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Interest and Librarians' Choice of Library Profession as a Career in Tertiary Institutions in Akwa Ibom and Cross River States of Nigeria

By
Professor Michael Afolabi*

&

ImaObong A. Etim**

Abstract

The study investigated Interest and Librarians' Choice of Library Profession as a career in tertiary institutions in Akwa-Ibom and Cross River States of Nigeria. It sought to investigate interest and its relationship with librarians' choice of Library profession as a career. The 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. Interest had a significant relationship with librarians' Choice of Library Profession. The results of data analysis showed a high positive correlation (0.70) between interest and librarians' choice of career. The study concluded that interest was the overriding factor in Librarians choice of career. The study recommended that library administrators should make the library an environment where librarians can explore, familiarise with and publicise their personal characteristics thereby encouraging individuals to consider choosing the library profession as a career in tertiary institutions.

Introduction

The term "Librarian" is used often and incorrectly to refer to anyone who works in a library. Para-professional or clerical staff working in a library is more properly referred to as library clerks, library assistants or some equivalent title. A librarian is an information professional trained in library and information science, which is the organisation and management of information resources and services for those with information needs.

*Prof. Afolabi is with the Dept. of Educational Technology/Library Science, University of Uyo, Nigeria.

**ImaObong A. Etim is from the Library Department, University of Uyo, Nigeria.

Typically, librarians may be categorized as public, school, special, independent or academic. Some librarians are independent entrepreneurs working as information specialists, cataloguers, indexers, publishers and other professionals in specialized capacities. When compared to older professions like Law and Medicine in any society, the consensus of opinions among experts in library and information science is that librarians and information scientists still have a problem of recognition and respect. (Dewey, 1977; Aguolu 1976; Aguolu and Aguolu, 2002; Ugah and Ntui, 2005).

Every individual who has attained a certain level of education is encouraged to set high aspirations for himself and to work hard to achieve these goals. People are increasingly made to become aware of the prestige that goes along with a successful career choice. As such, interest is often used as a pressure to induce individuals into predetermined professions. Though some individuals are indecisive about choosing a career in library and information service, the field of information services has prominent professionals. These groups of professionals are referred to as librarians and the greater bulk of their work lies in helping others find information and select materials best suited to their needs.

Statement of the problem

A wrong choice of career contributes to a lack of job satisfaction and malaise at work. In choosing a career therefore, it is of utmost importance to examine how interest relates with such a decision. Many theories have explained why and how individuals choose and enter different professions. In a way, most of what motivates individuals to enter a profession also account for the challenges and difficulties encountered in making and implementing a career decision. Studies show that people's choice of library profession as a career seems to be an illusion from the outset. Other decisions to settle in the profession have been mostly interest related. For instance, Berry (2007) in a research on why people choose librarianship stated that respondents cited "love of books" as the most common reason they chose the career.

Object of the Study

The purpose of this study was to determine the relationship between interest and librarians' choice of the library profession,

Research Question

What relationship exists between interest and librarians' choice of the library profession?

Hypothesis

Interest has no significant relationship with librarians' choice of the library profession.

Review of Related Literature

The interest a person has is important to the career choice he makes. Personal interest, values, self-assessment and aptitude are keys to making career decisions. The four factors are not mutually exclusive though, but could be used interchangeably depending on the context of the situation. Interest refers to the likes and dislikes of an individual, which determine his preferences for choosing an occupation or a profession (Shertzer and Stone, 1981). An individual's personal interest greatly affects the type of career a person will enjoy. Some people are interested in careers that encourage teamwork and allow for significant interaction with others. By so doing, their interest will be enshrouded in friendliness, generosity, helpfulness, tactfulness, understanding, responsibility and sympathy. Olayinka (1983) stated that there are many careers in which people with the above personal qualities can derive satisfaction.

Aptitude, which is an aspect of interest, could also be a determining factor in one's choice of career. Uba (1983), Onyemerekeya and Uhegbu (1998) observed that aptitude or special abilities determine the level of an individual's performance in a given profession. The individual needs to understand or have knowledge of his aptitude because different professions require different aptitude and if a profession requires capacities in which one is deficient, one may find it difficult and frustration may set in leading to a lack of job satisfaction and maladjustment (Ipaye, 1986).

It is nearly impossible to make a sound choice regarding a career. Therefore, Tracy and Rounds (1995) asserted that "people who do not understand themselves are not prepared to make a decision regarding the rest of their life". Invariably, self-assessment enhances personal interest and is the key to making career decisions. It is crucial that individuals assess themselves regularly to know where their interests, values and abilities lie.

Self-assessment is a benchmark of career choice, thus an individual who doesn't know which career to choose will need to return to a state of re-evaluating self. Nnachi (2000) stated that perception people hold of themselves tends to influence their choice of career. The influence of interest on career choice is well examined in Buttler and Cayon (1992) and Sax (1994).

In their research to show how academic environments boost librarian's interest in the field of Library and Information Science, Smart *et al.* (2000) reported that "librarians in different clusters of academic libraries create distinctive academic environments as a consequence of their preference for alternative goals and competencies". From their findings, it can be inferred that academic environments have an over-riding influence on the choice of librarianship as a career and the stability of librarian's abilities and interests. Therefore, academic environments socialize librarians towards the choice and development of interests and skills predicated by Holland's (1997) typological theory. In a study, Olayinka (1973) investigated among other things the career Nigerian youths preferred most and the reasons they offer for their choice. In descending order of magnitude, their most preferred careers were medicine (17.9%), engineering (16.7%), nursing (10.4%), accounting (8.9%) and business administration (6.3%). Apart from high salary and better conditions of service, another major reason for their choice of career was humanitarian interest. This is done with the belief that one could do well in a career that spurs the individual into it. Generally, such a belief is held in consideration of personal interest.

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 86 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
College of Education, Afaha Nsit	6	6	100
College of Agriculture, Obio Akpa	2	2	100
Maritime Academy, Oron	2	2	100
Akwa Ibom State Polytechnic, Ikot Osrurua	2	2	100
University of Calabar, Calabar	41	41	100
Cross River State College of Technology	7	7	100
College of Education, Akamkpa	1	1	100
Total	86	86	100

The total population of 86 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 for this study was a researcher-developed questionnaire which was referred to as Interest and Librarians' Choice of Library Profession Questionnaire (ILCLPQ). The questionnaire was given research experts in the areas of library and information science, for face, construct and content validity. Their suggestions and modifications were incorporated into the final draft of the instrument.

To test the reliability of the instrument, 20 copies of the questionnaire was given to 20 librarians randomly sampled outside the area of study. The responses obtained were analysed using frequency count and the data obtained were used to determine the reliability of the instrument using Cronbach's alpha reliability test.

Table 2: Summary of Cronbach's alpha reliability indices of the PVLCLP questionnaire

S/No	Variables	K	K-1	K-1	ES ² ₂	ES ² ₁	V
1.	Professional variables	14	13	1.08	6.02	20.97	0.79
2.	Professional choice library profession	13	12	1.08	5.82	18.99	0.76
	Total	27	26	1.04	8.03	27.83	0.74

The researcher personally administered copies of the questionnaire through research assistants to all librarians in tertiary institutions in Akwa Ibom and Cross River States that made up the sample. The hypothesis was tested using Pearson Product Moment Correlation Coefficient (PPMC) at 0.05 alpha level.

Data Analysis and Result

Hypothesis One:

Interest has no significant relationship with librarians' choice of the library profession.

In testing this hypothesis, interest in the profession is the independent variable and librarian's choice of the profession is the dependent variable. The result of Pearson Product Moment Correlation Analysis in Table 3 was used in determining the relationship between the two variables. The decision is taken at 0.05 alpha level of significance.

Table 3: Pearson Product Moment Correlation Coefficient (PPMC) summary of the analysis of scores on interest and librarians' choice of library profession (N=86)

Variables	ΣX	ΣX^2	ΣXY	$r_{xy}(\text{Cal})$	Df	$r_{xy}(\text{Crit})$
	ΣY	ΣY^2				
Interest in librarianship (X)	113	1501	15159	0.70*	84	.20
Librarians' choice of library profession (Y)	114	1546				
	8	2				

N=Number of pairs, *Significant at <.05 alpha

The result in Table 3 shows that the calculated correlation coefficient, r_{xy} , for the relationship between librarians' interest in library and information service and their choice of library profession is 0.70 while its corresponding table value, $r_{xy(\text{crit})}$, is 0.20 at df 84 and 0.05 alpha level of significance. As indicated the calculated correlation coefficient, 0.70, is greater than its critical value of 0.20, showing that the relationship is statistically significant. That is, there is a significant relationship between the librarians' interest in library and information service and their choice of library profession. With this observation, null hypothesis one which states that Interest has no significant relationship with librarians' choice of library profession was rejected.

The positive value of the calculated correlation index indicates that the relationship is positive. That is, librarians' choice of library profession increased with increasing interest in the profession.

Discussion:

Interest and Librarians' Choice of Library Profession

The result in Table 3, which investigated the relationship between interest in librarianship and librarians' choice of the library profession, showed that there exists a significant positive relationship between the two variables. The magnitude of the correlation index, 0.70, indicates a high correlation between interest and the respondents' choice of the library profession. The result of this study validates Olayinka's (1973) study which found that one of major reasons that Nigerian youths preferred careers like medicine (17.9%), engineering (16.7%), nursing (10.4%) accounting (8.9%) and business administration (6.3%) was humanitarian interest. This finding also agrees with Kanle's (2006) assertion that interest is a significant predictor of peoples' choice of careers. According to Kanle (2006), his choice of career in library and information service was based on his interest in developing and providing services and resources that inform and entertain others. The findings of this study therefore underscore the importance of people's interest in a particular career before choosing it. As noted by Ipaye (1986), lack of interest in a profession leads to lack of fit satisfaction and maladjusted behaviours in workplace. Hence, before choosing any particular career, people should know themselves and then carefully consider their likes and dislikes.

Major Finding

The results of the data analysis summarized in Tables 3 yield the following findings:-

- 1) The study found that there is a high positive correlation between interest and librarians' choice of library profession (index = 0.70). This indicates that the majority of the librarians chose the profession because of the passion they had for it. Interest is a significant factor in librarians' choice of their profession. The implication is that people should be allowed to take to professions in which they are genuinely interested in and are adequately trained for.

- 2) Based on the findings in this study, it is concluded that librarians' interest in library and information service as a career in tertiary institutions was the overriding factor in their choice of profession. The implication is that people should be allowed to take to professions in which they are genuinely interested in and are adequately trained for.
- 3) The findings of this study confirm Frank Parson's Trait/Factor theory and J. L. Holland's personality theory that the individual possesses a unique pattern of traits, such as interests, values, abilities and personality characteristics, which help them, become aware of their chances of success or failure in choosing a particular career.

Recommendations

From the result of this study, the following recommendations were made:

- 1) The study found that there is a high positive correlation between interest and librarians' choice of library profession. Based on the finding, this researcher recommended that individuals wishing to become librarians should choose a career based on their aptitudes, interest and abilities in order to succeed in the library profession.
- 2) Before choosing any particular career, people should know their altitude and aptitude and then carefully consider their likes and dislikes.
- 3) Individual must acquaint themselves with Holland' Typological model because the closer the match of personality to the job, the greater the satisfaction. This model takes a cognitive, problem solving approach to career planning and has been extremely influential in vocational counselling.

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