Born Yesterday: the Need for Reconstructing Master's Degree Programme in Library Science at the Bayero University, Kano, Nigeria

Bappah Magaji Abubakar
Department of Library and Information Sciences, Bayero University, Kano, PMB 3011
magaji02@yahoo.com

Kabiru Dahiru Abbas
Department of Library and Information Sciences, Bayero University, Kano, PMB 3011
kdabbas.lis@buk.edu.ng

Abstract
Developments in Information and Communication Technologies (ICTs), worldwide, are changing the face and direction of the LIS education and profession in general. As a result, educational offerings need to be revised to keep up with the current trends. This study examines the MLS programme offered by the LIS School, Bayero University, Kano, in terms of its curriculum and training facilities. The study also suggested a new masters' degree curriculum for the LIS School that is based on the current requirements (i.e. local and international). Such a curriculum is considered appropriate and necessary in bringing about the desired changes in the MLS programme. Thus, it is anticipated that graduates who are trained based on the proposed curriculum would have an edge in the ever-changing labour market for the LIS practitioners.
Keywords: Library and information science education; Information science; MLS programme; Library science; Curriculum; Bayero University, Kano

Introduction

Library and Information Science education has evolved and undergone fundamental changes in all its parts, particularly, during the last two decades due to rapid advancement in ICTs, especially the Internet and other digital technologies, which have implications for the profession in general. This has given rise to a variety of new areas of studies in the LIS discipline. Such changes, according to Chu (2010), have shaped and influenced how LIS professionals are educated. Thus, it is now common to see LIS schools changing the names of their programmes, degree titles and programme offerings, and in some instances, even offering joint degrees with other faculties (Abubakar & Idris, 2011). The structural changes taking place in the LIS education, according to Rehman and Marouf (2008), are profound, pervasive and universal. Similarly, Buarki, Hepworth & Murray (2011), have noted that the LIS schools are making changes in their curricula in order to incorporate ICT, and the skills of using them, which according to them, are becoming essential for LIS graduates.

Scholars and professionals in the LIS discipline have for long reached a consensus that the emerging information market required new breed information professionals that are equipped with the requisite skills necessary for survival in the dynamic and rapidly changing LIS environment. However, Xu (2003) has noted that meeting the demand for the next generation of information professionals is a formidable challenge for library and information science (LIS) education. Mêgnigbêto (2007) emphasized that, in order for the information professionals to play an active role in the new work environment, they need additional skills to be able to continuously fulfill their mission of serving as an intermediary between information seekers and the various information sources. In the same manner, Nonthacumjane (2011) asserted that LIS professionals working in the fast-changing digital age should possess the skills of providing information, as well as a set of personnel, generic, and discipline-specific knowledge skills, which according to her, are essential, especially in multidisciplinary contexts, where LIS professionals are expected to function.

Indeed, it has become a critical necessity for the various LIS programmes to adjust and expand their programmes to suit the new LIS environment, particularly, in the area of Information and Communication Technologies (ICTs), as well as economic and social development. Consequently, this call for an in-depth and structured education programmes for the LIS professionals (Lawal, 2009).

Although the LIS discipline has been witnessing a series of revolutionary trends, and the emergence of new areas of studies relating to knowledge management (KM), ICTs, networking, information science, information literacy, information architecture, and digital libraries, little changes has occurred in the curricula of LIS schools in the developing nations. For instance, Mêgnigbêto (2007) has observed that; while LIS schools in the Western countries update their curriculum regularly, the curricula of LIS schools in Senegal and Benin Republic, and even in other African countries has changed less. Other scholars (Mahmood, 2003; Gathegi & Mwathi, 2007; Singh, 2006 cited in Mahmood, 2012) had all pointed out similar situation in their respective countries. This

paper takes a critical look at the MLS curriculum of the BUK LIS School and proposed a viable curriculum for the LIS School that would cater for the changing LIS marketplace in Nigeria and even beyond.

The Bayero University, Kano (BUK) LIS School

The Department of Library and Information Sciences, Bayero, University, Kano was established in 1977, with the sole aim of producing subject librarians/graduates that are equipped with the specialized knowledge of Library and Information Science (LIS), as well as in one other academic discipline such as the Social Sciences, Humanities, Arts or Pure Sciences. It commenced with two-year diploma programme-Diploma in Library Science (DLS) up to 1980, when the Bachelor's Degree courses [BA/B.Sc. (LS)] were launched.

At present, the department offers different programmes of study, namely: Diploma in Library and Information Management (DLIM), Advanced Diploma in Information Management (ADIM), Bachelor of Science (Library and Information Science) [B.Sc. (LIS)], Bachelor of Arts (Library and Information Science) [BA (LIS)], Post-Graduate Diploma in Information Management (PGDIM), Master's Degree in Library Science (MLS), and a Ph.D Degree in Library Science (LS). However, plans were underway to change the nomenclature of the Master of Library Science (MLS) degree, to Master of Library and Information Science (MLIS).

The Master's degree in Library Science (MLS) was established in 1990, and it is designed to give students a broad and advanced understanding of basic methods and procedures used by modern library and information professionals. The minimum admission requirement into the programme is a first degree certificate preferably in Library and Information Science with a minimum CGPA of 2.75. The programme duration is two years minimum, and the maximum period is three years. The graduation requirements for the MLS programme include a satisfactory completion of 24 credit hours of course-work that comprises of core and elective courses. This is followed by the writing of thesis as a partial requirement which carries 6 credit loads.

Currently, there are twenty four (24) lecturers in the department (from Graduate Assistant to Professor grades) and a total number of fifty five (55) MLS students (2011/2012) session that are currently enrolled in the programme. Also, the LIS School has one (1) system analyst who takes charge of the departmental IT lab, as well as four (4) other administrative/non-teaching staff. However, studies at the MLS level is only run through the full-time mode.

With regard to facilities, the BUK LIS School has a departmental computer laboratory, known as the Information Technology Centre (Infortech Centre), which is stocked with 32 computers and Internet connectivity. Other facilities available included, a faculty based e-library, 4 overhead projectors, 2 multimedia Power Point projectors, 2 television sets, 2 TV receivers, 1 digital video camera, as well as 3 overhead projectors. Besides these, the department utilized the facilities provided at the University's Central Laboratory, known as the Centre for Information Technology (CIT), as well as the University Library for teaching purposes. Equally, the MLS programme got full accreditation from the National Universities Commission (NUC) in 2006. The NUC is the government regulatory body for university education in Nigeria; as such it conducts periodic accreditation of all university-based programmes in the country.

Purpose of the study

The purpose of this study is threefold:

- To examine the current situation of the MLS Programme in the BUK LIS School
- To expand the discourse on the LIS programmes and curricula within the LIS community
- To propose a model MLIS curriculum for the BUK LIS School, which other LIS programmes may strongly benefit from

Literature review

A review of the literature has revealed the existence of plethora of writings on the subject of LIS education and training in relation to the curriculum, particularly, in recent times. The curriculum is considered as a life wire for all LIS programmes, because, it takes care of what is to be learned by the students. A curriculum, according to Ocholla (2000), is a fundamental part of any education or training programmes, largely because it provides not only a list of courses or modules offered in a programme, but it also gives information on content, purpose, method, time/duration, trainers and location or situation of a programme or course of a study. A critical area of consideration in examining any education programme is the curriculum. The curriculum is a key factor shaping the educational outcomes of a programme, and how it is developed and delivered affects the experience of students in the programme, and the faculty involved (Lester, 2011). On the other hand, in any educational programme, the curriculum perhaps is the best barometer of its nature and content. The same applies to the LIS education (Chu, 2010).

Furthermore, the intellectual content of the curriculum for any programme has to keep pace with the demands of the profession (Edzan & Abdullah, 2003). Akkoyunlu (2008, cited in Mammo, 2011), observed that the primary focus of a curriculum is on what is to be taught and when and how it is to be taught. It is obvious that the type of

programme of study must be dictated by the content of the curriculum (Mohammed, 2008).

The International Federation of Library Association and Institutions (IFLA) (2009) guidelines for professional LIS programmes recommended that the core components of the curriculum of LIS programmes should comprise:

- The information environment, information policy and ethics, the history of the field
- Information generation, communication and use
- Assessing information needs and designing responsive services
- The information transfer process
- Organization, retrieval, preservation and conservation of information
- Research analysis and interpretation of information
- Applications of information and communication technologies to library and information products and services
- Information resources management and knowledge management
- Management of information agencies
- Quantitative and qualitative evaluation of outcomes of information and library use

As a consequence to the above, and also due to the dramatic shift in the information environment, LIS programmes worldwide are expected to make changes in their curricular, in order to accommodate the complexities that has been brought by the information technology revolution. In line with this, Karisiddappa (2004) emphasized that in view of the emerging network environment, the fundamental shift in the goals of the library, and the changes in information storage and delivery mechanisms, the LIS educational programmes should cater for the needs of these changes, by including in their course contents the required knowledge and skills. Changes in the LIS professions have been swift, and therefore, required to be reflected in academic policies and curricula (Rehman, 2012). The information profession has undergone changes regularly, and at higher level due to the ongoing advancement of information technology, advancement of information management, and the ever-changing learning behaviours and needs of users. Consequently, information professionals need to be developed in terms of knowledge and competencies, for them to work in such changing conditions (Tanloet & Tuamsuk, 2011).

Hence, the literature indicates that more trends are occurring in the LIS discipline globally. For instance, some scholars (Ameen, 2007; Rehman, 2003; Ocholla & Bothma, 2007; Gojeh & Bayissa, 2008; Tang, 1999) reported that LIS schools were altering the content of their courses and changing the names of their schools as well as programmes offered. Additionally, some were injecting new courses to their curricula which comprise of new areas like knowledge management, information literacy, multimedia, media and publishing, digital libraries, information architecture and website design. (Ocholla & Bothma, 2007; The-Lam, 1999; Chu, 2006; Chu, 2010; Callison & Tilley, 2001).

It is clear from the literature that Information technology (IT) has had a profound, pervasive, and dramatic impact on the LIS curriculum and the discipline as a whole which requires a very aggressive response from the LIS schools and the profession in general. By and large, the various LIS programmes of studies offered worldwide are expected to make meaningful changes in their curricula in a manner that would ensure a proper response to the needs of the emerging job market for the LIS professionals. Stueart (1998) asserted that a primary component in the education of information professionals is the construction of the curricula that are relevant, timely, and capable of meeting the educational needs of a specific and identified section of the information market.

In a related development, Aina (2007) argued that the LIS curriculum must be in tandem with the requirements of both the current and potential employers of the LIS trainees. He further noted that it must also be relevant to the immediate environment, as well mirror the best international practices. Additionally, the LIS trainees are expected to offer a variety of multidisciplinary courses from the curriculum of the LIS programmes.

The literature on the curriculum of the LIS programmes indicates that many studies were carried out in respect to the subject. For instance, Zimmerman and Jörgensen (1998) presented an overview in an article how the School of Information and Library Studies (SLIS) at the University at Buffalo, State University of New York, utilized a recent research results to review and re-evaluate its curriculum. According to the authors, the LIS education was affected by rapid changes, and therefore, it was expected to discern patterns of change that would likely affect the future of libraries and information agencies. The authors reported further that, the school used systematic designed model, which incorporated all relevant stakeholders, and commenced with the core curriculum review process, which was subsequently followed by the development of new information technology core courses.

In a related manner, Edzan and Abdullah (2003) undertook a holistic examination of the MLIS programme offered at the University of Malaya, in Malaysia. They reported that prior to the year 2000; the curriculum was heavily embedded with the traditional library science courses. However, according to them, the curriculum was revised not only to cater for the need of the students, but to also meet the demands of more IT oriented graduates.

Rehman and Marouf (2008) investigated the perceptions of the graduates of the Master of Library and Information Science (MLIS) programme at the Kuwait University, regarding coursework, faculty, instructional methods, facilities, field work, comprehensive examination and research component. They found that the faculty and core courses received the highest mean score for satisfaction; while on the other hand, many of the respondents were critical of the instructional methods and the facilities provided by the LIS School.

Ocholla (2000) carried out a survey to review and revise the curriculum of the Department of Library and Information Science, at the University of Zululand, South Africa, by means of examining the programme. The examination was done through product and market-type analysis. He discovered that sound education in the field of management; information searching, ICTs, analysis and synthesis of information, as well as the ability to perform practical work were regarded as essential aspects of the LIS training.

Chu (2006) undertook a content analysis of the curricula of 45 ALA-accredited LIS programmes in the United States. The study found that more elective courses were offered in the LIS educational programmes than the core courses. Similarly, 10% of the courses offered in the LIS schools were new in nature, and designed to deal with emerging subjects, as well as the latest developments in the LIS discipline.

Kigongo-Bukenya (2003) conducted a comparative study of the curricula of the East African School of Library and Information Science in Uganda, with the departments of Library and Information Studies at the Universities of Wales, Botswana and Cape Town. The study applied multiple approaches through the use of questionnaires, interviews, observations, focused group interviews, as well as debates. The results indicated the need for curricula policy, improvement of programme contents both academic and the ICT aspects, the need for indigenization and harmonization of the LIS programmes, the adoption of various teaching methods, improvement of space, teaching, research and ICT facilities. Also, there was the need for the introduction of practicum in the East African School of Library and Information Science (EASLIS).

Anna's (2011) study investigated the Information Technology units in the curricula of 8 universities that offered undergraduate degrees in LIS in Indonesia. She conducted an observation of the websites of individual universities, and carried out interviews with some faculty members of the LIS schools. She found that the curricula of the 8 universities had IT units, and therefore, recommended that more IT courses should be incorporated in the curricula of the LIS schools.

Zainab, Edzan and Abdul Rahman (2004) utilized the tracer study to ascertained curriculum relevance from the graduates of the MLIS programme of the University of Malaya. They found among other things, that 60% of the respondents indicated that the courses they took in the LIS School were relevant to their job responsibilities.

In a related article, Lutwama and Kigongo-Bukenya (2004) determined the appropriateness of the curriculum of the East African School of Library and Information Science to the professional practices in the LIS fields in Uganda. Their research which traced graduates between the years 1995-1999, found that the employers of those graduates complained about the lack of practical skills among the graduates.

Similarly, Mahmood and Shafique (2012) recently surveyed the alumni of the MLIS programme of the University of Punjab, Pakistan, with the aim of reviewing and improving the MLIS programme of the university. Two major objectives of the study were: to find out the nature of the jobs performed by the alumni of the MLIS programme, and to also seek alumni feedback with regard to usefulness of the various courses they had offered in the MLIS programme in respect to their present jobs. Major findings were that, the "alumni were performing a wide range of tasks in their job settings; they in addition perceived that traditional courses were useful in their present jobs, so also were some IT and communication related courses. Further, respondents emphasized on new teaching and delivery methods besides the routine class lectures, as well as mentioning that the quality of the MLIS programme would improve if lecturers receive training according to the changing trends in the profession."

Singh and Shahid's (2010) article examined the changing needs of Library and Information Science curricula in Indian universities. They reported that LIS schools in that country had inadequate infrastructure for curricular implementation, as well as the lack of expertise in ICT related areas.

Varalakshmi's (2009) study examined the digital library course contents in the curriculum of Masters' degree programmes in India. She found that the contents of the digital library course(s) were not satisfactory.

The MLS course structure

The MLS courses that are being offered by the department are as follows:

Table 1: Course Structure of the MLS Programme

FIRST SEMESTER

Course Code	Course Title	Credit Value
LSC 8201	Research Methods	2
LSC 8208	Special Libraries	2
LSC 8209	Public Libraries	2
LSC 8210	Archives	2
LSC 8213	Education for Library and Information Science	2
LSC 8218	Information Technology	2
LSC 8225	Serials Publications	2

SECOND SEMESTER

Course Code	Course Title	Credit Value
LSC 8202	Research Statistics	2
LSC 8207	Academic Libraries	2
LSC 8215	Information Science	2
LSC 8216	Library Automation	2
LSC 8220	Information Network	2
LSC 8221	Advanced Cataloguing	2
LSC 8222	Advanced Classification	2
LSC 8223	Advanced Indexing & Abstracting	2

- Compulsory Courses

However, considering the global trends of the LIS education, and the LIS profession which have been affected by profound changes, particularly, in relations to ICT courses, the curriculum looks too traditional and outdated. Various criticisms have always been expressed, that, the curriculum of LIS the programmes especially, in the developing countries did not kept pace with the increasing demands in the LIS discipline. (Haider, 1998; Mahmood, 2003; Mortezaie & Naghshineh, 2002) which according to many writers, is still traditional in nature.

It is worth noting that in the current curriculum of the BUK LIS School, courses were designed to fit the current contemporary Nigerian context. However, they are not really representatives of the global scenario. Of course, one may not forget the fact that, globally, the LIS environment is shifting from its traditional form to a new environment, the type in which librarians/information professionals will need to work and even compete with others, which require additional skills from them. This, unendingly, calls for a restructuring of the programme in a manner that would ensure compliance with current happenings internationally. But, it is observed here that the existing curriculum lacks in the area of ICT related courses as well as new/or modern courses that truly represent the paradigm shift from the traditional environment to a new form of environment.

It is worth stating that the inadequacy of the curriculum of the BUK LIS School was determined through a comparative analysis of the contents of the MLS programme, and their mapping with the Master's curricula of some top Information Studies Schools in the U.S. and UK (i.e., Graduate School of Library and Information Science, University of Illinois, University of Washington, and Loughborough University). This was done to ascertain courses not included by the BUK LIS School. The insufficiency was established by the nonexistence of many dynamic and innovative ICT related courses in the BUK MLS programme. For example, courses such as conceptual database design, network system administration, project management, information architecture, systems analysis and management, digital libraries, design of digitally meditated information services, information and knowledge management, digital curation and information needs and use were not taught. Therefore, it can be simply put that the curriculum is heavily loaded with traditional LIS courses. However, it is surprising to see that none of the above courses appeared in the curriculum. For example, Chu (2010) noted that the past decade has witnessed the emergence of new courses and concentrations in the LIS education. According to her, digital libraries, knowledge management, and information architecture represent the major ones.

It is clear from the existing literature (ALISE, 2000; Weech & Pluzhenskaia, 2005; Weech, 2007; Xu, 2003; Audunson, 2005; Ocholla, 2009; Okello-Obura & Kigongo-Bukenya, 2011) that the LIS profession is dramatically changing to a multidisciplinary one, and therefore, the LIS programme in the BUK LIS School and the country in general needed to appreciate the current trends. However, the dilemma of the LIS programmes in the country has actually been that of how to attract more funding for improvement in facilities and infrastructure. This is, more so when one considers the apparently intractable predicaments of underdeveloped/poor infrastructure and unfortunate funding situation that has bedeviled the country's university educational system. Diso and Njoku (2007), Ogbogu (2011), and Timilehin et-al (2010) had all reported about the poor funding

circumstances that led to a series of crises such as, deterioration of physical facilities, incessant strikes, general decline in standards, as well as the existence of hazardous learning environments in Nigerian universities. In fact, Diso and Njoku (2007) provided more insights into the funding scenario, by describing the situation in the following manner:

> The funding situation cuts across the entire education subsystems, from primary to tertiary levels, since the funding policy is general for the education sector as a whole. Therefore, the problems resulting from the situation affect all these levels with the university as the terminal institution, the worst affected. While the university system battles with all the crises arising from underfunding, the declining student quality from the lower level institutions (primary and secondary, or polytechnics and colleges of education) as a result of the same crises increasingly places additional pressure on the system. The trend has now been that each year the universities select the "the best" students; however, they only turn out to be, at best, last year's average.

It should be obviously noted that the report of the Association of Library and Information Science Education (ALISE) published in 2000 (ALISE, 2000) had reflected on the trends and changes that were shaping the curricula of LIS programmes in North America. In that report, six trends were recognized:

- LIS curricula were addressing broad-array of information environments and information problems, even though the library settings remain the heart of many LIS programmes.
- LIS curricula has witnessed the emergence of user-centered courses and has also continued to incorporate different perspectives from other fields of study. i.e. multidisciplinary issues.
- Increasing investment and infusion of IT into the LIS curricula i.e. information technology has underlies all aspects of the curriculum. As such, it was expected that the LIS programmes would bear the responsibility of keeping their students on the cutting edge of the existing and new technologies as they become available.
- LIS schools and educational programmes were experimenting with flexible programming to provide specialization within the curriculum.
- LIS schools and programmes were offering instruction in diverse formats (e.g. , course length, day and time of course offering, and on-or off-campus meetings, as well as distance education via the World Wide Web) to provide students with more flexibility.
- LIS schools and programmes were expanding their curricula by means of offering related degrees at the undergraduate, master's and doctoral levels.

Therefore, the above synopsis aptly points to the fact that the MLS programme in the BUK LIS school need to take note of some of these trends, particularly, trends numbers two and three where emphasis was placed on the issues of user-centered curricular, and the infusion of information technology in the LIS curriculum. However, due to the predicament afflicting LIS education in the country, especially, in relations to poor funding, and low level of infrastructural development, as mentioned earlier in the preceding paragraph, the merger of the traditional and modern courses in the LIS programme BUK has become inevitable. This is, more so, when one considers the fact that a large number of libraries that happens to be the major consumers of the LIS graduates are still traditional in nature. Therefore, the BUK MLS programme has to take note of the existing or contemporary realities of the nation. While reflecting on a similar situation, Mohammed (2008) unequivocally noted that due to degrading socio-economic status and other social problems, LIS education in the developing countries, particularly those in sub-Saharan Africa must take cognizance of the prevailing societal milieu. Either way, it is important to mention here that the extent to which the LIS programme respond to that clarion call for a hybrid kind of a curricular would surely go a long way in shaping the type of training it would provide, as well as the quality of the graduates the school produces in its effort to meet the demands and yearnings of the contemporary Nigerian society.

Looking into the future, and generally speaking, there is the need for the MLS curriculum of the BUK LIS School to be reconstructed, re-modified, and strengthened in a manner that will fit the contemporary 21st century expectations. In this regard, a new kind of MLIS curriculum will have to be put in place. Mammo (2011) noted that as a result of the shift from material world economy to knowledge economy, it is time to restructure and reshape the LIS field in a way that it fits the 21st century demands of the society. In a similar manner, Edzan and Abdullah (2003) opined that, if LIS schools continue to teach the basics while at the same time expand and upgrade their curriculum in line with the demands of ICT oriented environment, the new LIS graduates will enter the job market with ease.

The way forward
In order to be part of the global LIS environment, and at the same time join the recent trend for the internationalization of LIS education and curricula, the BUK LIS School must keep abreast with the latest developments and changes taking place in the profession, particularly, in relation to the ICTs and the needs of the job market for the LIS professionals. The BUK's LIS School should develop innovative courses in its MLS

programme to reflect the changing landscape. However, considering the current Nigerian scenario, the blending of the traditional and modern courses in the curriculum of the LIS School is inevitable. Essentially, a holistic approach must be adopted to ensure the restructuring and transformation of the following aspects, taking into consideration the peculiarity of the Nigerian LIS environment.

Curriculum

Considering the fact that the LIS curriculum is supposed to be dynamic rather than static, an in-depth review of the MLS curriculum of the BUK LIS School is required, which is expected to be radical in nature, to bring about the necessary changes into the curriculum. The proposed review should consider the present and future requirements of the information profession. Such curriculum changes necessitate the introduction of new/or modern courses as well as the re-modification of the contents of the existing ones, in order to give the students a competitive and improved chances in the labour market. The LIS School has to engage in dialogue with different stakeholders to ensure compliance with the current trends, as well as the interest of all parties concerned. It is, therefore, relevant to involve the professionals that comprise the employers, and the practicing information professionals. The professionals should be consulted about the skills needed for the future information professionals, the adequacy or other wise of the training programme provided, as well as the job market/prospects for the graduates. Also, the views of the students and the alumni of the MLS programme should be sought for. However, the local condition and situations should be appreciated.

The Faculty

The success of any educational programme rests upon the quality of the educators. In other words, educators are the bedrock of the LIS programme, and therefore, they are in a strategic position to act as instruments for change, initiating innovative transformations into the curriculum. In this regard, deliberate efforts should be made to ensure the recruitment of dynamic and ICT skilled faculty for the BUK LIS School, in addition to re-training of the existing faculty members. Stueart (1998) observed that the quality of a programme is reflected on its faculty, consulting, writing, speaking, research and other professional activities etc., therefore, according to him, the faculty expertise, as well as professional activities and interest must reflect the cutting-edge of research through the development and exploration of new knowledge and skills. Therefore, to this end, the BUK LIS School should strive not only to recruit new faculty, but also to initiate skills-upgrading programme for its existing faculty members.

Resources and Facilities

The appropriate provision of state-of-the art facilities is a critical element of any LIS programme. Therefore, it is worth noting that effective learning can only take place when adequate facilities and enabling environment is created. In terms of teaching facilities and resources, the department has made some appreciable provision. However, there is urgent need for the upgrading of the existing ones and the provision of those facilities that are not available in the LIS School. More computer laboratories, classrooms and offices should be provided and should be equipped with relevant modern teaching aids. Also, the departmental library deserves special attention and should therefore, be stocked with current collections which comprise monographs and current journals to fully support the teaching and research activities of the department.

Other LIS Schools

The experiences of other LIS schools in relations to curriculum development, review and modification are of primary importance. Therefore, it is imperative that other LIS schools both within and outside the country should be consulted in order to exchange and share curricula experiences, and to also ensure the intensification of the various aspects of the LIS programme. Additionally, in order to ensure the retooling of the information professionals to keep abreast, and to develop positive minds towards changes that are dramatically taking place in the LIS profession, there is a need for continuing education programmes to be established in the LIS School. It is, therefore, suggested that the BUK LIS School should establish continuing education programme through collaboration with the Nigerian Library Association (NLA).

Multi-disciplinarity of the Profession

Since the issue of multi-disciplinary perspective has taken a central stage within the LIS discipline, the BUK LIS School should establish multi-disciplinary activities/approaches in teaching and research. It is, recommended that the LIS School should interact and explore possible areas of collaboration with other departments and/or units within the University. Such as the departments of Mass Communication, Computer Science, Business Administration, and Law. The department can emulate Ahmadu Bello University (ABU) LIS School, where Mohammed (2008) reported that the department was collaborating in the areas of teaching and research with other faculties in that University. Thus, such collaboration and cooperation would broaden the intellectual and research capabilities of both the faculty members and the students.

Marketing of the MLS Programme

The significance of marketing of the LIS programme cannot be overemphasized especially, in the context of a developing country like Nigeria. Therefore, the BUK LIS School should develop aggressive marketing strategies aimed at creating awareness about the MLS programme, in order to attract more prospective students.

Additionally, the LIS School should also regularly conduct market survey of its MLS programme and the graduates of such programme in order to measure their employment track record. This would enable the school to determine the success or otherwise of the MLS programme in the present-day Nigerian society.

Proposed Masters' curriculum for the BUK LIS School

Having examined the critical aspects that needed restructuring, the next step would be the consideration of the curricular content and subject outlines. This is a very critical stage. In fact, Diso (2007) noted that curricular content and thematic profiles are the specific components that provide the building blocks for courses, and therefore, they serve as necessary guide to the teacher. The nomenclature of the masters' programme may include any of the following alternatives:

- Master of Library and Information Science (MLIS)
- Master of Library and Information Management (MLIM)
- Master of Science Library and Information Science [M.Sc. (LIS)]
- Master of Art Information and Library Management [M.A (ILM)]
- Master of Science Information and Library Management [M.Sc. (ILM)]

The minimum credit requirements for the masters' degree course-work may be adjusted to 30 credit hours instead of the present 24 credit hours. Similarly, the proposed courses for the masters' curriculum may include the following:

a) Core Courses
- Research Methods in Library and Information Science
- Research Statistics in Library and Information Science
- Information Technologies
- Information Organization and Retrieval
- Web Design/Structures and Information Architecture
- Management of Information Services and Resources

b) Elective Courses
- Special Libraries
- Public Libraries
- Records Management and Archives
- Academic Libraries
- Information Science
- Leadership and Change Management
- Intellectual Property and Copyright
- Digital Libraries
- Electronic Publishing/Publications
- Information and Knowledge Management
- Information Literacy
- Information Systems Analysis and Management
- Bibliometrics
- Advanced Indexing, Abstracting & Thesauri Creation
- User Information Needs, Behaviour and Use
- Internet Resources and Services
- Information Architecture
- Project Management
- Multimedia System Design and Administration

Table 2: Proposed Courses for the Masters' Programme

S/No.	Core Courses	S/No.	Elective Courses
1.	Research Methods In LIS	1.	Special Libraries
2.	Research Statistics In LIS	2.	Public Libraries
3.	Information Technologies	3.	Records Management and Archives
4.	Information Organization and Retrieval	4.	Academic Libraries
5.	Web Design/Structures and Information Architecture	5.	Information Science
6.	Management of Information Services and Resources	6.	Leadership and Change Management
		7.	Intellectual Property and Copyright
		8.	Digital Libraries
		9.	Electronic Publications/Publishing
		10.	Information and Knowledge Management
		11.	Information Literacy
		12.	Information Systems Analysis and Management
		13.	Bibliometrics
		14.	Advanced Indexing, Abstracting and Thesauri Creation
		15.	User Information Needs, Behaviour and Use
		16.	Internet Resources and Services
		18.	Information Architecture
		19.	Project Management
		20.	Multimedia System Design and Administration

Conclusion

Education for the LIS profession has evolved very rapidly, especially, in the last two decades which has resulted in curricular changes/revision, changes in academic policies, as well as the adoption of skills and methods from other academic disciplines through collaboration. Thus, without undue exaggeration, it is worth stating that the present MLS curriculum offered by the BUK LIS department is inadequate, and requires fundamental restructuring in order to keep pace with the global developments and requirements. This paper, has therefore, suggested the need for reconstruction of the MLS curriculum through the involvement of stakeholders, improvement in faculty's knowledge and the teaching facilities, collaboration with other LIS schools and other academic disciplines, in order to make the programme more competitive and acceptable in the ever-changing information environment. The paper has also proposed a masters' degree curriculum for the LIS School, which takes into consideration the requirements of the present-day LIS training.

The paper concludes by stressing that without considerable reform, the masters' programme offered by the department will continue to be left behind in the current transition, which the LIS field is presently experiencing. Thus, there should be fundamental transformation if the MLS programme is to remain within the cutting-edge, and viable.

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