THE IMPACT OF *LIS* EDUCATION IN SCHOOL LIBRARIES IN BOTSWANA

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Abstract

Library and Information Studies (LIS) education in Botswana started in 1979 with the establishment of Department of Library & Information Studies (DLIS) at the University of Botswana. The Department of Library and Information Studies of the University of Botswana is the only credible institution offering LIS education covering certificate, diploma, undergraduate and post graduate qualifications. LIS education is therefore rudimentary as it's only offered by one institution. The spread of LIS Education to other institutions is non-existent despite the fact that school libraries in Botswana do not have qualified library staff. This has had a negative impact on the qualification of school libraries as more and more teacher librarians could not be absorbed by DLIS. This paper deals with LIS Education in Botswana with particular reference to teacher librarians and their both traditional and technology needs. It demonstrates that teacher librarians in Botswana lack both traditional and technology skills and that while they are receptive to the new emerging technologies, the paucity of training opportunities is abounds. This trend can be seen as a disadvantage to would be teacher librarians. Thus the purpose of this paper is to share and exchange views on the major issues, opportunities and challenges for LIS Education in Botswana and some recommendations.

Keywords: Library studies education; school librarianship; Botswana; tertiary education

Introduction

Botswana has one big education budget in Africa, however it has a very small number of Universities. There are only10 Universities namely ABM University College, Botho University, Botswana Accountancy College, Botswana University of Agriculture and Natural Resources, Botswana International University of Science & Technology, Gaborone Institute of Professional Studies, Gaborone Universal College of Law, Baisago University, Limkokwing University Of Creative Technology and the University of Botswana. Of these 10 universities 4 are state universities. There are also four teacher training colleges. There is also one University which is a distance open university called Botswana College of Distance and Open Learning (BOCODOL).

Surprisingly the number of distance learning has not grown despite the demand for higher education. LIS Education in Botswana can be said to passing a turning point as it has become a fast developing subject with multidisciplinary approach. Today LIS Education not only includes the library specific subject but it is also has been extended to subjects like computer application, statistics, information science, management studies and operation research (Kaur and Babbar 2007). In today's corporate, management of libraries, records, archives, and information centers is an increasingly important preoccupation. This implies that the issue of LIS education should not be taken lightly. As the Botswana economy grows, the demand for information will propel the demand for LIS professionals because of the need to manage different kinds of documents. It recommends that as LIS education and training seeks a wider role in society, there is a need to prepare students for careers in a rapidly changing world. This requires multidisciplinary education, greater emphasis on core knowledge, and fully well-articulated graduate programmes to meet the requisite of LIS professionals. The DLIS of the University of Botswana is the only university in Botswana which teaches librarianship from certificate to PhD.

Writing of the DLIS role Jain and Jorosi (2015) said that DLIS has made a significant contribution to the education and training of library and information personnel in Botswana and the Southern, Central, West and East African regions. DLIS offers two non-graduate diploma programmes in Library and Information Studies and Archives and Records Management, a Bachelor's degree in Library Studies and a Bachelor of Information Systems. It also offers Master's Degree programmes in Library and Information Studies and Archives and Records Management and M.Phil and Ph.D programmes in Library and Information Studies. They further state that DLIS keeps reviewing its teaching curricula to ensure that it addresses current trends in the profession. Despite the contribution by DLIS to LIS Education in Botswana the DLIS has for years been trying to change its name from DLIS to reflect the new librarianship. It has long submitted to the University hierarchy a new programme called "Bachelor of Information and Knowledge Management" (BIKM) program at DLIS based on the latest market analysis. This program is taking longer than anticipated and may render the current DLIS curriculum obsolete. It is important that a curriculum is revised from time to time to reflect the new thinking.

LIS Education
The first training courses in library studies in Botswana was established at the University of Botswana in 1979 (Jain and Jorosi 2015). LIS education awards and LIS education courses have all changed around the world. These changes have been especially due to the reorientation of higher education in the world and the need to stay relevant in the global competitive world (Okello-Obura & Kigongon-Bukenya 2008). In the past most departments were simply called Departments of Library Science/Library Studies or Librarianship. In the eighties many departments changed their names to Department of Library and Information Science/Studies. In the nineties, many of these departments again changed their names to Information Science/Studies (Minishi-Majanja & Ocholla, 2004; Minishi-Majanja & Ocholla, 2004). The issue of what constitutes or should constitute the "core" in library and/or information science (LIS) education and training is one that is frequently debated in different circles by LIS professionals Most LIS schools agree with Wilson (2001) who proposed six fields that have to be factored in an LIS curriculum, and these include the following.(i)Information content (the traditional function of library and information centres).(ii)Information systems (human/systems

interaction and organizational systems).(iii)Information users and providers (information use and information seeking behaviour).(iv)Information organizations (information producers, libraries, information centres, and their operations, etc.).(v)Supplemental knowledge skills not included in any of the above (such as subject bases, e.g., philosophy, history, etc.).(vi) Practicum (prescribed practical experience as a programme of study) (Wilson2001). While this is the case the Botswana context indicate that there is only one institution that currently offers LIS education that is the Department of Library and Information Stidies of the University of Botswna. Even then the University of Botswana has taken long to review its curriculum to bring it to the same level with the current thinking in research. For example the Department attempted to change its name from library and information studies to Information Management and this is difficult as the wider university does not agree. Otike (20120 posits that until after independence in most African countries, LIS education was more concerned with training in librarianship.

The training aimed at producing competent librarians to manage all types of libraries in the country. It was therefore felt that the only way to accelerate development of libraries in Africa was to establish local training facilities. In Botswana Baffour-Awuah (2002) states that Training programs for teacher-librarianship began at the University of Botswana (UB) in 1988 and at Molepolole and Tonota Colleges of Education in 1990. The University of Botswana had a specific course on school School Libraries which spread over two years. This course has since been terminated by the university of Botswana and instead the UB has a general Certificate which can be attended to by any one. It is expected that teacher –librarians will then emerge from the certificate by choosing courses that relate to school libraries. The course has since been a flop attracting at times 4 to 6 students and therefore rendering it ineffective as at times lecturers are expected to teach only one student. This is not cost effective. However the University of Botswana is the only one which offer the following courses:

- Certificate in Archives and Records Management
- Diploma in Library and Information Studies
- Diploma in Archives and Records Management
- Bachelor of Library and Information Studies
- Bachelor of Arts, Library and Information Studies
- Bachelor of Information Systems (Information Management)
- Masters in Library and Information Studies
- Masters in Archives and Records Management
- Doctor of Philosophy

LIS Education and School Libraries

Recognition of the crucial role of libraries to education has led to the establishment of school libraries and resource centers in almost all Senior Secondary and Junior Community Secondary Schools in Botswana. Each Senior Secondary School is allocated a trained librarian while each junior secondary school is allocated a school librarian who may not have any library skills at all. This is due in part to the fact that this post is made available at a senior teacher level so even people without training in LIS take it as a form of advancement and with the hope of further winter training at the University of Botswana. The teacher librarians at the junior secondary schools are allocated the administration of the libraries in addition to the teaching load they have

to accomplish from mainstream subjects such as Geography Mathematics and Science to name a few. The reengineering and the creation of new information programme to comply with the new demands of ICT have made it imperative for upgrading of the training for the teacher librarians with LIS Education as well as Teacher Librarians without LIS training at all. Botswana is middle income economy with a population of two million as of last year's census results. The Botswana economy is depends mainly on diamonds.

School Libraries do not have a lot of documentation yet the libraries themselves came in to being during the colonial period. The Botswana National library Service (BNLS) was established in September 1967 by an act of Parliament (National Library Service Act No. 29, 1967 and officially opened in 1968. During its establishment it was a department under the Ministry of Labour and Home Affairs (Segodi 2009). During this time all school libraries were run by staff deployed by this department. When Junior Community Secondary Schools (CJSS) were established, they were separated from the Senior Secondary Schools. As the CJSS were many it was difficult for the BNLS to stationed librarians at the CJSS.

The BNLS only deployed Diploma and Degree holders in Librarianship mostly from the University of Botswana to Senior Secondary Schools. The University of Botswana could not manage to produce as many graduates as the market demanded. There library profession was at the time therefore assisted by foreign librarians mostly from African region. Thus librarians at the CJSS did not have the right qualifications to work in the libraries and most cases school libraries depended on volunteers and monitors to run the libraries. Teachers who volunteered were mostly educated in Molepolole, Serowe, Francistown and Tonota Colleges of Education. These colleges did not offer library studies as a subject which meant that those who graduate and work at the CJSS did not have library education. In view of this government establish library studies to be taught as part of mainstream subjects in Colleges of Education. It also negotiated with the Department of Library and Information Studies to teach teachers librarians a winter course called Certificate in Library Studies. The Course ran until later 2010 when it was stopped. The stoppage coincided with a post of senior teacher (Librarian) being created within the CJSS. A lot of teacher took interest in this position creating need for more training or on the job training. Teacher Librarians are found in nearly all government CJSS however at the senior secondary level there is a fulltime librarians trained mainly from the University of Botswana and most of these have degrees and masters in library studies.

All schools have libraries. They range from a classroom converted into a library to purpose-built libraries. Vocational and technical schools, colleges and institutes have full time librarians as well. The libraries at the Senior Secondary and vocational and technical schools, institutes and colleges are automated with full internet services while most CJSS libraries have no internet or a computer. Even so most of the time where they are present they would not be working. They are either donated by a philanthropist or an area Member of Parliament or Councilor.

For one to understand LIS education and its impact on school libraries one needs first to understand the history of school libraries in Botswana. Metzger (2000) posits that the concept of school libraries in Botswana started during the early 1960. But that it was during the 1970s that actual development began as a result of government development projects. In May 1969, BNLS, in collaboration with the University of Botswana, Lesotho, and Swaziland, organized the first

training course for school librarians. It was a four-day course that proved popular and was successful (Parker, 1969). Two major commissions on education have made major impacts on education and school libraries in Botswana. The report of the first commission, Education for Kagisano (Ministry of Education, 1977) and the Revised National Policy on Education (National Assembly, 1994). These policies called for the acceleration of the training of librarians and teacher-librarians to ensure that adequate and skilled personnel are in place for these libraries. Training programs for teacher-librarianship began at the University of Botswana (UB) in 1979 and at Molepolole and Tonota Colleges of Education in 1990. The course involves a certificate, Diploma, degree, master's degree and PhD at the University of Botswana. While at the colleges of Education Librarianship is taught as a subject with the program called Diploma in Education. So it is not a standalone. The absence of standardized library curriculum in Botswana has prevented the LIS education from developing uniformly.

Current situation

The Creation of the position of Senior Teacher librarian in CJSS has created more problems than solutions. Because within the Colleges of Education library studies is not taught as a main stream subject many teachers who graduate with these colleges would not have taken library studies as a subject yet when they get to the CJSS after graduation they always are faced with possibilities of becoming teacher librarians. With possibilities of becoming a senior teacher quickly teachers scramble for this position only to find that they do not have prospects of re-skilling themselves in Librarianship. Librarianship has become complicated with the introduction of ICT and most people are always looking forward for re-skilling opportunity especially on a part-time basis as in most cases they are forced to pay for themselves. Coming to the University is no longer attractive because they are forced to do either a Diploma or Degree instead of in the past when they just did a winter course and finish within two semesters. Those with degrees are better in the University of Botswana regulations allow for anyone with a relevant degree to take up a Masters in Library and information Studies or Masters in Records Management. Unfortunately those without degrees with only diplomas are left out. However with Botswana Training Authority some private companies are taking up this niche market including the Department of Library Studies which has recently being doing this on a consultancy basis. Hopefully with time the situation will improve.

There is increasingly a call for people with Certificate in Library Studies and Records Management. They want to do part time diploma in either Library Studies or Records Management. The same goes for those with Diploma they want to do degrees in Library studies and records management on a part time basis. In fact some have already registered with universities in South Africa which offer part-time education. What they now need are tutors in Botswana who can assist them with their studies and only go to South Africa for exams etc. One of our observations is also that there is lack of publicity regarding the profession and there is a general belief that library management does not require specialized or professional qualification. The non-existence of professional library staff in the majority of libraries has a great implication on the communities they serve. In most cases at the University of Botswana new students particularly those from Secondary Schools reported that they had never or hardly used the school library catalogue or the school library materials to support their studies. Obviously, these students are at a disadvantage when they carry out their research at the university level because

they have to start from scratch with their information searching skills. There is great need to train more librarians to work in school libraries as well as create corporate short courses on libraries and as well part-time courses.

The rapid development of ICT and the recent adoption of a knowledge based economic strategy by Botswana Government means the importance of libraries in nation building can no longer be ignored. Inputs from library professionals on how libraries are planned, designed, and managed are vital if libraries are to serve the communities effectively. Today, library users have become sophisticated and demanding when it comes to their information needs. Without qualified staff to plan and manage libraries, it will be difficult for libraries to develop and serve their clients satisfactorily.

There is a general realisation among Botswana librarians that the formation of library and information science education in Botswana at tertiary level is necessary not only to produce qualified librarians and information professionals but also to bring up the name and status of the librarianship profession in the country. Until recently the Molepolole College of Education, Tonota College of Education, Francistown College of Education added librarianship as a course in their three year Diploma in Education. The University of LinkomKwing also included a certificate course in Library Studies. The new Botswana University of Science and Technology (BUIST) advertise to employ Library and information Professors presumably to start courses soon in Librarianship. Increasingly we see 5 days course o on librarianship and records management advertised in the newspapers. All this efforts are attempts to increase LIS at t a Tertiary level thus assisting the University of Botswana which currently run Diplomas, degrees, masters and PhDs.

The Department of Library and Information Studies of the University of Botswana is currently reviewing its curriculum so start a Bachelor of Knowledge and Information Management which will improve the current curriculum. In a recent study done by the authors it was realized that the present day discussions in the LIS literature continue to center on conceptualization of types of library/information science education programmes to be set up, re-orientation and curriculum review. For instance, Odini (1999) identifies the need for review of information training requirements, curriculum review, emphasis of practical work as opposed to theoretical knowledge, learners' attitudes to the profession and information service delivery as well as the promotion of continuing education activities. The demand for competency in technology has led to teacher librarians acquiring ICT while studying the teacher certificate at their different colleges. All the teacher colleges in Botswana have a computer based class. The University of Botswana also offers students ICT based courses. So that generally the teacher librarians surveyed had an understanding of working with a computer. In terms of the technology at the school libraries in our study 53 respondents (81%) reported that the cost of staff training and education was very important while 11% reported that it is somewhat important. The respondents were also asked to report on the importance of in-house technical expertise and 57% said it is very important while 21% said it was somewhat important. The study asked respondent to report

on the skills of teacher librarians and 60% reported that the teacher librarians technology skills are very important while 60% reported that even subject teachers who are not librarians in the schools should be trained on the technology skills. 62% of the respondents also felt that it is very important for students to be trained on technology. The teacher librarians however showed a high level in the use of PC and on using basic software programmes with results showing that 55% are very skilled and 41% somewhat skilled in PC skills. On basic software programmes 43% said they are very skilled in using basic software programmes while 50% reported that they are somewhat skilled.

The teacher librarians are also skilled in the level of using email, printing out information, however it was significant that 26% reported that they were unskilled in trouble shooting computer problems. The teacher librarians during the study also rated themselves high in the level of using internet to search for fact. They reported that they have problems in integrating technology in classroom assignments as 235 indicted that they are unskilled. The teacher librarians also do not rate themselves high in searching databases. Teacher librarians training particularly short term training is done by the Department of Training and Development (DTD) of the Ministry of Education and Skills Development, however neither do teacher librarians get training in-house DTD or local commercial training providers. 83% said that they do not get training from local commercial training providers or distance education or even regional education centers. The teacher librarians were asked to comment on the need to teach staff basic computer skills and 82% indicated that it was very important. On the question multimedia 91% said it was very important to teach staff multimedia presentation and 82% also said it was important to teach them trouble shooting of computer peripherals and software problems. While teacher librarians reported that they are good at internet. They also reported the need to be taught how to conduct internet searches, to teach staff the integration of technology in the classroom, how to scan documents and evaluation of online information. 90% of teacher librarians reported that it is important to be afforded the opportunity to do distance learning.

In line with the national education objectives to develop a national education system for the new millennium, the focus has been towards setting up computer labs and thinking it will somehow assist the libraries. The technological developments and new methods in the library processes require the necessary moves or actions that will improve the quality and technology in teaching-learning. Botswana schools have become automated with the introduction of computer for Schools whilst almost all the government institutions of higher learning are fully automated. A number of libraries have plans to computerize but they have not really taken off. An attempt has been made to train teacher librarians in Botswana. However there is great need to make these people specialize in libraries so that they can give more time to the library. So that although all CJJS have libraries the facilities vary considerably and none of them employ full-time information professionals. The employment of a teacher-librarian, whose main duty would still be teaching, is still in practice. In cases where adequate number of teachers are available, they may be given a reduced teaching load. He/she would be assisted by a number of library monitors.

In such cases, it is not possible for the teacher to devote their time to the library management and services on a full-scale let alone technological issues. Many libraries in Botswana schools have ICT infrastructure especially when one looks at their computer labs in fact respondents indicated that they do use the computer labs from time to time as opposes to computers in the library as most of the time they are not connected. Howe there are some more pertinent challenges facing school libraries are: -

- • Poor communication networks
- • High costs of maintaining ICT infrastructure
- • Limited access to ICT hardware and software
- • Lack of funding to provide ICT infrastructure
- • Digital and information divide
- • Neglect of ICT resources
- • Computer /Information illiteracy
- • Technological
- • Poor Policy guidelines
- • Technological dependency as technology begets more technology
- • Utilizing technology to promote indigenous knowledge

As a result of this, many school libraries work with very limited bandwidth which makes their servers slow and most time there is internet down time as a result of slow server. This impedes the services rendered by librarians. This usually results in non installation of computer networks (LAN) in libraries, as well as no regular training programme.

Some solutions to the above listed challenges are can be found in reinventing the library curriculum to issue that librarians are able do put in place the following solutions: -

- • Transformation of traditional libraries to digital libraries,
- • Print on paper to digital information,
- • Card catalogs to Web OPACs,
- • Print documents to online or electronic documents,
- • ownership to Open access,
- • Provision of access to library resources to remote and desktop access.
- • Continuous availability of Information from different libraries.
- • Photocopies to digital copies,
- • Standalone libraries to Information networks
- • Real to Virtual libraries.

Conclusions

There is evidence from the results of on the impact of inadequate LIS education on of school libraries. The need to move towards knowledge society will not be easy unless there is a shift in the national education agenda towards more training opportunities for teachers. "A qualified teacher-librarian is a highly skilled teacher, with competencies provided by a combination of teacher education, classroom experience and courses in teacher-librarianship and information studies" (ATLC, 1997, p.2). This training enables the teacher-librarian to develop a school library programme that meets the learning objectives of the school. This includes teaching the students how to access and use learning resources, to develop the criteria and skills to select quality information, and to read widely and well. The teacher-librarian is a catalyst for ideas in the school, offering access to community and world-wide resources and linkages to resource people. Although school library are provided in most Botswana Community Junior Schools, the amount of budget allocation being channelled to the school library systems is not adequate. This is compounded with the increasing number of schools in the whole country resulting in the inequitable and inadequate budget. The school resource centres are being managed by teacher-librarians who are allocated with minimum hours but essentially are still responsible in the teaching process.

From the observation and research undertaken, from the schools and the teachers involved in the management of school libraries, most students do not use the library fully because of numerous factors as follows: lack of Library Skills among teacher librarians. The professional preparation and continuous training of teacher-librarians should help them develop realistic expectations related to programme implementation of the school resource centre management and services. This is especially critical in situations where novice teacher-librarians are introducing the programme to the school without having the essential practical experience. The adoption and use of technologies in school libraries have a positive impact on teaching, learning, and research. However despite this knowledge the roles ICTs can play in education, secondary schools in Botswana have yet to extensively adopt them for libraries. Efforts geared towards integration of ICTs into the secondary school system, have not had much impact in libraries as a lot of them still do not possess even rudimentary ICT resources.

Problems such as poor policy and project implementation strategies, and limited or poor information infrastructure work against these efforts. In order to ensure that technology are widely adopted and used in Botswana's secondary school system, the following efforts should be taken. Government should ensure that ICT policy statements are translated into reality. An ICT implementation department should be created by the Ministry of Education e.g. there is great need to evaluate Thutonet and computer for schools programme to see what has been achieved by the Maitlamo Policy in schools. This Department should be funded and given the power to provide ICT facilities in the schools and monitor their use. Above all there is a need to harmonize the Library education in Botswana to make it standard. The Botswana Qualifications Authority should come up with library standards to be trained by the University of Botswana and other private trainers so that at the end training can be the same.

Efforts should be made by Ministry of Education and skills Development to train teacher librarians and post them to libraries only and ensure that the libraries are resourced with the right

technology. A lot need to be done with regards to improving the skills and competencies of teacher librarians. There is the for enhanced manpower development through training, adequate monitoring and supervision, provision of ICT infrastructure and material resources should be in place, provision of sufficient funds, provision of bandwidth as well as regular review of the educational curriculum.

Recommendations

It is recommended that in employing the standard for the school library programme, the training of the teacher librarians and the time allocated for them must be placed as top priority. The standards need to be set up for teacher-librarians with the availability of on-going continuing education programme.

Teachers should be motivated and given access to training so that they can have the right qualifications. Upon finishing they must move into well supported libraries in CJSS which has been supplied with new materials and especially ICT related materials.

The teacher librarians must also under go continuous education because technology changes from time to time. Since teacher librarians come from colleges of education it is time that librarianship as a fully-fledged course is introduced in colleges of education, to ensure continuity.

Other universities in Botswana should also be encouraged to take up LIS Education in order to reduce negative impact on the quality of teacher librarians. Distance education must also be encouraged through eLearning but that also require that schools are well equipped with ICT so that teachers could use them to do courses through distance.

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