

Prospects and Challenges of the Librarian Registration Council of Nigeria (LRCN) in Ekiti and Ondo States of Nigeria

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Abstract: The purpose of the study is to examine the prospects and challenges of the Librarian Registration Council of Nigeria (LRCN) with a view to knowing the merits of establishing such a professional body and the possible problems/constraints that may arise in the process of such establishment. The study employed a descriptive research of the survey design. The population consisted of all the staff of the Libraries in Nigeria, while the sample was made up of 100 Library Staff selected by purposive sampling technique. A self-constructed questionnaire was used as the instrument for the study. The data collected were analyzed using simple percentages. The study recommended that sex should not be a barrier for registering members by the council.

Key words: LRCN, establishment, purposive, questionnaire, constraints, barrier

INTRODUCTION

In Nigeria, a number of studies have been conducted on the need for academic status for Librarians and how to make them professionals.

Adelabu (1984) confirmed the struggle that had been made to secure academic status for the librarians in Nigeria. To this end, it was believed that librarians should be registered by a body to be qualified to practice and enjoy the academic status and benefits. It should not be for ever dick and harry or all comers.

Ajidahun (1993) observed that library users do not know who is a librarian and the roles to be played by a librarian. It was believed that a librarian is someone who moves around in the library telling readers to keep quiet and saying silence please. This was due to the ignorance and lack of awareness on the part of the library users as to who librarian is. The poor recognition accorded librarianship and librarians made Fasanya (1984) to lament on the lack of recognized body to register practicing librarians with a formal code of conduct to regulate librarianship profession. Many people felt it is ridiculous to study shelving (library studies) in the University due to ignorance of the usefulness and importance of the profession. Some even felt librarians are inferior to their colleagues and so, are seen as riff-raffs. For librarianship profession to attain a comparable status with other professions like medicine, education, law and so on, there was a strong agitation among the librarians for the establishment of a body to register only qualified librarian and meet other conditions to make librarianship a profession.

The fact that the librarian is an academic staff of an institution requires that whoever will be a librarian must attain certain level of qualification and must be registered by a body. This led to the setting up of the librarians' registration council of Nigeria. This was backed up with act number two of 1995 and the act empowers the council to register only professionally qualified librarians and whoever refuses to registered by the council should not practice as professional librarian in Nigeria or elsewhere in the world. If this can be followed strictly, then librarians can be accorded academic status they deserve. It should be noted that if librarians are grouped with academic staff and enjoyed all the benefits of academic staff, they should be ready to abide by the promotion criteria of academic staff. For example, publication of articles in journals, attending conferences and presenting inaugural lectures among others. There is an indication that many librarians are ready to be registered, for them to be accorded the professional and academic status. But only 541 librarians have been registered and have collected their registration certificates, while others are yet to be registered.

Having become a registered librarian, people will be forced to recognize the profession to be at par with their academic colleagues, otherwise librarianship cannot and should not be called a profession.

Therefore, this study will look at the prospects and challenges of the Librarian Registration Council of Nigeria (LRCN) in Ekiti and Ondo States with a view of making it a professional body.

Statement of the problem: Inadequate funding to support the functions and to under take the activities stipulated

by the act establishing the council is making the registration of members difficult. Also, the lack of fund has not enabled the accreditation committee to visit the library schools to accredit their courses, talkless of giving librarians equal status with their academic contemporaries. LRCN has not been able to set up a proper secretariat or head quarter and to recruit staff to provide administrative support for the members.

Purpose of the study: The purpose of this study is to examine prospects and challenges of the Librarian Registration Council of Nigeria (LRCN) with a view to determining its relevance to making librarianship a profession and according them equal status with their academic colleagues. Also, the study will determine the rate of response of librarians to registering as a Chartered Librarian of Nigeria (CLN).

Furthermore, the study will ascertain the hindrances and shortcoming of the LRCN in registering its interested and qualified members, with a view to providing possible solutions to such problems wherever they arise.

Research questions: The following research questions were raised for the study.

- Is there any difference in the number of male and female librarians applying for registration with the LRCN?
- Is educational qualification affecting the registration of librarians with the LRCN?
- Is age of librarians affecting their registration with the LRCN?

MATERIALS AND MATHODS

The study is a descriptive research of survey design.

The population consisted of all the staff of libraries in Nigeria, while the sample was made up of 100 library staff selected using the purposive sampling technique. This was so because only the qualified and trained librarians participated in the study.

A self-constructed questionnaire was used as the instrument for the study. The instrument was made up of section A was on the respondents' characteristics like age, sex, qualifications and so on while section B consisted of 17 items on the registration issues with the LRCN.

The data collected were analysed using simple percentages. The instrument was administered and collected on the spot with a return rate of 100%. The instrument was validated by the test-retest reliability method. The responses were correlated using the pearson

correlation analysis and a correlation coefficient of 0.82 was got, which was considered high enough and tests experts were made to scrutinize the items to ensure both face and content validities.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

The results are as presented below.

Research question 1: Is there any difference in the number of male and female librarians applying for registration with LRCN?

Table 1 shows that there are more male librarians seeking registration than female librarians with the LRCN. This result supported the view of Eboka (1984) who recommended more male librarians than female.

Research question 2: Is educational qualification affecting the registration of librarians with the LRCN?

Table 2 shows that masters degree holders have the highest percentage and doctorate degree holders have the least percentage. This implies the higher your qualification, the less your interest in registering with the LRCN.

This finding supported Daniel (2005) who found a low relationship between qualification and registration.

Research question 3: Is age of librarians affecting their registration with the LRCN?

Table 3 shows that it is the librarians of middle age that are more interested in registering more than the young ones and those who are about to retire. The findings of this study contradicted the result of Okegbola (2005) who found out that librarians of all ages are interested in registering with their professional body.

Table 1: Sex of respondents

SEX	F	% YES	CUM
Male	54	54	54.0
Female	46	46	100.0
Total	100		

Table 2: Education qualification of respondents

Qualification	F	% YES
B.Sc/B.A/B.Ed	30	30
Masters Degree	46	46
Ph.D	6	6
Others	18	18
Total	100	

Table 3: Ages of librarians

Age Group	F	% YES
21-30	14	14.0
31-40	32	32.0
41-50	44	44.0
50-60	10	10.0
Total	100	

RECOMMENDATIONS

Bases on the findings of this study, the following recommendations were made:

- Both male and female librarians should be encouraged to register with the LRCN.
- Minimum of University degree should be required for registration with the LRCN, so that librarian's council be seen as qualified professions.
- Librarians should be encouraged to register early enough as soon as they are degree holders regardless of their age and not to wait until when they are moving towards retirement.
- Librarians should enjoy all the benefits of academic staff as soon as they have registered with the LRCN.

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