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Yahaha Aliyu
University of Maiduguri, yayaliyu@yahoo.com

Tukur Abba
Federal University of Technology, Yola, tukur_abba@yahoo.co.uk

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Yahaya Aliyu
Department of Library Science
University of Maiduguri Maiduguri
Borno State, Nigeria

Tukur Abba
Ibrahim Babangida Library
Federal University of Technology
Yolayola, Adamawa State, Nigeria

Introduction

The Department of Library Science, University of Maiduguri, was established in December 1977. An undergraduate degree programme began in the 1982/83 academic session. The master's in library science (MLS) programme began in 1993/94, with the following areas of specialisation: Foundations of Library and Information Science; Bibliographical Studies and Information Services; Library Management; Organisation of Knowledge; and Information Science. The objectives of the master's programme include:

- To educate graduates to understand and appreciate the changing library and information needs of the Nigerian society.
- To provide students with advanced theoretical knowledge and their relevant application to library and information problems.
- To provide students with advanced management skills and techniques for application in libraries and other library-oriented institutions such as publishing for library schools.
- To provide the personnel for library schools.
- To educate students in the theory and practice of communication to enable them to relate information effectively to the needs of their communities.
- To train students to acquire advanced skills in one or more areas of library and information science.
- To promote professionals who are competent in identifying problems and conducting research in various aspects of library, information and archival science (MLS Handbook, 2000).

A doctor of philosophy (PhD) in library and information science (LIS) begin in 2006/07. As stated in the *PhD handbook* (n.d.), the department, having enhanced its trained manpower capability with the master's programme for more than ten years, was faced with a pressing demand for a doctoral programme. The programme is designed to train academics and professionals with relevant theoretical knowledge in LIS for public and private organisations and to develop advanced management personnel with technical and conceptual skills for the organisation and administration of modern libraries and related institutions. The programme will also produce teaching personnel for LIS departments.

The dissertation is one of the major requirements for the award of the Degree of Master of Library Science (MLS) in the University of Maiduguri. Usually an approved topic on any aspect of Library Information and Archival work to be research and reported upon. A seminar is required on the approved topic prior to the completion and submission of the dissertation to the School of Postgraduate Studies. In Duck and Beck's work as quoted by Fosu and Alemna (2006), the goals of a dissertation are to meet the requirements of a degree, proving that one has mastered the skills necessary to one's chosen scholarly field, while at the same time, making an original contribution to that field.

Literature on analytical studies on undergraduate final year projects and postgraduate dissertations/theses on Library and Information Science has generated a considerable amount of research over the years. Afolabi and Mohammed (1984) analysed 371 final year undergraduate projects submitted to the Department of Library Science, Ahmadu Bello University, Zaria, between 1972 and 1983. Their study showed that the aspect of Librarianship most of the students concentrated on was Library Services, the type of library most discussed was the Public Library and the geographical area most covered by the researchers was Kaduna State. Momoh (1993) studied the statistical analysis of final year undergraduate Library Science projects at the University of Maiduguri, between 1981 and 1990. The findings of the study showed that Library history is the most concentrated subject area and the most discussed type of library was the Academic Library. It recommended that heavily concentrated areas should be de-emphasised while the future focus should be on the least/non-discussed areas. Fosu and Alemna (2006) analysed Masters dissertations written on the Balme Library, University of Ghana by students of the Department of Information Studies, University of Ghana between 1998 and 2005, with a view to ascertaining how the management of Balme Library has implemented the recommendations from the dissertations. The analysis takes the form of the type and year of dissertations, subject of dissertation and whether written by Balme Library staff or not.

Objectives of the Study

The objective of the study is to analyse the MLS dissertations submitted to the School of Postgraduate Studies, University of Maiduguri between 1996 and 2008, in order to determine the following:

- The total number of dissertations by academic year.
- The subject areas covered.
- The type of library focused.
- The geographical areas covered.
- The gender of the researchers.

This study being first of its kind on the analysis of Master of Library Science dissertations in the University of Maiduguri, its findings will hopefully reveal the research trends of postgraduate students in the Department of Library Science, University of Maiduguri. This will in no small measure help both the Department and prospective postgraduate students to focus their researches on areas that are least or not concentrated upon by previous dissertations. Similarly, the study will serve as a database for the Department which could be updated periodically.

Methodology

The data for this study were gathered from the MLS dissertations accepted by the School of Postgraduate Studies, University of Maiduguri and deposited in the Ramat Library and the Department of Library Science Laboratory, University of Maiduguri. Each dissertation was analysed thoroughly in terms of the year of dissertation, subject area, type of library, geographical area covered and the gender of the student that presented the dissertation. The data gathered were analysed using descriptive statistics of frequency counts and percentages.

Results

The results of the study are presented in tables below:

Table 1: Distribution of Dissertation by Academic Year

Academic Year	Frequency	Percentage
1996	1	2.6
1997	2	5.1
1998	2	5.1
2000	4	10.3
2001	3	7.7
2002	3	7.7
2003	2	5.1
2004	4	10.3
2005	7	17.9
2006	9	23
2007	1	2.6
2008	1	2.6
Total	39	100

Table 1 shows the distribution of Master of Library Science dissertations by academic year. A total of thirty-nine (39) dissertations were produced between 1996 and 2008. The 2006 academic year recorded the highest productivity of dissertations with nine (9) representing 23 percent.

Table 2: Distribution of Dissertation by Subject

Subject of Dissertation	Frequency	Percentage
Information Science	7	17.9
Library Personnel Management	5	12.8
Library Resources	5	12.8
Serial Librarianship	4	10.2
Library Resources Conservation/Preservation	3	7.7
Library Services	3	7.7
Library Administration	2	5.1
Library Automation	2	5.1
Collection Development	2	5.1
History of Libraries	1	2.6
Library Association	1	2.6
Library Profession	1	2.6
Library Services to Children/Adolescents	1	2.6
Library Standards	1	2.6
Publishing and Book Trade	1	2.6
Total	39	100

Table 2 shows the distribution of the subject areas of the dissertations, ranked in the order of their scores from the highest to the lowest. Information Science ranked highest with 7 scores representing 17.9 percent, Library Personnel Management and Library Resources followed with 5 scores representing 12.8 percent each. Serial Librarianship recorded 4 scores representing 10.2 percent, Library Resources Conservation/Preservation and Library Services recorded 3 scores representing 7.7 percent each. Library Administration, Library Automation and Collection Development recorded 2 scores each representing 5.1 percent. While History of Libraries, Library Associations, Library Profession, Library Services to Children and Adolescents, Library Standards and Publishing and Book Trade recorded one score each representing 2.6 percent.

Table 3: Distribution of Dissertation by Type of Library

Type of Library	Frequency	Percentage
Academic Library	24	57.1
Public Library	7	16.7
None	4	9.5
School Library	3	7.1
Special Library	3	7.1
Private Library	1	2.4
Total	42	100

Table 3 shows the distribution of dissertation by type of Library covered. The table reveals that a total of 42 scores were recorded for the type of library covered by the dissertations. The figure 42 is above the total number of dissertation produced between 1996 and 2008 covered by the study. This increase is due to the fact that some of the dissertations covered more than one type of Library. The table further revealed that Academic Library recorded the highest scores of 24 representing 57.1 percent; Public Library recorded 7 scores representing 16.7 percent. Four dissertations representing 9.5 percent did not focus on any type of library. School and Special Libraries recorded 3 scores each, representing 7.1 percent while Private Collection/Library recorded one score representing 2.4 percent.

Table 4: Distribution of Dissertation by Geographical Area

Geographical Area	Frequency	Percentage
Borno State	21	46.7
Adamawa State	8	17.8
Bauchi State	4	8.9
Plateau State	3	6.7
Benue State	2	4.5
Kwara State	1	2.2
Niger State	1	2.2
Oyo State	1	2.2
Yobe State	1	2.2
North-Eastern Nigeria	1	2.2
North-Western Nigeria	1	2.2
Republic of Cameroun	1	1.1
Total	45	100

Table 4 shows the distribution of dissertations by geographical area. The table reveals that the total of 45 scores was recorded for dissertation by geographical area covered. This is above the total number of dissertations (39) produced between 1996 and 2008 covered by the study. This increase is due to the fact that some of the dissertations covered more than one geographical area. The table further revealed that Borno State ranked first with 21 scores, representing 46.7 percent; Adamawa State 8 scores, representing 17.8 percent; Bauchi State 4 scores, representing 8.9 percent; Plateau State 3 scores, representing 6.7 percent; Benue State 2 scores, representing 4.5 percent; while Kwara, Niger, Oyo, Yobe States, North-Eastern, North-Western Zones of Nigeria and the Republic of Cameroun had one score each representing 2.2 percent.

Discussion

Table 1 reveals that the Department of Library Science, University of Maiduguri has produced thirty-nine (39) dissertations in the Master of Library Science programme, from 1996 and 2008.

The subject-matter of the dissertations as shown in table 2 revealed that the most researched subject area was the Information Science, followed by Library Personnel management and Library Resources. The choice of Information Science as the most research area among the Postgraduate Students could be probably associated to the fact that it is considered as a current subject area because it encompasses Information and Communication Technology and its application to Libraries, hence the interest of the students in choosing it as an area of specialisation. The second most researched subject area was the Library Personnel Management and Library Resources, which are aspects of Library Management in Librarianship. The interests of the students in this area might be attributed to the fact that majority of these students are professionals managing various libraries and might have identified problems in the management of modern libraries, hence the interest to conduct research in the area. However, it is not out of place to suggest to the Department to encourage prospective postgraduate students to carry research into other areas of specialisations such as Bibliographical Studies and Information Services, Organisation of Knowledge and Foundations of Library and Information Science, which are hitherto, yet to receive attention from the postgraduate students.

The distribution of dissertations by type of Library covered as shown in table 3 revealed that Academic Librarianship is the type of Library most widely focused in the dissertations. The interests in the Academic Library could be attributed to the fact that majority of these students are working in Academic Libraries in institutions of higher learning such as Universities, Polytechnics, Monotechnics and Colleges of Education. Private Library had the least score despite the fact that numerous private collections of Islamic Scholars and traditional rulers which are bound in Borno State. Also, Aguolu (1986) lamented that there are still many extant Arabic manuscripts, scattered here and there among Emirs, Alkalis and Mallams; these records, which are largely of a theological, legal or administrative nature, and vital for research. In a similar finding, Mommoh (1993) in his study on Statistical Analysis of Final Year Undergraduate Library Science Projects at the University of Maiduguri rightly suggested that the department should encourage students to being such collections to the lime-light. Also, the National Library of Nigeria is the type of Library that did not receive focus at all in the dissertations analysed, hence the need for the department to encourage prospective students into the Master of Library Science programme to take interest in conducting research.

The geographical areas focused in the dissertations as shown in table 4 revealed that Borno State is the most concentrated area covered by the dissertation, followed by Adamawa and Bauchi States. This finding may be likely due to the fact that the Master of Library Science Programme attracts more students in these states being the catchment area of the University and the only institution that offers Master of Library Science programme in North-Eastern Zone of Nigeria. Kwara, Niger, Oyo, Yobe States, North-Eastern and North-Western Zones of Nigeria and Republic of Cameroun recorded the least in the geographical focus of the dissertations. Similarly, the gender of the students who presented the dissertations revealed that majority 23 (59%) were male while 16 (41%) were female respectively.

Conclusion

The study analysed 39 Master of Library Science dissertations accepted by the School of Postgraduate Studies, University of Maiduguri, between 1996 and 2008 academic sessions. The analysis focused on productivity of dissertation by academic year, subject area, type of library, geographical area covered and gender of the students that presented the dissertations. The analysis revealed that the 2006 academic year recorded the highest productivity of dissertations with nine (9) representing 23 percent, the most researched subject area was Information Science, the type of Library most research was Academic Librarianship and Borno State was the most focused geographical area in the dissertations presented during the years covered by the study.

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