

Full Length Research Paper

Proliferation of library and information science schools in Nigeria: Issues at stake and quality control

Katamba Abubakar Saka^{1*}, Salimatu Kashi Garba¹ and Musa Makama Zarmai²

¹Department of Library and Information Technology, School of Information and Communication Technology (SICT), Federal University of Technology, Minna, Niger State, Nigeria.

²Department of Library and Information Science, CABS, Kaduna Polytechnic, Kaduna, Nigeria.

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This paper highlighted the key issues at stake by the proliferation of Library and Information Science schools in Nigeria without due regard to the established standards. In terms of physical infrastructure, location, staffing issues, curriculum, laboratories and programme(s). The paper pointed out the use of other departmental facilities, building, over-relying on institutions' library staff and part-time lecturers from other library schools. The newly established library schools are either located in institutions' libraries, under consultancy services unit or as a unit of a department with their curriculum produced from the harmonization of older library schools. Other key issues at stake include: inadequate or absence of laboratories, workshops and the use of university librarians or outgoing university librarians as the heads of library schools. Some library schools run diploma while some run degree and/or higher degree respectively. The implication include: provision of inadequate training and acquisition of the low level of skills, over utilization of other departments' facilities leading to failure in resource evaluation and accreditation. There should be quality control by the regulatory bodies such as National Universities Commission National Board for Technical Education, with Librarians' Registration Council of Nigeria/Nigerian Library Association. NUC, NBTE and LRCN should ensure quality control for polytechnics running library and information science programmes in Nigeria. This should be in the areas of: resource evaluation, resources, admission requirement/student population uniform/harmonized curriculum, accreditation commencement of programme at lower level (National Diploma and Bachelor Degree); assessment of academic staff duties in the areas of teaching, administration, research and community services. The paper recommended collaboration among in the development of minimum academic standard and uniform curriculum for Nigerian Polytechnics and similar tertiary institutions running LIS programmes.

Key words: Proliferation, library schools, universities, polytechnics, standards, resources.

INTRODUCTION

Library education globally began in 19th century with the establishment of the first library school called School of Library economy in Columba College in 1887 and later

known as Columbia University. Three years later, the school was transferred to New York State library in with enrolment of 20 students (Reitz, 2005). Between 1890

*Corresponding author. E-mail: s.katamba@futminna.edu.ng.

and 1893, library schools were established at the Pratt Institute, Brooklyn, Drexel Institute, Philadelphia and Armour Institute, Chicago respectively (Issa et al., 2014). The 20th Century witnessed the establishment of first library school at the University College London in 1919, and in 1928 graduate library school was established in 1919 which gives librarianship a “professional character model”. With the contribution from Carnegie Corporation and British Government, the first regional library school was established in Ghana in 1944, though lasted for one year after which it was closed down. Through the support of Kenya, Tanzania and Uganda, East Africa Library School was established at the Makerere University, Uganda in 1963. The United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization (UNESCO) has contributed positively to the development of library education in Africa in the following countries:

Provide a director and British council to offer the services of lecturer in library school, established at Makerere University, Uganda in 1963. Establishment of regional training centre for librarians in Senegal in 1963; department of library studies, University of Zambia in 1966, department of library science University of Addis-Ababa Ethiopia to offer librarianship at postgraduate level and department of library studies, University of Botswana Gaborone in 1979 (Issa et al., 2014).

Microsoft Encarta (2009) revealed that South Africa Library Association provided introductory courses in librarianship, while University of Pretoria introduced undergraduate courses in library science in 1948.

In Nigeria, history of library education/library school can be traced back to UNESCO Seminar which took place in 1953 in Ibadan. One of the outcomes of the seminar was the establishment of a professional training programme in Nigeria, and thus led to the establishment of the first library school called Institute of Librarianship at the then University College, Ibadan. The first sets of students were admitted to read post graduate diploma (PGD) and masters in library science (MLS) degree respectively in 1960.

The role of Carnegie Corporation towards the development of library education cannot be undirected as eight years later, Carnegie Corporation sponsored a study on “Library Needs for Northern Nigeria” under the chairmanship of F.N. Sharr and report recommended the establishment of second library school in Ahmadu Bello University, Zaria in 1968 to offer Bachelor degree in Library science (Alhassan and Ahmed, 2015).

In 1984 when the first NALISE conference was held with a theme on “Education for Librarianship”, there were six University-based Library Schools in Nigeria, namely:

University of Ibadan, A.B.U. Zaria, Bayero University, Kano, University of Maiduguri, Imo State University, Owerri and University of Nigeria, Nsukka (Dike, 2014). As at 2015 there are about 30 Nigerian universities offering

LIS programmes out of which 25 were the accredited Library Schools, though some of these universities like Ibrahim Badamasi Babangida University, Lapai, Baze University, Abuja and others are yet to commence the LIS programmes (Alhassan and Ahmed, 2015).

The proliferation of library schools vis-à-vis LIS programmes was as a result of the demand for librarians that led to the establishment of Bayero University, Kano and University of Maiduguri, library schools in 1977 and 1978 respectively while the 1980s and beyond has witnessed establishment of a number of library schools not only in universities but also in the polytechnics and some in Colleges of Education in Nigeria (Ochogwu, 2010). Some of these polytechnics include Kaduna Polytechnic, Federal Polytechnics in Nekede, Okon, Offa, Nassarawa, Kazaure, Kogi State Polytechnic Lokoja, Hassan Usman Katsina Polytechnic, Katsina (Directory of accredited programmes in Nigeria, 2014; 2016; accreditation status www.nbte.gov.ng 2016).. Library schools were established at State/Federal Colleges of Education, Minna, Zaria, Zuba, College of Education, Ilorin though affiliated to A.B.U, Zaria, all lack the minimum standard as Minna have stopped the programme over a decade and there was no documents as standard by National Commission for Colleges of Education on LIS programme run in Colleges of Education in Nigeria.

However, the rate at which LIS schools sprang-up does not give regard to standards in the areas of curriculum development and resources (Ochogwu and Nwokocha, 2014). This trend can only be checked by the regulatory bodies which are also parastatals under Federal Ministry of Education namely; Librarians’ registration council of Nigeria/Nigerian library association (LRCN), national universities commission (NUC) and NBTE. Thus, the need to regulate the activities of LIS sector has led to the establishment of LRCN by the Decree 12 of 1995 whose functions include: determining the level of knowledge and skills required to be a librarian, standards of knowledge to be attained by any one striving to become a registered librarian, and accredit library school programmes (LRCN, 2011, 2013).

ISSUES AT STAKE

Physical infrastructure, facilities and information resources

The proliferation of library schools has caused the problem of meeting up with the adequate facilities and resources (building, lecture theatre, classrooms, staff offices) such that the new library schools use the facilities of other departments. Lecturers have to pair in the available offices; clashes in lecture venue (halls) and over-crowding which are not conducive for the academic development of students. Facilities of other departments such as computers, computer laboratories, internet and

institution libraries are being borrowed or loaned for use meaning that they are not available. Infrastructure/facilities like classroom, lecture theatre, library, computer laboratory, cataloguing and classification workshops are grossly inadequate in Nigerian university library schools. Where these facilities and resources are available, they are grossly inadequate (Diso, 2009; Saleh, 2011; Atsugh and Ukende, 2013).

Location and accommodation of library schools

When approval is given by the institutions' management to establish library schools, they usually make use of institutions' libraries thereby converting or partitioning some sections of the libraries to lecturers' offices, information communication technology (ICT) sections, etc. Some library schools established within a decade still use part of the university or polytechnic libraries for office accommodation, while library schools are domiciled/located as units under a department or as consultancy services unit. Some universities are offering diploma programmes as diploma in library science and diploma in library and information management while some polytechnics are still running ordinary national diploma (OND) or diploma in library science which are not in conformity with the standards set by the NBTE as regulatory body. Such polytechnics are still running unaccredited programmes and as such, their products have to go for one year programme to nationalize their OND in Kaduna Polytechnic.

Heads of library schools

The proposal for the establishment of library schools in Nigeria few years back usually come from heads of institutions' libraries. As their tenure in office is about to end, they usually take up a move to establish library schools by presenting the proposal before the institution's management. With the management approval, head of institutions' libraries (university, polytechnic, College of Education and monotechnic) now act as either the co-ordinator of LIS department while he/she is still the head of institution's library. He/she can still be the coordinator of the newly established department on retirement and take-up contract appointment as the head of new library school. Some of them were practising librarians throughout their career path and lacks adequate teaching experience. This situation affects the development of LIS programmes in Nigeria in the areas of curriculum design, development and implementation; staffing, physical resources, etc.

Staffing issues

As new library schools are established, it has been a

tradition to use or absorb institution's library staff as lecturers. In some cases, part-time lecturers are sought from other library schools. Some of the retired lecturers from other library schools are usually offered contract appointment. Generally speaking, acute shortage of lecturers especially at professional cadre has been a major obstacle to the development of LIS programme in Nigeria.

This situation has been attributed to the poor condition of service in institutions of higher learning on one hand, brain drain and search for greener pasture on the other hand. With the establishment of new library schools, staff from institution's library, lecturers from other library schools tend to convert, move or transfer their services to the new library schools thereby leaving the old library schools with problem of staffing (Muazu and Derman, 2011; 2012; Saka, 2015).

Curriculum and nomenclature

Curriculums developed by new library schools are products of harmonized curriculum from the old library schools. The co-ordinator/Acting head of department (HODs) go round some library schools to gather the existing curriculum and extract some parts. The modification, addition and restructuring of course contents lead to divergent or disparity of LIS curriculum as each library school is free to review its curriculum after few years.

The disparity of the curriculum is in relation to differences in customs and traditions of people (Saleh, 2011) and the employers/labour market demand. The LIS schools in Nigerian universities run divergent curriculum such that some have few ICT courses while others have more than necessary courses which are not in line with NUC (2014) bench mark as this is evident in researches carried out by Eyo et al. (2014) and Saka (2015). The current crisis is in the nomenclature of diploma and higher national diploma (HND) certificates in Nigerian polytechnics offering LIS programme at the end of the programme, award OND, diploma, ND and HND library and information science while universities offering LIS programme award diploma in library science (DLS) and diploma in library and information management (DLM) respectively (Kalu and Obazi, 2014). By law, universities are not supposed to run diploma and sub-degree programmes.

Variations in LIS programmes

The proliferation of LIS schools is characterized by variations in programmes. Some library schools are established by mounting diploma and/or undergraduate programmes while others are established with commencement of higher degree programmes. This,

Table 1. Admission requirements and students' enrolment.

S/N	University	UTME/University requirements	Direct entry
1	University of Ibadan, Ibadan (Undergraduate and Postgraduate Prospectus 2011-2013)	5 "O" level credits in GCE, WASCE, NECO and SSCE including English Language and Mathematics	NCE and OND DLS plus 5 "O" level credit passes in SSCE, NECO or TC II before 1981
2.	University of Abuja, Abuja.	5 "O" level credits in GCE, WASCE, NECO and SSCE including English Language, Mathematics and any other 3 subject	NCE, DLS plus 5'O'Level Credit including English and Maths
3.	A.B.U., Zaria (Undergraduate Students Handbook (2014-2017)	5 "O" level credits in SSCE or equivalent in not more than 2 sittings	Merit in relevant Diploma. 2 passes at "A" level plus 3 "O" level credit passes not more than 2 sittings OR NCE with SSCE/GCE "O" level credits in 3 other subjects 2 passes at IJMB plus 3 credits in SSCE in equivalent
4.	FUT Minna Undergraduate Academic Brief 2014-2019	5 "O" level credits in Mathematics, English, Physics, geography and any one of Chemistry, Biology, Economic and Technical Drawing	Diploma, ND, NCE, IJMB/GCE A" level in LIS, Computer Science or any sciences combination with upper credit/merit in 2 passes
5.	MAUTECH, Yola (Undergraduate Programme (nd)	5 "O" level credits in English, Mathematics any other 3 from Physics, Chemistry, Biology, Agric- Science, geography, Economics, Commerce, Accounting and History in SSCE or teacher II Certificate	2 "A" level passes in Science and/or Social Science OR DLS with at least lower credit. NCE with at least credit
6.	Kogi State University, Anyigba	5 "O" Level credit in English, Maths and any other 3 subjects	Upper credits in NCE, DLS or Diploma in any field

Source: Document analysis and telephone correspondence with colleagues (2016).

apart from creating disparity, appointing lecturers at professorial cadre becomes a problem to library schools running postgraduate programmes only. Library schools when established are expected to commence with diploma programme before HND programme as the case of polytechnics and undergraduate before postgraduate as in the case of universities. Some universities are running diploma in library science and diploma in library and information management. By law, universities are not supposed to run diploma programmes but undergraduate and postgraduate programmes, while polytechnics are expected to run national diploma and higher national diploma programmes respectively.

Admission requirements and students' enrolment

Nigerian library schools apart from the unified tertiary matriculation examination (UTME) requirements operate their own admission requirements. Table 1 clearly shows the entry requirements for sampled university-based library schools.

Looking at the entry requirements from the aforementioned library schools, while candidates seeking admission will be at advantage, some may be at disadvantage in the other library schools. This is because

some library schools tend to be liberal and not specific on subjects required for admission while others are to some extent strict and specify subjects to be passed at credit level before granting admission. With the proliferation of library schools, some may not have enough candidates. Some candidates may not be interested in reading library science and as such end-up reading the course simply because other choices/courses are filled up. Some students have no intention to read the course but as alternative end up being admitted to LIS programme thus negatively affecting their participation in the profession. In some cases those candidates that have passion for the profession are admitted leading to over population of students which create the problem of classroom management (Muazu and Darman, 2011; 2012; Nwokocho et al., 2014).

The massive admission of students in some cases is to attract the management of institutions to increase the funding capacity of department for example, in some universities, the more the students' enrolment figure in a session, the more allocation of money on direct teaching and laboratory consumable (DTLC) the department would earn or receive from university management. The over population of students in various library schools is contrary to the benchmark issued by the various regulatory bodies. For example, the NUC (2014) benchmark

Table 2. Lecturers students' ratio in university and polytechnic based library schools.

Variable	Levels					Standard
Library schools universities	100	200	300	400	500	Lecturer: Students (Standard)
FUT., Minna	108	121	60	61	72	1:30
University of Ilorin, Ilorin	80	69	28	57	-	1:30
Umar Musa Yardua University, Katsina	117	132	186	160	-	1:30
Kogi State University, Anyigba	115	83	152	10	-	1:30
AbubakarTafawa Balewa University, Bauchi	49	50	85	82	64	1:30
Library schools polytechnics	NDI	NDII	HNDI	HNDII	-	Lecturer: Students (Standard)
Federal Polytechnic, Offa	130	175	110	105	-	1:30/1:40
Kaduna Polytechnic , Kaduna	90	110	40	40	-	1:30/1:40
Federal Polytechnic, Nekede	101	98	230	235	-	1:30/1:40

Source: Telephone correspondence with colleagues (2016).

stipulates that "the staff" student ratio shall be 1:30 for all programmes while NBTE (1993) maintains that a classroom should accommodate 30/40 student with one teaching staff. Table 2 shows the students population of some library schools in Nigeria at various levels.

Accreditation

As part of the preparation for the accreditation exercise for the new library science programmes, the un-prescribed NLA/LRCN courses were incorporated into the curricula, resources are hurriedly borrowed from other departments or library schools, and exhibitions are carried out in a window-dressing act. However, some library schools claim to use resources which they do not adequately have and eventually lead to failure (denial or interim) in the accreditation. One cannot guarantee quality LIS programmes if Nigerian library association (NLA) is not involved in the accreditation of LIS programmes in Nigeria (Aina, 2007; Issa et al., 2014).

Implication of the proliferation of LIS Schools

Inadequate facilities and resources can lead to the use of sub-standard facilities which result to not only inadequate training but also producing graduates without adequate ICT skills. Massive enrolment of students can lead to over-utilization of resources with poor classroom management on the part of lecturers. The variation in the entry requirement and different nomenclature especially with regards to polytechnic library schools, there is likelihood that labor market might reject the ordinary national diploma, diploma, DLS certificates. Library schools that fail to meet up with the accreditation requirements are likely to have denied accreditation status or close down the LIS programmes as occur with some library schools recently. The proliferation of LIS schools and programmes will require a great deal of

money/capital as well as the recruitment and retention of quality staff (Aina, 2007)

WHAT SHOULD BE DONE?

Quality control by regulatory bodies

In order to resolve the aforementioned issues surrounding the proliferation of library schools in Nigeria, there is need for quality control by the regulatory bodies including national universities commission (NUC), National board for technical education (NBTE), Nigerian library association (NLA), the librarian's registration council of Nigeria (LRCN) and contribution from NLA. For example recently, Council for the Registered Engineers in Nigeria (COREN) went round some universities to accredit some of her engineering programmes. There should be quality control on resources admission requirement and student enrolment, academic staff activities, curriculum, external examiners report.

Resource verification and evaluation

Before any library school is given approval for establishment there is the need for resource verification. The LRCN in collaboration with NUC as the case of universities, NBTE as the case of polytechnics must ensure that resources such as physical facilities (classrooms, computer laboratory, staff offices, etc.), department libraries, staff strength and quality of staff are verified, evaluated and conform to the benchmarks of those regulatory bodies. The idea of commencing the programme and later follow by resource verification and evaluation should be discouraged. However, these bodies must use the benchmark minimum academic standards as their working tools to make sure the proposed library schools meet the requirement before

granting the approval.

Collaboration between LRCN with other regulatory bodies and parastatals in education (accreditation)

There is the need for harmonised working relationships among LRCN with NUC, NBTE and NLA so as to improve the quality of LIS education in Nigeria. Areas of collaboration should be the issue of accreditation of LIS programmes such as the provision of professional input in the areas benchmark for establishing LIS programme; guidelines for accreditation and implementation of LIS programmes. In the accreditation of LIS programmes in Nigerian universities, the NUC accreditation team is expected to include LRCN (LRCN and NLA Newsletter, 2011).

RESOURCES

The NUC benchmark (2014) for undergraduates states that the following academic staff should be made available in every university-based LIS school, thus – graduate assistant, assistant lecturer, lecturers II and I, senior lecturer, associate professor and professor respectively. Each library school should have academic staff structure of 20% professorial cadre, 35% senior lecture and 45% lecturer I and below. Above all, 55% of the academic staff should hold Ph.D. degree in librarianship. The staff: students ratio should be 1:30 for all LIS programmes in Nigerian universities. As for the non-academic staff structure, every library school should have one secretary (computer literate) one clerical officer, one technologist, two office attendants/cleaner and two secretariat assistants. In the area of structure/building, adequate classrooms, lecture theatres, laboratories, studios, staff offices, computer laboratory, internet and resource room departmental library with current resources and managed by one librarian. Academic staff on professorial cadre and senior lecturers should have well-furnished single offices (LRCN Curriculum and Benchmarks, 2016). The NBTE (2002) states that there should be well-furnished cataloguing and classification laboratory with the following tools with ratio:

Sear's list of Subject Heading = 1 copy: 10 students
 LC Subject Headings = 1 copy: 10 students
 AACR II (revised edition) = 1 copy: 10 students
 LC Classification Scheme (latest edition = 1 set
 DDC Scheme = 1 set: 10 students
 AACR 1967 = 1 copy
 UDC Scheme (One set)
 Departmental Library

There should be well-dedicated training library which serves as a demonstration and workroom manned by a librarian, two library officers and two library assistants.

There should be catalogue, cabinet shelves, periodical

rack and metal cabinet. Information resources should include: books, periodicals basic reference books, and ICT equipment. Teaching staff should possess a minimum of first degree and should be adequate in number, and competent in subject areas (NBTE, 1993).

Admission requirements and students population

NUC benchmark 2014 highlighted two modes of entry to the bachelor of library and information science degree programmes.

Unified tertiary matriculation examination (UTME)

This aspect of entrance examination requires 5 "O" level credits in senior school certificate examination (SSCE) not more than 2 sittings in addition to pass in the UTME. Both UTME/Direct entry candidates must obtain 5 "O" level credits including English and Mathematics.

Direct entry

Two passes in relevant subjects at "A" level with 3 credits in SSCE/GCE "O" levels in not more than two (2) sittings, three (3) passes in relevant subject areas at "A" level with two credits in subjects in not more than two (2) sittings. At least merit in two (2) major subjects in relevant areas in NCE with SSCE/GCE "O" level credit or its equivalent in three (3) other subjects. Two passes in IJMB Examination with SSCE credits or equivalent in three subjects. For polytechnics and similar tertiary institutions in Nigeria, to pass the accreditation, the accreditation status of Nigerian polytechnics (2002) states that the admission requirement for ND library and information science is 5 credits in SSCE/GCE "O" level subjects including English Language, Mathematics and any other 3 credits from the following subjects:-History, Literature in English, Economics, Art, Government, a Physical Science and Geography, passes in Mathematics, Physics, Electronics/Basic Electricity (NBTE Directory, 2014). As for entry/admission requirement for HND Library and Information Science, ND relevant to the programme with credit level pass plus Post-ND cognate experience, ND at pass level in relevant programme plus a minimum of two years Post-ND cognate experience. As for students enrolment, the NUC (2014) stipulate that there should be one lecturer to thirty students (1:30) while NBTE (1993) stipulate that each classroom should be able to accommodate 30/40 students for Technical courses and for Art, Social science courses respectively.

Development of uniform curriculum by the regulatory bodies (LRCN, NLA, NUC and NBTE)

As part of the mandate by Decree 12 of 1995 LRCN has

developed new LIS curriculum for undergraduate programme which aimed at harmonising the course contents and incorporate ICT components, project management, knowledge management, business skills, information literacy, entrepreneurial component, etc. which is developed in line with the international best practice (Salau, 2015). The NUC (2014) also contain LIS courses such as GST, core, cognate, elective courses from 100 to 400 levels. Thus 130 credits are required for graduation for 4 and 5 year programme respectively while 98 credits is required for graduation as for direct entry students (LRCN, 2016). The draft copies were despatched to library schools offering undergraduate programmes for their inputs. However, for full implementation of the LRCN- designed uniform curriculum, there is the need to provide adequate facilities / Infrastructure (ICT, cataloguing and classification laboratories, departmental libraries, lecture theatre, classrooms, office accommodation) and adequate staffing etc. The NBTE (2002) draft copy contain uniform curriculum for all Nigerian polytechnics offering ND and HND library and information science programmes. Courses are arranged according to programmes, semesters and resources to support the teaching and learning were contained (NBTE, 2002; Muazu and Darman, 2011; 2012)

Accreditation

Accreditation in LIS programme in Nigerian universities and polytechnics must take cognisance of the staffing requirement, entry requirements, students enrolment, adequate facilities, (staff room, lecture hall, workshop, laboratory) teaching staff by quality and quantity as well as curriculum. The accreditation exercise is expected to involve NUC/LRCN LRCN (LRCN Newsletter, 2011; Akanwa, 2014), NBTE/LRCN and the umbrella body-NLA as the case of universities and polytechnics which should be expected to use benchmark in the areas of resources, entry requirements and student enrolment, number of students per teaching staff, academic staff activities, student academic performance and external examiners report, etc. (LRCN 1995, 2011; NBTE, 1993, 2002; NUC, 2014). Nigerian universities are encouraged to move from the normal programme accreditation to institutional accreditation with emphasis on academic staff activities in four basic areas: teaching, administration duties, research and community service (FUT Minna, 2016).

Approval of LIS programmes

In order to regulate the proliferation of library schools vis-à-vis library and information science programmes, the regulatory bodies should ensure that only library schools that meet the requirements for establishment are

approved. The approval of LIS programmes is different from the accreditation; thus, there are library schools today that were approved by NUC and yet could not meet the accreditation requirements. As at now, some library schools got denial or interim accreditation status. It is worthy to note that as at today National Universities Commission in collaboration with Librarian Registration Council of Nigeria has approved 25 Nigerian Universities offering LIS programmes (www.lrcn.gov.ng) while NBTE has approved nine (9) polytechnics and technical institutions in Nigeria to run national diploma and/or higher national diploma LIS programmes (NBTE Directory, 2014).

Conclusion

From the discussion on proliferation, the new library schools will be of capital intensive and the demand for the recruitment and retention of quality staffing. The NBTE (1993) provide general guidelines to all polytechnics offering ND/HND programmes, though specification was made on the curriculum of various programme but other aspects were of general scope. Guidelines for accrediting polytechnics and standards (resources, teaching staff, etc) were of general scope.

RECOMMENDATIONS

This paper provides the following recommendations:

- (1) There is the urgent need for collaboration among NLA, LRCN and NBTE in the development of uniform minimum academic standards for Nigerian polytechnics, and similar tertiary institutions offering library and information science. Subject experts/specialists should be drawn from Nigerian library association, librarians' registration council of Nigerian as well as national board for technical education. These experts/specialists can also be lecturers from various library schools in universities and polytechnics to design appropriate curriculum. The practising librarians can also be invited to recommend appropriate information resources for use in Nigerian libraries and to support teaching and learning LIS programme.
- (2) The supervisory ministry of education should make provision for adequate funding of LIS education so as to take care of accreditation, resources, etc.

CONFLICT OF INTERESTS

The authors have not declared any conflict of interests.

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