LIBRARY AND INFORMATION SCIENCE EDUCATION IN ZAMBIA: ISSUES AND TRENDS PRE- AND POST-INDEPENDENCE

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Abstract

Library and Information Science (LIS) education is central to sustaining development in any nation. It equips individuals with the knowledge and skills to effectively manage much-needed information and knowledge resources in organisations. This chapter presents a historical background on the evolution of LIS education in Zambia pre- and post-independence. It provides an overview of the current status and provision of LIS education as well as research programmes in the country, focusing on universities and colleges. The challenges confronting these institutions in providing such education are explored and solutions are suggested. This chapter will hopefully assist university and college management in furthering the development of LIS education in Zambia as well as enhance the academic knowledge of lecturers and students in this field.

Key Words: Library and Information Science, Education, Issues, Trends, Zambia

INTRODUCTION

Education is the primary determinant of development in every society. Not only does it impart lifetime skills, but it also provides a window of opportunities. It is practically impossible to sustain development without an educated populace. According to Burnett (2013), the development of tertiary education is a core objective in many national strategic plans or visions. For instance, Zambia's Vision 2030 underscores the importance of investing in human resources through education and training to ensure job creation and socio-economic transformation. Thus, the role of higher education in any nation cannot be overemphasised. Universities UK (2010) posits that

higher education institutions have the responsibility to equip individuals with the knowledge and skills required for key positions in all sectors of the economy. It adds that higher education institutions produce new knowledge through research and can transfer, adapt and disseminate knowledge as well as being important institutions in civil society.

Library and Information Science (LIS) is one of the higher education programs that is important in sustaining national development. It equips learners with knowledge and skills to effectively manage the information and knowledge resources of organizations. We live in an information society where information is recognised as a crucial resource in development and acts as a link to development. For instance, for sustainable development to take place, there is a need for relevant, accurate and complete information on health, education, the environment, industry, good governance, freedom, human rights, and wealth creation, to mention but a few. Information is a prerequisite for informed action at individual, institutional, national and global levels. At the personal level, it helps individuals to achieve self-fulfilment. At organizational level, the input of relevant, accurate, complete and timely information is critical for management functions such as organizing, coordinating, directing, planning, budgeting, controlling, staffing and decision making. Compared to other critical resources such as labour, capital and property, information provides an organization with a competitive edge in this age of scarce resources, which must be efficiently utilized in order to survive and achieve organizational objectives. At national level, information plays a very important role in development. Any developmental effort requires adequate input of information to enable planners and policy makers to select the best options in a given context. With the availability of appropriate information, alternative solutions can be weighed and pursued. Information helps to improve productivity by minimizing the chances of unnecessary duplication. In today's competitive world, information about competitors helps a producer to improve the quality of their goods and services.

In order for information to be managed and to flow to the various users who need it on a daily basis, as well as in their various roles in contributing to sustainable development, there is need for educated and trained information personnel (Chifwepa, 1999). Thus, LIS education equips learners with knowledge and skills to effectively organize and provide technical, economic and environmental information for research and development as well as for decision making so as to

create an appropriate framework for sustainable social and economic development. It develops human capacity in broad terms to manage information for democratic governance, transparency, accountability, and full observance of human rights, freedom of association, and political consciousness among others, so as to transform society and ensure that it recognizes information as a national resource. It is increasingly recognized that the right to information is the door to the fulfilment of other rights. Without information, it is impossible for citizens to enjoy their right to participate in political life and to self-determination, among others. According to Lundu (1998), LIS education and training offers new insights into the implications of proposed strategies to solve some of the critical problems confronting society.

Historical Background of LIS Education in Zambia

The practice of LIS education in Zambia is mainly a post-independence development (Mwacalimba, 1981) and is linked to the growth of libraries in the country. The story of libraries reflects the social, economic, cultural, and educational needs to which they have responded and also demonstrates that the conditions which affected the community also affected the development of libraries. As Ramesh and Babu (2007) rightly state, "the origin and growth of the libraries depend on the educational and cultural conditions of the society at any time. Library as a social organ has certain social obligations. These obligations vary with the educational and cultural needs". Library and Information Science education in Zambia has its origins in the colonial era when the first libraries were established. Colonialism introduced reading and writing to the indigenous people (Otike, 2012). Creating a reading culture meant that books had to be made available. Since they were fairly expensive for the ordinary person, libraries became a necessity (Otike, 2012). One of the major events during the colonial period in Zambia was the establishment of the Livingstone subscription library around 1908. This was followed by a number of small subscription libraries in the 1920s in the townships of Chipata, Kasama, Mongu, Mansa, Lusaka, Luanshya, Choma and Ndola (Wedgeworth, 1993). As more libraries were established, there was a need for trained librarians (Otike, 2012).

The early libraries were run by expatriate librarians educated in the West. The missionaries were preoccupied with industrial and trade education rather than higher education for Africans that did

not fit with their plans. Indeed, they came from traditions that reserved higher education for the privileged classes. In addition, the social thinking that emerged in the 19th century posited that black people were mentally deficient and could thus not receive higher education (Wedgeworth, 1993). Thus, training in librarianship for Africans was inevitably not part of their plans (Mulauzi et al, 2011). A notable achievement during this period was the allocation of funds from the Colonial Development and Welfare Fund to establish the Northern Rhodesia Publications Bureau in 1947. It was renamed the Joint Publications Bureau of Northern Rhodesia and Nyasaland in 1948 (Wedgeworth, 1993). This encouraged the establishment of more libraries in the country.

While, as Mulauzi et al (2011) note, education during the federal period continued to be mainly characterised by segregated and inequitable patterns of provision for African and European children, the Bureau introduced a country book-box library scheme in 1959 that provided the majority of Africans with their first access to library services. While the need for library education in Central Africa had been emphasised by the South African Library Association in 1950, no positive action was taken (Rooke, 1986). In 1960, the Joint Publications Bureau received a grant-in-aid from the Ford Foundation towards the development of a nationwide public library service in the country. The Northern Rhodesia Library Service (NRLS) was established in 1962. This was renamed the Zambia Library Service in 1964. According to Rooke, the NRLS prepared a submission on library education abroad (in the U.K. and Uganda) for the First National Development Plan. Given growing demand for librarians in both the colonies and the mother countries, it became obvious that overseas training could not provide sufficient numbers (Otike, 2012). Otike notes that, a number of regional seminars were held between 1953 and 1963 on the African continent to sensitise colonial governments on the need to establish public libraries to speed up socio-economic development. It was recognised that library schools were needed to train staff.

At independence, Zambia embarked on massive investment in all areas of education including LIS. The country was under pressure to train librarians due to the fact that expatriate staff left the country immediately after independence. According to Otike (2012), many left because the independent states could not continue supplementing their salaries. There was a worrying shortage of trained librarians in Zambia (Chifwepa, 1994). Funding was made available to the Ministry of

Education for the expansion of education facilities, including colleges and universities. The first higher education institution, the University of Zambia, was officially opened in 1966 and it was the first institution to introduce LIS education at first degree level. The Bachelor of Library Studies was introduced in 1967 under the Department of Library and Information studies. The need was also expressed for sub-professional (library training below the level of a diploma) and professional (library training diploma level and above) education. These courses were offered at Evelyn Hone College (Lusaka), Mindolo Ecumenical Foundation (Kitwe) and the Posts and Telecommunications College (Ndola) (Mwacalimba, 1981) from 1967 to 1971 as concerns were raised about their sustainability. Chifwepa (1994) submits that until 1968 (when the first cohort of sub-professionals graduated), there were no trained librarians in Zambia. The Department of LIS produced its first three graduates in 1970. It began as part of a UNESCO project under which students pursued a three-course minor in library studies as part of their degree program. Otike (2012) states, that, UNESCO played a leading role in the establishment of LIS education programmes in Africa, particularly Anglophone sub-Saharan Africa due to the conviction that illiteracy could only be eradicated with the support of libraries. However, Rooke (1986) states that the UNZA library did not recognise the Bachelor of Arts with Library Studies (B.A.L.S.) as a sufficient qualification for appointment as an assistant librarian because library studies subjects were minor options within the curriculum. In 1970, steps were taken to bring all aspects of library training in Zambia at graduate and non-graduate level under the jurisdiction of the University. Thus from 1971 onwards, the sub-professional (Certificate) qualification the semi-professional (Diploma) qualification and the B.A.L.S./Bachelor of Science with Library Studies (B.Sc. L.S.) degree qualifications were all offered by the Department of Library Studies until in 1991 when the Diploma programmes were discontinued. The degree was transformed from the B.A.L.S to the Bachelor of Library and Information Studies (B.A.LIS) in 1996 so that students could have a double major with courses from either the School of Humanities and Social Sciences or the School of Natural Sciences or it could be taken as a major with two minors.

In 1971, the need was expressed for an Intermediate Certificate of six months and a Diploma of two years (Rooke, 1986). Due to staff shortages in the newly established Department of LIS, it was decided that the University would focus on the degree and diploma programmes. Hence, the Certificate programme was run at Mindolo Ecumenical Foundation (MEF) in Kitwe and accredited

by UNZA from 1969 to 1973. The MEF also offered a range of elementary library training programmes in 1974. According to Rooke, the Department of LIS offered Diploma programmes from June 1972 to March 1974. Due to economic decline and an unstable political situation, in 1974, the Department experienced staffing and economic problems which led to the suspension of the Diploma programme and biennial admission of students between 1974 and 1982. UNZA ceased its accreditation of the certificate programme in 1975 and it was completely transferred to the MEF where it was offered from 1976 to 1978. Meanwhile, between 1973 and 1976, Nkrumah Teachers College in Kabwe offered teachers elementary library education as an elective course. This programme collapsed in 1976 and between 1978 and 1980, Copperbelt Teachers College in Kitwe was the only institution that offered courses in school librarianship (Rooke, 1986).

After the demise of the MEF certificate course, a certificate course in library studies aimed at Namibian refugees resident in Zambia was launched at the Posts and Telecommunications College (currently known as the Zambia Information and Communication Technology College) in Ndola. The programme was initially offered for three months and after negotiations, was elevated to a six-month course based on the MEF curriculum. The first Zambian students were enrolled in 1980. Evelyn Hone College of Applied Arts and Science also started offering a certificate programme in LIS in 1990 and introduced a Diploma programme in 1999. In 2005, UNZA launched a non-credit certificate programme under Extension Studies which was offered until 2008. In 2009, the UNZA Senate approved the programme. In 2012, the Diploma programme was introduced at UNZA under Extension Studies and the Department of LIS started offering a Master's degree in LIS.

Current Situation

Zambia currently has over 360 training institutions, most of which are privately owned. Only three offer comprehensive programs in LIS, the University of Zambia, Evelyn Hone College of Applied Arts and Science and Zambia Information and Communication Technology College. In 2014, the University of Barotseland (UBL) also started offering librarianship training on a small scale at degree level as they still have to build capacity. Education and training of library and information professionals in Zambia is integrated into the general pattern of higher and vocational education with the state often maintaining close control of admission requirements and quotas, standards, examinations and certification (Chifwepa, 1994).

Levels of LIS education in Zambia

LIS education in Zambia is offered at different levels. These include the certificate course, undergraduate diploma, postgraduate diploma course, Bachelor of Library and Information Science (B.A.LIS), Master of Library and Information Science (MLIS), Associateship in Information Science and the PhD Programme. The certificate programmes are designed to prepare students for basic assistance in library and information practice while diploma courses prepare students for paraprofessional engagement and semi-professional work in library practice. At university level, studies are undertaken for the B.A.LIS, over a period of four years, Masters for two years and PhD for three (full-time) to six years (part-time). All the programmes at university level prepare students for professional library practice. The certificate programmes are offered UNZA, UB and Evelyn Hone College of Applied Arts and Science while diploma programmes are offered by UNZA and Evelyn Hone College only. Degree and professional programmes are offered by UNZA. Table 1 below shows the programmes offered by Zambian LIS schools.

Table 1: Programmes offered by Zambian LIS Schools

S/N	LIS School	LIS programmes		Duration
1.	University of Zambia (UNZA) (public university)	i)	Certificate in Library and Information Science	1 year
		ii)	Diploma in Library and Information Science	
		iii)	Diploma in Records Management	2 years
		iv)	Bachelor of Arts with Library and Information Studies (B.A.LIS)	2 years 4 years
		v)	Master of Library and Information Studies (MLIS)	2 years
		vi)	PhD in Library and Information Studies	4 years
2.	University of Barotseland (UBL) (private university)	i)	Bachelor of Arts with Library and Information Studies (B.A.LIS)	4 years
3.	Evelyn Hone College of Applied Arts and Science	i)	Certificate in Library and Information Science	1 year
		ii)	Diploma in Library and Information Science	
		iii)	Certificate in Records Management	3 years 1 years

4.	Zambia Information and Communication Technology College	i) Certificate in Library and Information Science	1 year

According to Chifwepa (1999), the development and authentication of training programmes is the responsibility of the parent organisations of the training institutions (Ministry of Higher Education). However, there are considerable disparities between the two certificate courses and the two diploma courses. For instance, the certificate programme at UNZA does not require one to do a library practicum, unlike the one offered at Evelyn Hone college. Chifwepa observed that the Ministry of Education has not regulated the curricula and it appears that it has not been concerned about this diversity. Most employers are not aware of the differences in curricula and therefore are not aware of the difference in the caliber of graduates. Their main concern is the qualification (Chifwepa, 1999).

The Need to Redefine LIS Objectives

Although LIS education has been offered for over four decades in Zambia, there have been a number of changes both within the training environment and in industry practice. These include the number of students admitted to the programme which has increased each year. For instance, in the year 2000 the department of LIS at UNZA enrolled a record number of 68 students. In 2014, the department enrolled more than 450 students in its full-time, distance and parallel programs. There have also been changes in the subject content within the dynamic and broader field of information science as well as changes in industry skill requirements; this required the introduction of more detailed, specific and diverse courses.

In view of this, there is need to redefine, re-engineer and diversify LIS programmes. Library and Information Science education and training needs to keep up with advances in Information and Communication Technologies (ICTs) in order to produce skilled and competent LIS professionals that will promote socio-economic development. The LIS curriculum must equip learners with a set of skills and competencies that are suitable in the evolving information environment. It is widely recognised that skilled human capital is a key stimulus of socio-economic development. Skilled human capital is the creative force that generates productivity, which in turn drives

economic growth and LIS professionals are well-placed to further the agenda of the information society when equipped with relevant skills and competencies.

Burnett (2013) claims that LIS schools in many underdeveloped nations are not keeping abreast of the rapidly changing digital environment and are facing new knowledge and skills demands from employers. However, it has been observed that LIS graduates in Zambia compete favourably in the job market and are found in every sector of the economy. They are employed as social workers, economists, human resource managers, development planners, information analysts, management information experts, academicians and so on. Major employers include the banking sector and the government, especially the Ministry of Health which employs health information specialists. Gone are the days when organisations had difficulties in managing information. Today, in each and every section of society, there is a component of information management. For organisations to effectively manage this information, they require trained personnel. Thus, one can conclude that to some extent, the curriculum is meeting industry's skills requirements.

Problems confronting LIS Education in Zambia

As in most African countries, LIS education in Zambia has not been without its challenges. One of the difficulties is **the mushrooming of colleges and universities** providing LIS education. Four institutions, both public and private are now involved in LIS education. Amunga and Khayesi (2012) note that this is due to demand for higher education, a very competitive education system and job market, commercialisation of education and the introduction of parallel programmes. One of the implications is diverse curricula and naming of the programmes. However, Amunga and Khayesi argue that the most important concern should be the content covered to help students deliver the services expected in the job market.

Another challenge is **a shortage of faculty staff** in specialised LIS fields. For instance, in the Department of LIS at UNZA, only two staff members have postgraduate qualifications and none of the staff is qualified to teach in specialised fields like knowledge organisation, records management, ICTs, reference services, etc. Burnett's (2013) study found that, "there are inadequate educators especially at graduate level and in specific fields of records and archives

studies, publishing studies and IT related courses." The staff: student ratio at UNZA for the 2014 academic year was 1:175 for core courses. The LIS Department at UNZA hires part-time lecturers from the University library or other departments. Lecturers tend to be over-stretched and students may not receive sufficient attention. Classroom space is normally inadequate and lecturers find it difficult to effectively assess a large number of students. An undergraduate student that was interviewed lamented:

We are 160 plus in our class… we hardly fit in all the venues where our classes are scheduled…the lecturers with such large classes normally cut on the number of assessment tasks given to students as it takes time to receive feedback when we are many…

A post-graduate student revealed that there are few lecturers to effectively supervise research projects:

The principal supervisor has never given me feedback on my proposed study. He seems to have several engagements…this has affected my progression…I hope I am doing the right thing.

Amunga and Khayesi (2012) observed that staff shortages mean that students do not receive timely feedback on their work, preventing them from completing assignments on time. On the other hand, Onyancha and Minishi-Majanja (2009) note, that, the pressure on lecturers causes them to miss out on promotion because they do not have the time to devote to research. Many leave the LIS Department and join the university administration or leave the university altogether for research and other organisations. Staff shortages are exacerbated by delays in hiring additional staff (Amunga and Khayesi, 2012). Teaching staff are the bedrock of any training programme and hold the keys to change and innovative transformation (Abubakar and Abbas, 2014).

University LIS Schools also need to diversify so that they do not produce generic librarians. There is a dire need for school librarians, archivists, records managers, reference librarians, systems

librarians, and librarians specialised in music, law, the medical field, children, community, finance, systems, etc. These areas are not receiving sufficient attention in existing LIS curricula in Zambia.

Furthermore, LIS schools in Zambia have not invested sufficiently in **Continuing Professional Education (CPE)** so that the available staff can start specialising in the areas of need. Onyancha and Minishi-Majanja (2009) note that CPE for LIS professionals is underdeveloped across sub-Saharan Africa. They add that this is due to the limited number of LIS professionals being overloaded. Ocholla (2000) argues that no single skill can equip an individual for all stages of their career as technical skills become out-dated. Thus, lecturers need to continuously update their knowledge and skills in the ever-changing information and knowledge environment. There is need for training and re-training of staff, especially in ICTs, records and archives management and so on. Affirming the need for CPR, Ahmed (2012) submits that since knowledge is dynamic, it is imperative for LIS educators to undergo training and retraining. Skills and knowledge acquired years ago may not match modern developments. The success of any educational programme rests on the quality of the educators (Abubakar and Abbas, 2014).

Abubakar and Abbas (2014) also argue that effective learning can only take place with adequate facilities and an enabling environment. However, LIS education in Zambia is hampered by a **lack of facilitie**s and also faces practical training pitfalls. In the first place, few institutions are available to host students for practical training under the supervision of qualified professionals. The popularity of the LIS program has led to large student enrolment in recent years. This has resulted in an unprecedented increase in the number of students requiring attachments. For instance, at UNZA, the number of students due for practical training rose from 226 in the 2006 academic year to 468 and 492 in 2013 and 2014, respectively. The large number of students also means that teaching facilities such as classrooms are inadequate.

Despite the introduction of ICT courses in most LIS schools in Zambia, observation revealed that all these schools lack information technology laboratories. For instance, LIS students at the University of Zambia share a computer laboratory with students in the Department of Computer Science. This laboratory cannot accommodate all those that need to use it at one time and students

have to be grouped into various manageable streams. Furthermore, it is not fully equipped. Edegbo (2011) observed that most LIS schools teach ICT at the theoretical level as they do not have the required quantity and quality of computer equipment and also have poor access to the Internet. An LIS student doing an ICT course commented:

> *There are no computers in the lab. Each student is required to carry with them personal laptops when going for labs. The challenge with personal laptops is that it is hard to install the software required. As a result, some students lag behind due to difficulties to install software in those laptops. Some even give up. They would rather learn theory only than practical because it is not everybody who can afford a laptop. Some students are forced to share laptops. Now, this is a practical course which requires practice every day and because most students just borrow laptops, it is not possible to practice every day. The only time they would practice is when they have a lab session.*

A former LIS student stated:

> *I left UNZA without adequate knowledge on Web creation and Internet searching. Computers were inadequate during our time… five to seven students had to sit around one computer during lab sessions…I found this to be a challenge as not each one of us was given chance to practice…*

Ahmed (2012) poses this important question: how can a LIS school function effectively when there is no computer laboratory? According to Ahmed, the survival or sustainability of library schools depends on adequate provision of ICT facilities with internet connectivity. This would equip students with the skills they require to access certain jobs. Edegbo (2011) also notes that students require access to appropriate hardware and software. This often involves installing and maintaining many classroom workstations to accommodate sets of workstations or networked PCs.

Another problem experienced by LIS schools in Zambia is the **lack of accreditation of the LIS profession.** The importance of accreditation in any profession cannot be overemphasized as it

ensures quality by monitoring, assessing, and evaluating the standards and quality of the education offered at a college, university or other institution of higher learning. It thus reassures students that the education they are receiving is valuable and worthwhile. Recognition of the qualification obtained also assists colleges and universities to achieve positive student learning outcomes and certifies that they are qualified to work in the profession. Importantly, Edegbo (2011) observed that accreditation by professional bodies also has the potential to promote consistency in core educational areas which meet employers' requirements across countries.

Accreditation is a battle that the LIS profession has been fighting for years. While the current government has drafted a Bill in this regard the profession does not have the legal backing to regulate itself. Unlike other prominent professional bodies such as medicine, nursing, finance and engineering which have accreditation and are able to regulate themselves, there is no professional accreditation body to evaluate the programmes in LIS schools. According to Akakandelwa (2015), accreditation impacts on training, practice and conduct. In the first place, without accreditation, the training provided will be of different standards; this is precisely what is happening in Zambia. It is also difficult to determine how much content to approve at each level of training (i.e., certificate, Diploma, Degree, Masters, etc.). Certification also becomes a problem without accreditation. It is difficult to determine which institutions can certify the facilities that should exist, and the duration of the training and content. For instance, in the United Kingdom, the Chartered Institute of Library and Information Professionals (CILIP) is a professional body for librarians, information specialists and knowledge managers. It acts as a voice for information, library and knowledge practitioners and works to advocate for the profession. The Institute also promotes unity through shared values and develops skills and excellence in the profession.

Secondly, accreditation affects practice. In Zambia, anyone can be employed as a librarian even if they are not qualified. If the profession was accredited, it would be possible to regulate who should practice librarianship. Individuals would be affiliated to an accreditation organisation.

Thirdly, accreditation affects conduct. There is no code of conduct for librarians and information professionals in Zambia and even if there were one there is no legal capacity to enforce it. Librarians are bound by their employers' codes of conduct. Ultimately, lack of accreditation affects

the image of the profession. Library and Information Science professionals have little say in terms of conditions of service and it is difficult to advocate for the profession.

Apprenticeship (i.e., mentorship) is yet another problem affecting LIS education in Zambia. Such programs play a major role in mentoring and providing skills and experiences which cannot be acquired through formal training and are important knowledge transfer tools. However, no such program exists in LIS schools in Zambia. Junior Doctors work under a Senior Doctor for a year to acquire relevant practical skills before they can work independently. It is important to note that theory and formal training do not adequately prepare one to work as a professional. It takes five years to become a good teacher under the mentorship of senior colleagues.

Library and Information Science education in Zambia also confronts a number of challenges in terms of the **curriculum.** Akakandelwa (2015) argues that the current curriculum does not seem to be relevant to industry. This is supported by Edegbo (2011) who claims that there is a wide gap between what is being taught in many LIS schools and what is practiced in industry. According to Ikoja-Odongo (2006), industry is dynamic but the curriculum is static. It is still heavily slanted towards traditional librarianship, making it difficult for graduates to operate in the changing environment. Information and Communication Technologies have impacted every economic sector and human activity, calling for new skills, knowledge and approaches. The curriculum has to respond to these changes. Minishi-Majanja (2007) states that, the market demands LIS graduates with strong ICT skills and a broad perspective on information management as industry recognises the importance of effective management of knowledge and information. Minishi-Majanja adds that this calls for versatile professionals that are able to access relevant information, synthesize data and repackage it to enhance organizational effectiveness. This requires extensive ICT knowledge and skills.

Akakandelwa (2015) claims that one of the problems at UNZA is that surveys are not conducted to inform curriculum redesign. Instead, it is designed from a theoretical perspective. There is very little focus on the views and needs of industry as well as existing skills gaps, relevant content and who potential employers are. Akakandelwa asserts that:

The difficulties of reviewing curricula at the University of Zambia are that there is too much bureaucracy e.g. formalities… the system must be flexible enough to allow efficient and effective review of curricula. For instance, the University of Zambia can decentralise curricula review from Senate to School level.

On the other hand, Minishi-Majanja (2007) observed that, while LIS schools do consult industry to some extent in redesigning the curriculum, it is often difficult for employers to visualize how their needs can be met by such and vice versa. Producing job-specific graduates is a tall order considering their diverse nature. In trying to provide for everybody, LIS schools often end up satisfying none. Thus, it is difficult for them to meet stakeholders' expectations (Beukes-Amiss, 2006).

Akakandelwa (2015) posed another important question with regard to the LIS curriculum in Zambia:

Have we maintained the core values and principles of librarianship in these revised curricula or have we lost it? The answer is that we have lost the core values and principles of librarianship. In pursuit of ICTs which we cannot avoid and is important, we are losing our core values and philosophies. This demonstrates that there is something wrong in our curriculum. Observational experience is that most of the graduates from our LIS schools in Zambia cannot spell out the five Laws of Librarianship by Ranganathan. These are important laws that are applicable even in the electronic environment. Additionally, graduates of nowadays cannot even spell out the theories of classification, theories of cataloguing, etc.

Admission procedures and intake are also a challenge**.** For instance, at UNZA, 150 first year LIS students enrolled for the 2015 academic year. The Department of LIS has a total of more than 600 students, including distance, parallel and full-time. While management has put pressure on the School to increase intake, this is not matched with commensurate resources. Furthermore, the program is flexible in that students can major in LIS or take it as a minor subject in another program; this has made it very popular. The result is that LIS schools have inadequate library

facilities, lecture theatres, staff and laboratory facilities. Quality has been sacrificed in the name of quantity and lecturers have no time to attend to individual student's concerns. It is impossible to run tutorials due to inadequate space and equipment, yet this is where students are supposed to be grounded. Learner-centred approaches to teaching have been abandoned. Many lecturers have no office space and there is no time to conduct research to generate new knowledge. This prompted Akakandelwa (2015) to ask:

> *In the 50 years of the University of Zambia's existence, how many textbooks have been created? There is no funding… no time… for lecturers to be engaged in such activities.*

Student selection criteria add to the problems**.** For instance, at UNZA, it is not clear whether the profession is the first or last choice. Furthermore, UNZA offers different modes of study and distance and parallel modes have relaxed selection criteria. Such students may not be able to cope with the course. There is also a need for more stringent selection criteria at Masters level. According to Akakandelwa (2015), the problem lies in the fact that the skills, knowledge and conduct that LIS students should possess when they graduate are not defined in the departmental handbook. These attributes change from time to time depending on the environment. This takes us back to the issue of curriculum. Akakandelwa added that insufficient research has been conducted on the double major degree offered at UNZA, particularly in terms of its impact on industry. There is need to establish whether the second major strengthens the librarianship component of the degree. It has been argued that the double major has robbed Zambia of librarians because those that are trained do not necessarily become librarians but obtain other jobs using their second major. The LIS School is thus unwittingly training teachers, bankers, economists, administrators, psychologists, sociologists, demographers and so on.

Emerging Trends

We are living in an information society where a most important economic activity is the production and dissemination of information. In the modern world, change is a basic driving force in every human activity. According to Abubakar and Abbas (2014)), IT has had a profound, pervasive, and dramatic impact on the LIS discipline. Any activity or business that fails to keep up with

developments is likely to become less competitive. Edegbo (2011) submits that the information society demands a work force that can use technology as a tool to increase productivity and creativity.

Edegbo adds that, in order to remain relevant, the discipline of LIS must produce a new generation of librarians that can effectively use new ICTs in their professional practice, while Ahmed (2012) observes that it is essential for any training institution or profession to move with the times. Technological advancements have resulted in significant changes in LIS across the world. This calls for curriculum review (Otike, 2012). This is one of the emerging trends in LIS schools in Zambia, with universities and colleges coming up with new programmes to meet market demand. The major issues include the relevance of the current curriculum and how teaching and learning could be reshaped. It has also become imperative for LIS schools to consider the form of CPD required, and how it might assist educators at LIS schools. For instance, the curriculum for the degree programme at UNZA has improved as modern courses such as management, ICTs, archives and records management, research and knowledge management have been added. However, there is need to align the LIS programmes to make them more relevant to industry. While theory is important, it must be married to practice.

Library and Information Science schools in Zambia have adopted a number of measures to ensure that their educators are up to date in terms of professional practice in changing disciplines especially those related to ICTs. Educators are encouraged to pursue further courses or attend local and international conferences/seminars. Furthermore, most LIS schools have increased their staff complement. For instance, from four full-time staff in 2004, the LIS department at UNZA now has 11. While this has been matched by increased enrolment, efforts are being made to ensure that the situation does not become unmanageable.

Recommendations

In view of the prevailing challenges confronting Zambian LIS schools, the following recommendations are made:

i) As recommended by Ahmed (2012), LIS schools in Zambia should gradually de-emphasise traditional information approaches in favour of technological ones in both teaching and

practice. This implies that all courses in LIS programmes should include technological aspects.

ii)   LIS schools should build computer laboratories in order to effectively teach ICT-based courses.

iii) Since knowledge is dynamic, it is imperative for management of LIS schools to make deliberate efforts to recruit dynamic and ICT skilled staff in addition to training and re-training existing staff in contemporary information service delivery.

iv)   LIS schools should constantly review their curricula and introduce new programmes and courses to meet the changing needs of society and the labour market.

v)   The schools should conduct surveys when reviewing or designing curricula to determine the skills required; the adequacy or otherwise of the training provided, and the job market/prospects for graduates.

vi)   The LIS department at UNZA should develop a departmental handbook to guide not only the Department but students on various issues concerning the LIS programmes.

vii) There is need for LIS educators in Zambia to actively participate in professional associations to broaden their scope of knowledge and keep abreast with changes in their field.

viii) LIS schools should encourage apprenticeships among staff for the purposes of continuity; this could take the form of teaching and joint publications.

Conclusion

In today's knowledge-based economy, information is a strategic resource in every human activity, including economic, social and political life. The need for skilled information management personnel across all economic sectors cannot be overemphasised. Library and Information Science education equips students with the knowledge, skills and techniques required to effectively manage information. However, LIS education has become more challenging in light of technological advancements. This calls for strategies to ensure that information professionals acquire competencies that enable them to adapt to the changing needs of the labour market.

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