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## **Factors Influencing Students' Choice of Library and Information Science, and their Academic Performance in Niger Delta University, Wilberforce Island, Bayelsa State**

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### **ABSTRACT**

*This study investigated the factors influencing students' choice of Library and Information Science and their academic performance in Niger Delta University, Wilberforce Island, and Bayelsa State. The main objectives are to ascertain the factors influencing the choice of LIS, academic performance of the students and the relationship between the factors influencing the choice of LIS and academic performance of the students. The study adopted correlational research design. The population of the study comprised all the 45 year one students admitted 2019/2020 academic session. There was no sampling because of the relatively small size of the population. Questionnaire was used to elicit data from the target population. The instrument was administered directly to the students in the classroom during lecture hour. The data collected were analyzed with descriptive statistics. The findings revealed that, the students' choice of LIS was as a result of not been offered admission to study their choice of course, the academic performance of the students is positive. The findings also show that no relationship exists between the factors influencing the choice of LIS and academic performance of the students. Based on the findings some recommendations were made to address issues confronting the admission of students outside their preferred departments.*

### **Introduction**

The choice of a particular discipline as area of specialization is an issue of great concern to parents and guidance and, as well the students in contemporary society. The right choice of a discipline to a large extent may determine the effort, commitment and interest student may devote in the discipline. A majority of students in secondary schools may not have sufficient information about specific areas of specialization to decide what to study in the higher institution. This has made the choice of area to study a challenging issue. These challenges have been made more complex with parents and guidance in choosing area of specialization without the involvement of their children. Experience has shown that this single action has led to dropout, poor performance, examination malpractice, etc. in our universities. Similarly, experience has also shown the number of students choosing library and information science as a discipline is geometrically increasing in the various library schools in Nigeria. This is evident in the number of library and information schools increasing in Nigeria. From the establishment of the first library school (Institute of librarianship) in the then University College, Ibadan, 1959 to 2019 a large number of library schools have been established across the country (Okiy, 2015). This is the reflection of the high demand of professional librarians in the country. In return, this called for the encouragement and advocacy for more students to choose



LIS as area of specialization.

Librarianship as a profession that centred in provision of information resources and as well provision of access to the resources. Thus, the core emphasis of librarians is to select, acquire, organize, store and disseminate information. These obligations make librarians to be highly reverence in academic institutions. "As a profession, it has all the elements of any other profession. It is an honorable and dignified profession. It is one of the oldest professions. The profession came into being as a result of the need for safekeeping written and recorded information. In addition, the invention of printing press resulted to the flourish of written information and this led to the development of library promote the profession (Kikon, 2018). As a professional career, several factors may influence students to choose to study LIS to enable them practice as librarians. However, experience shows that a good number of LIS student leave the department for other departments after their first year of study in LIS department. It is against this background that this study aims to investigate the factors that influence students to choose LIS as course of study in the first instance.

### **Objectives of the Study**

The main objective of the study is to determine the factors influencing library and information students to choose library and information science as area of study. Therefore, the specific objectives are to:

1. ascertain the factors influencing the students' choice of LIS as a course of study in the department of LIS in Niger Delta University;
2. establish the performance of LIS students in their first year in the department of LIS in Niger Delta University; and
3. determine if any relationship exists between the factors influencing choice of LIS and academic performance of year one students of LIS department.

### **Research Questions**

1. What are the factors influencing students' choice of library and information science as area of study in department of LIS in Niger Delta University?
2. What is the academic performance of the students in their first year in the chosen area of study (LIS) in the department of LIS in Niger Delta University?

### **Hypothesis**

HO<sub>1</sub> There is no significant relationship between the students' choice of LIS and academic performance of year one students of LIS department in Niger Delta University.

### **Review of Related Literature**

The increase in the establishment of LIS schools in universities, polytechnics and colleges of education and the struggle to fill the department with the required number of students has called for immediate investigation for the factors that influence the students to choose the course. As a matter of facts, any choice one made in life is influence by one factor or the other. These factors may cut across gender, parents influence, personal interest, etc. Some scholars in librarianship have carried out studies to determine the factors responsible for the choice library and information science as a course of study and as well a career outside the study area of this study. For example, Issa and Nwalo (2008) carried out a survey on the influence of age, gender, subject background and predisposing factors on the admission choice of undergraduates in Nigeria library schools. The study adopted descriptive survey method. The population comprised of LIS students. The findings revealed that 38.4% who chose the course were influenced mostly by previous library work experience, male LIS



students (50.3%) than females (49.7%), indicating its equal popularity among both sexes. That 46.9% of them were in the 22-26 age bracket showed that the younger undergraduates constitute the majority. Some recommendations were made based on the findings of the study. The result of the study shows that, the study investigated students who are working or have sometimes worked in the library. However, this present study aims to investigate those newly admitted students into the department of LIS.

Similar study was carried out by Kazi, Sharif and Ahmad (2017) to examined the factors influencing students' career choices. The research study investigated the factors that influence the career selection choice of the student and create a possible alignment between their preferences and the institutions curriculum and offerings. The study used correlational research design. The structured questionnaire was distributed among MBA/BBA students enrolled in different universities of Karachi. Data were collected from 120 participants and analyzed using SPSS. Correlation and multiple - regression were applied as statistical tools to test the hypotheses. The results of the study revealed that gender and interest in the subject are the most dominant factor influencing career choices of business students,  $f(1,118) = 12.304$ ,  $p$ . Based on the findings recommendations were made to address issues confronting choice of career among young men and women. It revealed the factors that influence the choice of career among the business study students. As diverse as the respondents, the study provides direction for this present study to critically investigate the variables in the study.

Similarly, in considering the influence of parents in children choice of course of study and career choice, Mbagwu and Ajaegbu (2016) investigated parents' educational background on career choice of teenagers among senior secondary school students in Owerri, Imo State. The study used survey design. 400 teenagers were administered with structured questionnaire in four sampled schools in Owerri. They comprised of 200 males and 200 females whose ages ranged from 13 to 19 years with a mean age of 16.24. The data collected was analyzed using both descriptive and inferential statistics. The result revealed that teenagers whose parents are from high educational background are more consistent and do not have much difficulty in making career choice when compared with those whose parents have low educational background. Also, majority of the teenagers whose parents had high educational background made more of professional career choices while majority of those whose parents had low educational background made more of business career choices.

Due to one of the objectives of the study that is concerned with academic performance of students, the study reviewed the work of Mengjie, Wangyang and Yu (2019) that investigated factors that influence academic performance among students. It investigated influences of family background and structural factors on children's academic performances against the assumption that children's academic performances are affected by both their family backgrounds and contextual or structural factors such as the urban–rural difference and regional variation. Therefore, the study also evaluates the relative importance of family background versus structural factors in determining children's academic achievements across three different societies: China, the United States of America, and Germany, analyzing data from five large-scale, high-quality, and nationally representative data sets. The results reveal two main findings: (a) family socioeconomic status exerts much stronger positive effects on children's academic achievement in the USA and Germany than in China; and (b) structural factors (such as those measured by location and urban/rural residence) play much smaller roles in the USA and Germany than in China. This study is relevant to the present study as it exposes some key areas that determine students' academic performance in USA and Germany.

Adanum and John-Oswald (2010) investigated the factors that influence the choice of librarianship as a course of study at the diploma level in Ghana. The study also sought to find out if interest had been engendered in librarianship after enrolling for the course and whether the students intended pursuing the course further to develop a career in librarianship. The population surveyed was



the Diploma I & II classes of the Department of Information Studies, University of Ghana who were admitted in 2005/2006 and 2006/2007 academic years. Using data obtained through questionnaires, the study sought for information relating to their background, factors influencing the choice of librarianship, interest in librarianship and pursuing librarianship as a career. The findings revealed that various factors account for the choice of librarianship. These factors were mainly external with an opportunity for further education being the most prevalent. Other factors included association with librarians, experience in library work, a liking for books and the need for career change.

Abata-Ebire, Ajayi and Adetayo (2018) investigated the factors influencing the career choice of LIS students in Federal Polytechnic Ede, Osun State. The major objectives of this study were to find out the factors that influenced the choice of librarianship as a career among the students, the level of their perception towards LIS as a career and to find a way out on how library and information science can become a reputable discipline in the society. A total number of 127 newly admitted students into LIS were purposely chosen. An enumerative sampling technique was adopted. Structured questionnaire was used for data collection. Findings of the study revealed that students were influenced based on their personal interest in the course 78(70.9%), to seek for knowledge 77(70.0%) and Career expectation 60(54.5%). The study also finds out that the students' level of perception towards choosing librarianship as a career, and it was indicated that Library and information science is a lucrative field 95(86.4%), Library and information science is a professional course 93(84.6%), it offers job security 76(69.1%) and they will like to further their career in librarianship 60(54.5%). Furthermore, the study finds out that librarianship as a career should be introduced to secondary schools' curriculum in Nigeria 99(90.0%). The study therefore recommended that there should be a continuous awareness of LIS in other to clarify the belief of the public that LIS profession is a dumping ground for poor students, Nigeria library association should be involved in educating the publics about librarianship as a profession through symposiums, conferences, etc.

Archison, Bosu, Ekow, Achiaa, Afia Bafowaah, Kobina and Arboh (2021) investigated the factors affecting business students' choice of career in accounting and factors affecting business students' inability to choose a career in accounting remains unclear. SPSS was used to analyze data collected from four randomly selected senior high schools in the central region of Ghana through questionnaires. This paper investigated the influences of job opportunities, personal interest, family influence, social status, peer influence, salary expectation, weakness in mathematics, time it takes to become an accountant, and stress involved in the accounting career. The paper then revealed the effects of these in influencing factors. Though other factors were found to have substantial effects, the results clearly show that high salary expectation and job opportunities are the most influential factors that influences a business student's choice to choose or not to choose a career in accounting. These results could be used as a reference for educational reforms and career counselling.

Similarly, Ouanoa, Torreb, John, and Monevad (2019) carried a study on the factors influencing on grade 12 students' chosen courses in Jagobiao national high school. The purpose of this research was to see the factors which affect the choice of career among students. This study assessed the influence identified factors such as decision-making and interest, peer influence, considerations about the institutions and future job opportunities on the career decisions of 90 students in Jagobiao National High School. Data was collected through a survey questionnaire. The researchers used chi-square as a research tool to analyze the collected data. The results revealed that the considerations about the institutions as most significant, followed by decision-making and interest, peer influence and future job opportunities.

The above reviewed studies focused on factors influencing the choice of librarianship as a career in Nigeria. However, one of the studies that investigated the factors influencing the choice of LIS as a course of study was carried in Ghana. Also, none of the studies attempt to investigate if any



relationship exists between the students' choice of LIS and academic performance of year one students of LIS department. Specifically, the researcher does not have knowledge of studies that are related to factors influencing the choice of LIS as a course of study and academic performance in LIS department in Nigeria. Hence, there is knowledge gap on factors influencing the choice of LIS as a course of study and as well as academic performance of LIS students in Nigeria.

### **Methodology**

The study adopted correlational research design, which is more appropriate to sample the opinions of the respondents in the study. The target population was the (45) newly admitted for the 2019/2020 academic session (Year 1) at the Niger Delta University, Wilberforce Island, Bayelsa State, Nigeria. As the population size is relatively small, there was no need for sampling. According to Best and Kahn (2007) "if the population size is not much or very small, the total population under the study can be used as a sample size for the study". A structured questionnaire was used to elicit data from the respondents. The questionnaire was structured on four Likert rating scale of SA(4), A(3), D(2) and SD(1), respectively. All the copies of the questionnaire administered were correctly filled and returned, and were used for the study. The data were analyzed with descriptive statistics.

### **Data Analysis and Presentation of Result**

The analysis of the research questions and hypothesis are presented in tables below:

**Research Question 1:** What are the factors influencing students' choice of LIS as course of study in Niger Delta University?

**Table 1: Summary of mean scores of the respondents**

S/N	Statement	SA 4	A 3	DA 2	SDA 1	Total	Mean
1	I was influence by parents to study LIS.	6 (24)	7 (21)	15 (30)	17 (17)	45 (92)	2.04
2	I was influence by my peer group to study LIS.	1 (4)	3 (9)	23 (26)	18 (18)	45 (57)	1.26
3	I was influence by my teacher to study LIS.	1 (4)	0 (0)	17 (34)	27 (25)	45 (64)	1.4
4	I was influence by not gaining admission to my choice department.	16 (64)	9 (27)	11 (22)	5 (5)	41 (118)	2.87
5	I was influence by my gender status to study LIS.	0(0)	2 (6)	20 (40)	22 (22)	44 (68)	1.54
6	I was influence by my personal interest to study LIS	3 (12)	5 (15)	17 (34)	20 (20)	45 (81)	1.8
7	I was influence by my parents' educational background to study LIS.	1(4)	1(3)	21 (42)	22 (22)	45 (64)	1.4



8	I was influence by my parents' economic status to study LIS.	0(0)	0(0)	21 (42)	21 (21)	42 (63)	1.5
9	I was influence by the lecturers in the department to study LIS.	2 (8)	4 (12)	18 (36)	21 (20)	45 (76)	1.68
10	I was influence by my environment	1 (4)	4 (12)	15 (30)	25 (23)	45 (68)	1.53 (17.02)
<b>Total</b>							<b>1.70</b>

The data presented in table 1 above reveals that, all the items mean scores of 2.04, 1.26, 1.4, 1.54, 1.8, 1.4, 1.5, 1.68, 1.53 except item 4 (2.87) were less than the cut-off mean score of 2.50. On the whole the total mean score of 1.70 was also less than the cut-off mean score of 2.50. This implies that the students were not influenced by any other factors than their inability to gain admission to read their course of interest. In other words, the students investigated choose LIS as a course of study because they were not offered admission into their choice of departments of interest.

**Research Question 2:** What is the performance of the students in their first year in the chosen area of study (LIS) in Niger Delta University?

**Table 2: Summary of mean scores of the respondents**

S/N	Statement	SA 4	A 3	D 2	SDA 1	Total	Mean
1	I adequately complete my assignments.	24 (96)	15 (45)	0 (0)	6 (6)	45 (147)	3.26
2	I fulfill responsibilities specify in my academic activities.	15 (60)	20 (60)	6 (12)	4 (4)	45 (136)	3.02
3	I meet formal performance requirements of my study.	17 (68)	19 (57)	5 (10)	4 (4)	45 (139)	3.08
4	I engage in activities that will directly affect my academic performance.	9 (36)	15 (45)	5 (10)	16 (16)	45 (107)	2.35
5	I don't fail to attend classes.	21 (84)	12 (36)	3 (6)	9 (9)	45 (135)	3.0
6	I help students who are been absent from class.	7 (28)	11 (33)	12 (24)	8 (8)	38 (93)	2.06
7	I assist supervisors with his/her work when not ask.	8 (32)	5 (15)	14 (28)	18 (18)	45 (93)	2.06



8	Helps others students who have heavy work-load.	8 (32)	17 (51)	6 (12)	11 (11)	42 (106)	2.52
9	I go out of way to help new students.	8 (32)	19 (57)	8 (16)	10 (10)	45 (115)	2.55
10	My attendance at class is above the norm.	7 (28)	17 (51)	5 (10)	9 (9)	38 (98)	2.57
11	I give advance notice when unable to come to class.	10 (40)	16 (48)	11 (22)	15 (15)	42 (125)	2.97 (29.44)
<b>Total</b>							<b>2.67</b>

The data presented in table 2 above reveals that, all the items mean scores of 3.26, 3.02, 3.08, 3.0, 2.52, 2.55, 2.57. 2.99 except item 4(2.35), 6(2.06) and 7(2.06) were greater than the cut-off mean score of 2.50. On the whole the total mean score of 2.67 was greater than the cut-off mean score of 2.50. This implies that there exists a perceived positive academic performance among the respondents.

### Testing of Hypothesis

**H<sub>01</sub>:** There is no significant relationship between the students' choice of library and information science and their academic performance in Niger Delta University.

**Table 3: Pearson Product Moment Correlation Coefficient analysis of the relationship between students' choice of LIS and their academic performance**

Students' choice	Academic performance	df	Crit. r	Decision	p < 0.05
Student's choice Pearson Correlation	1	26.081**	43	0.936	*
Sig. (2-tailed)		0.141			
N	45	45			
Academic performance Pearson Correlation	0.207**	1			
Sig. (2-tailed)		0.141			
N	45	45			

\* = Significant at 0.05 alpha level; N = 45

In order to confirm whether the relationship exist between factors influencing student's choice and their academic performance, the analysis of student' choice and academic performance is subjected to the Pearson product moment correlation coefficient (PPMC) analysis. The data presented above shows that, the calculated r-value of 0.141 is lesser than the critical r-value of 0.0.936 at 0.05



alpha levels with 43 degrees of freedom. Hence, the null hypothesis, which states that, there is no significant relationship between factors influencing student's choice and their academic performance, is accepted.

### **Discussion of the Findings**

From the findings above it was revealed that year one students of LIS in Niger Delta University, Wilberforce Island choose to study LIS because there were not offered admission to their different areas of interest to which they applied in the University. This might have been due to the fact that they prefer to be in the system than to stay back at home. This finding is in agreement with the findings of Adanum and John-Oswald (2010) which revealed factors accounting for the choice of librarianship. These factors were mainly external. However, the finding is not in agreement with that Abata-Ebire, Ajayi and Adetayo (2018) which revealed that students were influenced based on their personal interest in the course 78(70.9%), to seek for knowledge 77(70.0%) as well as career expectation 60(54.5%).

The study also ascertained if the factors that influence the students to choose LIS regarding any negative or positive impact on their academic performance. Interestingly, the study revealed perceived positive academic performance among the students. This might be due to the fact that the students were not deterred by their inability to gain admission to their various areas of interest. Otherwise, their academic performance could be very poor or negative, since they are studying a course completely out of their areas of interest. It might also be that the students got encouragement, enlightenment, information regarding to job opportunity and the lucrateness of librarianship career from the lecturers at the beginning of the semester which likely motivated them to be more serious and committed to their studies

Similarly, the study also revealed that, there is no significant relationship between the factors that influence the student's choice LIS and their academic performance. This implies that their choice of LIS due to the inability to gain admission to study in their primary areas of interest did not impact negatively on their academic performance. This could be the fact that, in spite of the trauma of admission to department outside their interest, they decided to forge ahead and concentrate on their studies.

### **Conclusion**

Based on the findings of this study, the factors influencing students' choice of LIS as course of was their inability to gain admission into their preferred courses of study. However, in spite of admitting them to department outside their interest of study, they record perceived positive academic performance. It is also established that students' academic performance is not affected by being admitted to courses or departments they did not apply to study in the University.

### **Recommendations**

Based on the findings the following recommendations were made:

1. University admission officers should try as must as possible to admit students into the courses they apply to study, as it might encourage them to achieve better academic performance.
2. In spite of the perceived positive academic performance of the students admitted into courses or department outside their areas of interest, University admission officers should understand that those students may likely perform better in their preferred areas of interest. Hence, he should not admit students into departments or courses outside their areas of interest.





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