>
<td>3.92</td>
<td>1.44</td>
<td>HP</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>9.</td>
<td>Develop specific software to give instruction</td>
<td>3.83</td>
<td>1.58</td>
<td>HP</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Aggregate X and SD</td>
<td>3.66</td>
<td>1.28</td>
<td>HP</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Researchers’ Field Work, 2018

The result in table 1 showed that lecturers assessed all of the items as highly possessed by students. In general, all of the items of library and information science technology for self-employment skills assessed by lecturers in these categories were highly possessed by students in South-South, zone of Nigeria. In summary, the aggregate mean of 3.66 and standard deviation of 1.28 is an indication that students in South-South, zone of Nigeria possessed computer soft-ware development skills to alleviate poverty.
Research Questions 2: To what extent do students possess computer maintenance skills to alleviate poverty in South-South, zone of Nigeria?

Table 2: Mean Ratings of Male and Female Lecturers on Computer Maintenance Skills Possessed by students to alleviate poverty in South-South, zone of Nigeria

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>S/n</th>
<th>Computer Soft-Ware Development Skills</th>
<th>X</th>
<th>SD</th>
<th>Remarks</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1.</td>
<td>Ability to power on computer, monitor, printer</td>
<td>4.06</td>
<td>1.57</td>
<td>HP</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2.</td>
<td>Ability to network computer to exchange file and information</td>
<td>4.01</td>
<td>1.30</td>
<td>HP</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3.</td>
<td>Ability to create folder and sub-folders</td>
<td>3.69</td>
<td>1.43</td>
<td>HP</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4.</td>
<td>Ability save on computer system and external device</td>
<td>3.61</td>
<td>1.30</td>
<td>HP</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5.</td>
<td>Ability to open new computer environment, ability to scan the computer system and external devices to detect virus</td>
<td>3.56</td>
<td>1.30</td>
<td>HP</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6.</td>
<td>Ability to retrieve work from computer system and external device</td>
<td>3.58</td>
<td>1.52</td>
<td>HP</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7.</td>
<td>Ability to set up a computer networking using wireless LAN network</td>
<td>4.24</td>
<td>1.24</td>
<td>HP</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>8.</td>
<td>Ability to format a computer system and external devices</td>
<td>3.92</td>
<td>1.44</td>
<td>HP</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>9.</td>
<td>Using window operating system</td>
<td>3.88</td>
<td>1.58</td>
<td>HP</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>10.</td>
<td>Set up new personnel computer using computer to deliver instruction</td>
<td>3.76</td>
<td>1.54</td>
<td>HP</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Aggregate X and SD</td>
<td>3.83</td>
<td>1.42</td>
<td>HP</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Researchers’ Field Work, 2018

The result in table 2 revealed that lecturers assessed all the items as highly possessed by students. In general, all of the items of library and information science programme for self-employment assessed by lecturers in this category were highly possessed by students in South-South, zone of Nigeria. In summary, the aggregate mean of 3.83 and standard deviation of 1.42 is an indication that students in South-South zone of Nigeria possessed computer maintenance skills to alleviate poverty.

Hypothesis 1

There is no significant difference in the mean ratings of male and female lecturers on the effect of computer soft-ware development skills of students on poverty alleviation in South-South, zone of Nigeria.

Table 3: The t-Test Analysis for the Mean Ratings of Male and Female lecturers on the effect of Computer Software Development skills on Poverty Alleviation in South-South, Nigeria.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Gender</th>
<th>N</th>
<th>X</th>
<th>SD</th>
<th>DF</th>
<th>t-cal</th>
<th>t-crit.</th>
<th>Decision</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Male lecturers</td>
<td>42</td>
<td>3.88</td>
<td>1.32</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Female lecturers</td>
<td>283</td>
<td>3.42</td>
<td>1.37</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Researchers’ Field Work, 2018

From the t-test in table 3, the t-calculated value of 0.87 is less than t-critical value of 1.960 at 0.05 levels of significance and 323 degree of freedom. The null hypothesis is accepted. This indicates that male and female lecturers in South-South, zone of Nigeria do not differ significantly in their mean ratings on their
perception on the extent computer software development skills are possessed by students to alleviate poverty.

**Hypothesis 2**
There is no significant difference in the mean ratings of male and female lecturers on the effect of computer maintenance skills of students on poverty alleviation in South-South, zone of Nigeria.

Table 4: The t-test Analysis for the Mean Ratings of Male and Female lecturers on the effect of Computer Maintenance skills on poverty alleviation in South-South, zone, in Nigeria

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Gender</th>
<th>N</th>
<th>X</th>
<th>SD</th>
<th>DF</th>
<th>t-cal</th>
<th>t-crit.</th>
<th>Decision</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Male lecturers</td>
<td>158</td>
<td>3.81</td>
<td>1.38</td>
<td>323</td>
<td>0.05</td>
<td>0.56</td>
<td>1.960</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Female lecturers</td>
<td>167</td>
<td>3.68</td>
<td>1.55</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Researchers’ Field Work, 2018

From the t-test in table 4, the calculated value is 0.56, while t-critical table value stood at 1.960 at 0.05 level of significance. The t-calculated value is less than the t-critical value, the null hypothesis is therefore accepted. This indicates that male and female lecturers in South-South, zone of Nigeria do not differ significantly in their mean ratings on their perception of the extent computer maintenance skills are possessed by students to alleviate poverty.

**DISCUSSION**
The result of the analysis of research question one (1) on computer software development skill revealed that computer software development skills are highly possessed by students to alleviate poverty. The finding is in agreement with the report of Haruna (2009) that found out that university graduates could find computer software skills useful in developing specific software for specific task in libraries and information centers. Another finding of the study on research question two indicated that computer maintenance skills are highly possessed by students to alleviate poverty. This finding corroborated the finding of O’Connor (2009) who reported that computer maintenance puts the graduate in a position to be self-employed. Also, the two null hypotheses test were upheld.

**CONCLUSION**
Based on the findings of this study, it could be concluded that computer software development skills and computer maintenance skills are possessed highly, and as such are needed for successful poverty alleviation in South-South zone of Nigeria.

**RECOMMENDATIONS**
On the basis of the findings and conclusion from the study, the following recommendations were made:
1. Curriculum planners should incorporate computer software development skills and computer maintenance skills perceived by lecturers in library and information science programmes both at the secondary and tertiary levels of education to enable prospective L.I.S. students acquire the necessary skills before venturing into their self-employment options on graduation.
2. Library and information science students who are deficient in perceived skills in computer software development and computer maintenance should proceed for further training to acquire the required skills for efficient management of their business on graduation.
3. Workshops and seminars should be organized for L.I.S. students by the federal and state ministry of education yearly, to teach and enlighten students on the need to upgrade their competencies on the skills required for success.
REFERENCES