

## **Librarianship as a Career Choice in Ogun State, Nigeria**

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*ABSTRACT: The study examined librarianship as a career choice in Ogun State, Nigeria. Purposive sampling was used to select ninety librarian personnel. Questionnaire was used as the main instrument for gathering data. The findings revealed that previous work experience in a library is a major factor for choosing librarianship as a career. Many people settled on a career while working after secondary schools. Friends and relatives were major sources of information. It is recommended that librarianship as a career be introduced in all secondary schools in the country and that the Librarians' Registration Council of Nigeria engage in a full-scale campaign to promote librarianship as a noble profession to the public.*

### **I. Introduction**

Libraries and librarianship have evolved over time in Nigeria. However, they have not yet gained a proper place among institutions and professions in the country.

In spite of the rich knowledge and information resources available in libraries, librarianship is among the least sought-after professions in Nigeria (Okoro, 2009). Generally speaking, strong academic background breeds good career. Lawyers, doctors, engineers, and accountants are traditionally held in high esteem because they all demand solid academic backgrounds. However, there are some other professions that require advance education but never receive due respect. Librarianship belongs to the latter category.

Librarianship is a profession that is dedicated to serving the general public, providing timely and accurate information, thus contributing to the development of the society. However, the profession of librarianship hardly shares the glamour and respect of those other professions mentioned above. Igbinosa (2007) maintained that people, particularly students, do not like to pursue a career in librarianship. They do not realize that librarians are unsung heroes behind the successful stories of students, researchers, medical doctors, etc.

## **II. Literature Review**

Nigerian youths are often faced with a lot of problems in the process of choosing a life career. Indeed, many adolescents do carry these problems into adulthood. Geshinde (1986) opined that there is a danger inherent in making wrong career choices. He highlighted its adverse effect on physical health, company of friends and job security. Issa and Nwalo (2008) supported Geshinde's position by saying that wrong choice of career can lead to frustration and low productivity.

Wiljers and Mijers (1996) defined career as a process of describing individual's life time of learning and work. Ferry (2006) singled out the factors that determine people's occupational choice, which include life context, personal attitude, and educational attainment. Tella (2007) identified various factors, such as attractive salary, good condition of service, and job security, which can promote librarianship as a choice of career.

Agumanu (1989) conducted a studied on factors that influenced the students in Imo State University Library School. The findings reveal that 80% of the respondents entered the library school because they failed to secure admission into other departments such as law or engineering and that 20% of the students pick the profession due to the influence of librarians in their family.

Alemna (1991) conducted a study on the post graduates at the University of Ghana Library School and found that despite the fact that most of the students were there because other options were denied, opportunity for intellectual development and further education were a major reason for choosing the profession as a career. This corroborated the findings of Nzotta (1982) on the reasons to choose librarianship among the post graduate students at the University of Ibadan. In his findings, the majority of the respondents (58%) indicated that they chose the profession because it gives them room for intellectual development.

In addition, Issa and Nwalo (2008) studied the factors affecting the career choice of undergraduates in Nigeria library and information schools. They discovered that 68.86% of the respondents claimed that they chose the profession because of their previous work experiences in a library while 15.68% admitted that they opted for the profession in order to secure a good job.

## **III. Research Objectives**

The current study has 3 objectives:

1. To identify the reasons for the choice of librarianship as a profession
2. To identify the sources of information used in choosing librarianship
3. To identify the level of satisfaction in librarianship

#### IV. Research Methodology

The study used a descriptive survey and a questionnaire on the choice of librarianship as a career to collect data. Descriptive statistical techniques were employed in the analysis. The target population of the study was library personnel in eight selected libraries in Ogun State, Nigeria, which include five academic libraries, one public library, one special library, and the branch of the National library in the state. Purposive Sampling Technique (PST) was used to select 90 library personnel. The breakdown is as follows:

Table 1: Libraries selected for the study

	Name of Library	Library Personnel
1	Nimbe Adedipe Library, University of Agriculture Abeokuta, Ogun State	20
2	Federal College of Education Library, Abeokuta, Ogun State	15
3	Olabisi Onabanjo University Library, Ago-Iwoye, Ogun State	20
4	Moshood Abiola Polytechnic Library, Abeokuta	6
5	Redeemers University Library, Mowe, Ogun State	8
6	Simeon Adebo Library, Abeokuta	10
7	National Library of Nigeria Abeokuta	10
8	Neuropsychiatry Hospital Library, Abeokuta	6
	<b>Total</b>	<b>90</b>

#### V. Findings and Discussion

Table 2: Educational attainment of the respondents

Academic Qualification	Frequency	Percentage
OND/DLS	23	25.6
BLS/BSC	12	13.3
MLS	53	58.9
Ph.D.	2	1.8
<b>Total</b>	<b>90</b>	<b>100</b>

Notes: OND = Ordinary National Diploma; DLS = Diploma in Library Science; BLS = Bachelor of Library Science; BSC = Bachelor of Science

The above table shows that 53 (58.9%) had Master in Library Science (MLS) degree. The high percentage of the library personnel with MLS in the study may be due to the fact that the five academic institutions placed an emphasis on higher degrees.

Table 3: Reason for the choice of librarianship

Reasons	Frequency	Percentage
Intellectual development	23	26
Employment opportunity	19	21.1
Previous work experience in libraries	33	37
Love for books and reading	06	07
Prospect for good salary	03	03
Attractive work environment	02	02
By accident	02	02

Responding to a question on reasons to choose librarianship as a profession, 33 (37%) indicated that they made the choice because of their previous work experience in libraries, as shown in table 3. This supports the finding of Nwalo and Issa (2008) that previous work experiences in libraries encourage many to choose librarianship as a career.

Table 4: Time of choice

Time of Choice	Frequency	Percentage
While working after secondary school	43	48
While in the university	22	24
While working after NYSC	12	13
During NYSC	10	11
While in secondary school	03	03
Before attending secondary school	01	01
<b>Total</b>	<b>90</b>	<b>100</b>

Note: NYSC = National Youth Service Corps

The finding in table 4 reveals that 43 (48%) developed interest in the profession when they were working in libraries after their secondary school. This contradicts the finding of Nzotta (1982) that many people consider the profession during their first degree courses in the universities.

Table 5: Source of Information

Source of Information	Frequency	Percentage
Friends and relatives	41	45.5
Advertisements for library vacancy	24	26.7
Library school's prospective	15	16.7
Radio, television, and newspapers	10	11.1
<b>Total</b>	<b>90</b>	<b>100</b>

The finding in table 5 shows that friends and relatives were the major source of information in choosing the profession. This is in agreement with the finding of Agumanu (1989) that family members were the sources of information to the students of Imo State University, Nigeria on the choice of librarianship.

Table 6: Level of satisfaction

Level of Satisfaction	Frequency	Percentage
Highly Satisfied	61	68
Satisfied	23	26
Not Satisfied	6	6

Table 6 provides information on the level of satisfaction with the profession. 61 (68%) of the respondents said that they were highly satisfied.

## VI. Conclusion

The findings of the study show that previous work experiences in libraries serve as a major reason for the choice of librarianship in Ogun State, Nigeria. Some started their career as library assistants or library officers and then decided to stay in the librarianship after their secondary school education. In that sense, librarianship is a profession for the 'work and study' people. On the other hand, some library personnel learned about the profession through friends and relatives. Many of the respondents affirmed that they were satisfied with their choice of librarianship as a career.

To attract more graduates from secondary school into the librarianship, it is recommended that librarianship as a career be introduced to all secondary schools in Nigeria and that the Registration Council of Nigerian Library Association engage in a full-scale campaign on the awareness of librarianship as a noble profession to the public.

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