

Education and Training of Library and Information Professionals for National Integration and Development

Imaobong . N. Obot

University of Uyo, Nigeria

Oludayo J. Bamgbose

Ajayi Crowther University, Oyo, Nigeria.

Chinyere P. Okoro

*Alvan Ikoku Federal College of Education,
Imo State, Nigeria.*

Information Impact: Journal of information and knowledge management
2018, Vol. 9 (4) Pg 122-129
ISSN: 2141 – 4297 (print)
ISSN: 2360 – 994X (e-version)

Abstract

The study investigated education and training of Library and Information Professionals for national integration and development in tertiary institutions in Akwa Ibom and Cross River States of Nigeria. It sought to investigate education and its relationship with national integration and development. Survey design was used for the study. The hypothesis was tested using the Pearson Product Moment Correlation statistical technique and the relationship was established to be significant at 0.05 level. The results of data analysis showed a high positive correlation (0.61) between education of information professionals and national integration and development. The study concluded that education of information professionals was a strong determinant of national integration and development. The paper recommends among other things that government and stakeholders must rise to the challenge of supporting the education and training of information professionals so as to foster national integration and development through the custody and dissemination of information materials by educated and trained information specialists.

Keywords: Education, Training, Library and Information Professionals, National Integration.

Introduction

National integration is the awareness of a common individuality and distinctiveness amongst the citizens of a country. National integration therefore attempts to erode the presence of micro-nationalities in place of a spirit of nationhood (Alapiki, 2000). The issue of national integration has been an issue of concern in Nigeria since its independence from the Great Britain in the year 1960. It would be recalled that the geographical entity now called Nigeria wasn't in place until 1914 with the amalgamation of the Northern and Southern protectorates. After one hundred and three years of the amalgamation, there is still the question of whether the nation

should remain united or split into different countries. Recently, there have been serious agitations structured along ethnic cum regional persuasions. Militant groups like Movement for the Emancipation of the Nigeria Delta (MEND) and AVENGERS agitate for control of resources in the Niger Delta region of Nigeria. Often, their activities jeopardise the Nigerian economy. The South Eastern part of the country has been agitating for secession under the aegis of Movement for Actualisation of Sovereign State of Biafra (MASSOB) and Indigenous Peoples of Biafra (IPOB). South Western Nigeria's Odua People's Congress (OPC) from time to time thrust forward the idea of separateness from the Nigerian union.

The Nigerian civil war of 1967-1970 led to the creation of the National Youth Service Scheme (NYSC) in 1973. Its primary objective was to enhance national integration. In line with this, Alapiki (2005) rightly noted that the National Youth Service Corps (NYSC) scheme, the Unity Schools, the Federal Character Principle and states creation are examples of state policies intended to achieve this goal. Over the years, the outcome of these integration policies and programmes in Nigeria did not seem successful as ethnic biases have further torn the nation apart. However, more still needs to be done to address the issue of national integration and growth. The recurring communal clashes and the alleged frequent attacks of the Fulani herdsmen on communities are classical illustration of the dire need for better integration amongst different ethnic groups and linguistic persuasions. This reality therefore imposes the need to integrate the distinct ethnic groups to become a colossal whole that shares a common uniqueness and purpose through an investment in education. To this end, it is essential for all and sundry to join the efforts that would bring about the nation's development and unity, hence the need to examine the role that the education of librarians as information professionals could play in the actualization of these development and integration plans.

The initial establishment and development of libraries precipitated the necessity to educate people in the library and information profession. In any profession, no issue is more contentious than the form of professional education and training required of its practitioners (Aguolu & Aguolu, 2002). This is sequel to the role of library management in creating a balanced atmosphere between library manpower and technological and educational advancements. The education and training of librarians as information professionals has therefore remained incontestable and incontrovertible as this has invariably enhanced educational as well as national development. In Nigeria, the need to train librarians and other information professionals led to the establishment of the Department of Library, Archival and Information Studies at the University of Ibadan. The Department which began with a Diploma in Librarianship now offers Bachelor, Masters and Doctorate Degrees in Librarianship and other associated programmes like Archival Studies, Health Information Management and Copyright Studies. Many other Universities and Polytechnics including publicly owned and private institutions across the six geo-political zones now offer librarianship education across different levels of education, therefore increasing the needed specialists.

Despite the opportunity for education and training, suffice to state that in recent years, the library profession has been proliferated with individuals who have not obtained sufficient

academic attainment. Without being immodest and disrespectful, a three-semester education in librarianship (at Masters level) is in sharp contradiction with what obtains in other professions. This therefore reveals the need for greater length of training for librarians as information professionals. An example is the study of law which requires five full years of study in the University with another year at the Law School. A degree holder in any other discipline can at best be considered for a waiver of one year out of the expected six years education. This also holds true for many other professions including Medicine which require full six years of study at the University and the medical school. Since librarianship is a profession that requires insightful knowledge so as to keep library patrons satisfied, there is therefore the need to educate librarians as information brokers/gatekeepers for effective services delivery that foster national integration.

Statement of the Problem

Despite the place of national integration and development in the economic and socio-political well being of any nation, Nigeria has not fared well in this regard, hence her classification as a third world nation. With this in mind, the need for multi disciplinary and multi-sectoral approaches aimed at proffering panacea to this problem cannot be overemphasized. This study is therefore an attempt to examine whether the education and training of librarians and other information professionals can actually play a significant role in contributing towards national integration and development.

Objective of the Study

The overall objective of this study is to examine the relationship between education and training of library and information professionals' viz-a-viz national integration and development.

Research Question

What relationship exists between education and training of Library and Information Professionals and national integration and development?

Hypothesis

Education and training of library and information professionals has no significant relationship with national integration and development.

Literature Review

The education and training of people whose career choices were in the library profession necessitated the initial establishment and development of libraries. There are different types of trainings aimed at developing the capacity of professionals. Ikoro (2001:144) subscribed to this when he enumerates the different categories of staff training thus:

There are different types of staff training and development programmes such as simple orientation, organized visits to other libraries, seminars and conferences, participatory management, internal or in-house training programmes, short courses and formal professional education. Others are library trainee, industrial training for library student, staff manual for self-development research/sabbatical leave.

Oduagwu (2001) stated that the need for (staff) training cannot be over-emphasized, pointing out that such training improves efficiency and morale, provides for succession and raises the standard of personnel, etc. One of the most important as well as recent aspects of librarianship in this century has been the emergence of library schools as a potent factor in training librarians, shaping new philosophies and enhancing national integration and development. Therefore a library school aside from giving unity to the profession also gives unity to the nation. Interest in the study of library and information profession began to emerge in the 1960's with the growth of university-based professional courses for librarianship. The education of librarians is associated with the social and political history of Nigeria, and this has had tremendous influence on its citizenry. Ojo-Igbinoba (1995:179) lend credence to this fact by asserting that political awareness on the part of the citizen and other political activities and developments have affected, sometimes negatively the field of librarianship as well. Before Nigeria gained independence, people who aspired to become librarians went to Great Britain to qualify for the A.L.A certificates because there was no library school. Librarianship was essentially a non-graduate profession as there were relatively few graduates in the country generally (Nzotta, 1983). The author stated further that with independence, came the establishment of many educational institutions at all levels and access to education became more liberalized. Many graduates therefore drifted into various professions and this was invariably a welcomed development for the library profession. There is however no gainsaying the fact that many graduates who drifted into librarianship in this country do so for want of some career to cling to, while waiting for "better" prospects rather than do so to better the society. Some may not have studied library science as a course in the university but chose the profession as a level ground to study their courses in depth.

In Nigeria, different professions have regulatory bodies which influence the academic and professional preparation of their practitioners in a bid to make them useful to themselves and to the society as a whole. Lawal (2002:91) stated that in professional education, the raising of standards of qualifications for entry to the profession is another mark of a strong professional association. The author stated further that "in principle, concern with education and training should be one of the preferred priorities of a professional association; but in practice, the ideals are sometimes difficult to attain where for instance the association has no authority from government to control its education system or even influence the trends through the usual accreditation schemes". Ogundipe (2005) supported this view when he posited that all

professional organisations function also as a welfare organization, and its educational and training programmes should be particularly concerned with this. It is partly as a welfare programme that the library association should see to it, by its education and training programme that all its members are trained to do their job better, are adequately rewarded for improved services. With this, the profession would be able to maintain high standards of efficiency and professional service which will invariably foster national integration and development.

The controversy about qualifications and status in the profession would have been unnecessary if employers, library schools and librarians were guided in their assessment of the qualifications by the entry requirements, the duration and orientation of the courses and the course contents (Ojo-Igbinoba, 1995). However more universities and similar tertiary institutions do offer equal opportunities to librarians for further training for specialization to make the information professional useful to himself and the society at large.

Methodology

The survey research design was used for this study. The study covered eight tertiary institutions in Akwa Ibom and Cross River States of Nigeria. The population of the study comprised all the 91 professionally trained librarians in the 8 tertiary institutions in Akwa Ibom and Cross River States, chosen for the study. The tertiary institutions that formed the population of the study were eight in number as shown in the table below:

Table 1: Population as classified by tertiary institutions

Tertiary institutions	Population of librarians	Sample of librarians	Percent (%)
University of Uyo, Uyo	25	25	100
Akwa Ibom State University, Ikot Akpaden	15	15	100
College of Education, Afaha Nsit	7	7	100
Maritime Academy, Oron	5	5	100
Akwa Ibom State Polytechnic, Ikot Osurua	4	4	100
University of Calabar, Calabar	21	21	100
Cross River State University of Technology	11	11	100
College of Education, Akamkpa	3	3	100
Total	91	91	100

Source: Nominal roll of each institution

The total population of 91 librarians were used as sample for the study. The use of the entire population was based on the fact that the population is small and accessible. The distribution and sample of librarians in tertiary institutions in Akwa Ibom and Cross River states are presented in the table above. The instrument used for data collection was a researcher-developed questionnaire. The hypothesis was tested using Pearson Product Moment Correlation Coefficient (PPMC) at 0.05 level.

Findings and discussion

Research Question

What relationship exists between education and training of Library and Information Professionals and national integration and development?

Table 2: Correlation Analysis between Education and Training of Library and Information Professionals and National Integration and Development (N = 91)

Variables	$\sum X$	$\sum X^2$	$\sum XY$	r_{cal}
	$\sum Y$	$\sum Y^2$		
Education/Training of Professionals (X)	363	7643	5302	.61
National Integration and Development (Y)	257	3789		

In Table 1, the correlation coefficient (r) between education of Library and Information Professionals and national integration is .61. This indicates a positive high correlation between education of Library and Information Professionals and national integration and development. It implies that as education and training of Library and Information Professionals improve, national integration and development would be greatly enhanced.

Testing the Research Hypothesis

The hypothesis formulated to guide this study was tested using Pearson Product Moment Correlation (PPMC) as the hypothesis is to determine if the relationship is a significant one.

Hypothesis One

Education and training of Library and Information Professionals has no significant relationship with national integration and development.

Table 3: Pearson Product Moment Correlation Coefficient (PPMC) summary of analysis of scores on education/training and national integration and development (N = 91)

Variables	$\sum X$	$\sum X^2$	$\sum XY$	r_{cal}	r_{cri}
	$\sum Y$	$\sum Y^2$			
Education/Training of Professionals (X)	363	7643	5302	0.61*	.11
National Integration and Development (Y)	257	3789			

*= significant at .05 level of significance

As shown in Table 3, calculated r value (0.61) is greater than the critical r value (.11). Therefore, the null hypothesis is rejected. This implies that education and training of library and Information professionals has significant relationship with national integration and development.

The results in Table 3 on the relationship between education of Library and Information Professionals and national integration and development indicate a high correlation which was significant. The relationship was a positive one which could imply that as education of Library and Information Professionals is improved, national integration and development would be enhanced. This result could be attributed to libraries and librarians as agents of change academically, socially, politically, economically and otherwise. They are the tools for propagation of information in all sectors of the nation which affect national integration and development.

There is a significant positive relationship between education and training of library and information professionals and national integration and development. That is, education of this crop of professionals is a significant determinant of national integration and development. The 0.61 calculated correlation index indicates a high positive correlation.

The observed positive correlation between education and national integration and development agrees with Nnaji's (1986) observation that the best library and information professionals are those who had been adequately equipped with the educational aspect of their profession. It further corroborates Aguolu and Aguolu's (2002) assertion that in any profession, no issue is more contentious than the form of professional education and training required of its practitioners. These observations by the authors above underscore the importance of education in national integration and development. This is important considering the desire of the nation at working towards the attainment of the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs).

Conclusion and Recommendations

Based on the findings in this study, one can conclude that the education and training of library and information professionals is an overriding factor in national integration and development. This is to state that education and training of library and information professionals is a strong determinant of national integration and development. Information service is enhanced for societal benefit due to the education and training of information professionals. From the result of this study, the following recommendations were made:

1. The curricular of library schools should capture national integration and development. Also, courses which bother on these areas should be made compulsory and not elective for students, hence, students may end up not taking the course(s) if the status is elective.
2. Nigerian Library Association (NLA) and the Librarians' Registration Council of Nigeria (LRCN) should organize enlightenment campaigns for its members on national development and integration as part of their mandates for continuous professional education and training.

3. Librarians due to their proximity to citizens should be involved in conception, implementation and appraisal of initiatives of the government and non-governmental organizations targeted at enhancing national integration and development.
4. Librarians on attachment / industrial training can be encouraged to carry out their trainings amongst people of other cultures and ethnic backgrounds. This will help them have fair share of the culture of others and assist them in conceptualizing programmes that can engender national integration and development.

References

- Aguolu, C. C. and Aguolu, I. E. (2002). *Libraries and Information Management in Nigeria*. Maidugari: Ed-Linform. pp. 427- 439.
- Alapiki, H.E. (2005), 'State creation in Nigeria', failed approaches to national integration and local autonomy. *African Studies Review*, Vol.48, No.3, pp.49-65.
- Alapiki, H. and Barikor, I. B. (2002), 'The Politics of Ethnicity and Political Integration in Africa'. In: Efemini, A.O. (Eds), *Ake and African Development: Selected Issues*, Port Harcourt: Paragraphics, PP.127-140.
- Ojo – Igbinoba, M. E. (1995). *History of Libraries and Library Education*. Lagos: Uto Publications, Chapters 2-4.
- Ikoru, F. (2001). Personnel Management in Nigerian Academic Libraries: Some Issues. *Language and Librarianship Journal*, 1(1): 139 – 149.
- Oduagwu, M. C. (2001). Human Relations Strategies for Improving Non-professional Librarians in AlvanIkoku College of Education, Owerri and Federal University of Technology, Owerri, libraries. Unpublished MLS Dissertation, Imo State University, Owerri, Nigeria.
- Ogundipe, O. O. (2005). *The Librarianship of Developing Countries: the Librarianship of Diminished Resources*. Lagos: Ikofa Press, Chapters 2-4.
- Nnaji, L.O. (1986). *The Library in Nigeria*. Enugu: Fourth Dimension Publishers, pp. 23-24.
- Nzotta, B. C. (1983). Professional Careers in Nigeria. *Nigerian Libraries*, 19 (1 – 3): 27 – 33.
- Lawal, O. O. (2002). *The Library Profession in Nigeria*. Calabar: University of Calabar Press,