

PREDICTORS OF UNDERGRADUATES' ENROLMENT IN LIBRARY AND INFORMATION SCIENCE PROGRAMMES IN NIGERIAN UNIVERSITIES

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Abstract

This study investigated predictors of undergraduates' enrolment decisions and perceptions of Library and Information Science (LIS) in federal universities in southern Nigeria, using the Social Cognitive Career Theory as its theoretical framework. A descriptive survey design was adopted. The population of the study included 2,723 LIS undergraduates in nine federal universities, out of which 408 students were chosen using the stratified random sampling technique. The instrument used for data collection was the questionnaire. 408 copies of the questionnaires were distributed to the respondents, and 321 responded, which were subject to data analysis with descriptive and inferential statistics via SPSS version 23. The results showed that the most effective motivational factors to study LIS were job opportunities and personal interest, which showed a transition towards career driven and intrinsic motivation. Students in general expressed positive views about LIS, especially as it was considered relevant to the national development, contribution to the information economy and intellectual challenge. Although gender did not play a significant role in the decision by students to study LIS, it played a major role in how the students perceived the programme. The study concludes that enrolment in LIS is influenced by perceived career opportunities and positive expectations of outcomes, which has implications for curriculum, career advice, and gender specific academic support. The researcher recommended LIS programmes should actively promote the wide range of career opportunities in the field and early guidance, strengthen ICT focused and practice oriented curricula, and adopt gender sensitive teaching and mentoring approaches to support informed enrolment and positive student perceptions.

Keywords: Undergraduates enrolment, Library and Information Science students, Federal universities, Southern Nigeria.

Abstrak

Studi ini meneliti prediktor keputusan pendaftaran mahasiswa S1 dan persepsi mereka tentang Ilmu Perpustakaan dan Informasi (LIS) di universitas negeri di Nigeria selatan,

menggunakan Teori Karir Kognitif Sosial sebagai kerangka teoritisnya. Desain survei deskriptif diadopsi. Populasi penelitian meliputi 2.723 mahasiswa S1 LIS di sembilan universitas negeri, di mana 408 mahasiswa dipilih menggunakan teknik pengambilan sampel acak bertingkat. Instrumen yang digunakan untuk pengumpulan data adalah kuesioner. 408 kuesioner dibagikan kepada responden, dan 321 responden memberikan tanggapan, yang kemudian dianalisis datanya dengan statistik deskriptif dan inferensial melalui SPSS versi 23. Hasil menunjukkan bahwa faktor motivasi yang paling efektif untuk belajar LIS adalah peluang kerja dan minat pribadi, yang menunjukkan transisi menuju motivasi karir dan intrinsik. Mahasiswa secara umum menyatakan pandangan positif tentang LIS, terutama karena dianggap relevan dengan pembangunan nasional, kontribusi terhadap ekonomi informasi, dan tantangan intelektual. Meskipun gender tidak memainkan peran signifikan dalam keputusan mahasiswa untuk belajar LIS, gender memainkan peran utama dalam bagaimana mahasiswa mempersepsikan program tersebut. Studi ini menyimpulkan bahwa pendaftaran di bidang Ilmu Perpustakaan dan Informasi (LIS) dipengaruhi oleh persepsi peluang karir dan harapan positif terhadap hasil, yang memiliki implikasi terhadap kurikulum, bimbingan karir, dan dukungan akademik yang spesifik gender. Peneliti merekomendasikan program LIS untuk secara aktif mempromosikan berbagai peluang karir di bidang ini dan bimbingan sejak dini, memperkuat kurikulum yang berfokus pada TIK dan berorientasi praktik, serta mengadopsi pendekatan pengajaran dan pendampingan yang peka gender untuk mendukung pendaftaran yang terinformasi dan persepsi positif mahasiswa.

Kata kunci: Pendaftaran mahasiswa S1, Mahasiswa Ilmu Perpustakaan dan Informasi, Universitas negeri, Nigeria Selatan.

1. INTRODUCTION

Library and Information Science (LIS) is an interdisciplinary profession that involves the processes of identifying, retrieving, selecting, organizing, storing, and disseminating information. It is an interdisciplinary field that incorporate the features of other disciplines, such as management, information technology, education, and social sciences, to solve problems associated with handling information in both hardcopy and electronic forms (Paul et al., 2017; Bawden & Robinson, 2016). LIS professionals function in different organizations, such as libraries, archives, museums, and the information technology industry. Their responsibilities include acquiring, preserving, accessing, and communicating timely, accurate, and relevant information to contribute to societal advancement. Librarians are equipped with several skills, which include digital and information literacy skills, research skills, citation management skills, and data analysis skills (Ogunbodede & Aborisade, 2025; Adebayo-Atchimi & Ogunbodede, 2024; Cox, 2018). These skills enable them to support to faculty and students with research projects and digital resources, as well as serving as repositories of materials and historical records.

Because of the increasing role of information in society, there is a rise in demand for the services of well-trained LIS experts (Malhan, 2017). LIS is an educational discipline that is service-oriented, as it occupies a highly important place inside and outside the educational systems of all countries. A career, therefore, is the field of employment that one or more individuals or organizations undertake in their lifetime, involving training, education, and experience. Career choice has a strong impact on the effort, commitment, and interest displayed by the students in their chosen field. However,

as indicated by Effiom et al. (2021), several students do not have the right information regarding the different disciplines, and as a result, they find it hard to decide on what to pursue at the university. Since many students do not access occupational guidance and counseling, they may find themselves in the wrong occupations or an attraction to certain jobs without sufficient information about their prospects (Kanyika, 2022). As a result, they continue to cause problems in universities, such as high dropout rates, poor academic achievements, and examination misconduct.

The reasons individuals select a career or a profession of their choice are attributed to several factors. Some of these factors may include interest and ability, desired occupation, the nature of the job market, the judgment of relatives and friends, and remunerations, among others. Other factors may include parents, friends, the media, employers, and counselors (Norahim et al., 2025; Hadiyati & Astuti, 2023). Other important considerations include job stability and security, social recognition and reputation, pay, and the ability to learn from the profession. Other factors, such as working in a library or having a professional role model in LIS, may also influence the decision to study LIS (Abraham et al., 2021). In conclusion, one can say that choosing LIS as a field of study remains a personal decision that depends on personal preference and future goals.

In recent years, there has been a rise in the number of institutions offering LIS programs in Nigeria. In 1959, the University College, Ibadan, founded the first library school, which has led to the establishment of more library schools in different parts of the country ever since (Okoye, 2015). Many universities and polytechnics have included LIS courses and programs as a way of admitting students interested in a career. As a result, LIS education has become more accessible and available for students across Nigeria. However, the development of LIS programs in Nigeria is not without its challenges. There is an alarmingly low level of visibility or limited perception among students about LIS as a viable profession (Kanyika, 2022). However, it appears that many students who enroll in library schools do so primarily due to the lack of opportunities to pursue other courses of their preference (Abata-Ebire et al., 2018). This may have created a perception where people enroll in library school in Nigeria with the impression that it is a dumping zone for those who failed to secure their preferred programs and hence have no option but to take library and information science programs. While some few studies have investigated factors influencing enrolment in LIS programs, there is a significant research gap concerning the factors influencing undergraduates' enrolment in LIS programs in federal universities in southern Nigeria. This study aims to address this critical gap by investigating the predictors of undergraduates' enrolment in LIS programs in federal universities in southern Nigeria.

Statement of the Problem

LIS is a significant field that plays an important role in providing informational, educational, and cultural requirements for modern society. Graduates of LIS acquire competencies in information management, research techniques, and management of information technology; hence, they prepare themselves to fill the increasing needs of organizations. Due to the rapid growth of online information resources and the need for

proper data management, the need for skilled LIS graduates will also remain high. However, despite the importance of LIS as a course of study, many undergraduates in Nigeria still did not choose it as their first choice course but rather as an alternative when they could not get their desired course (Posigha, 2021). This trend is indicative of one's lack of appreciation for the subject and adds to the idea that LIS is an unattractive or less respectable profession. Other social factors, such as societal attitudes, peer pressure, and culture, as well as economic factors, can influence students' decisions to pursue LIS programs. By identifying these factors, measures can be taken to ensure a steady supply of qualified information professionals. Based on the preceding perspectives, it is imperative to review the factors influencing undergraduates' choice of LIS as a course of study in federal universities in southern Nigeria. This is to determine if the undergraduates now view LIS as a desired, appreciated, and cherished course, rather than as an assigned course or a fallback option.

Research Questions

The following research questions guided the study:

- What factors predict undergraduates' enrolment in LIS programmes?
- What is the perception of LIS undergraduates towards LIS as a course of study?

Hypotheses

The following hypotheses were tested at 0.05 level of significance:

- Gender does not significantly predict undergraduates' choice of LIS as a course of study
- Gender does not significantly predict LIS undergraduates' perception of LIS as a course of study

2. LITERATURE REVIEW

Predictors of undergraduates' enrolment in LIS programmes

The results from South Africa and Turkey indicate that not all students are interested in LIS as a first choice but only get inspired by job security and opportunities (Sibiya & Shongwe, 2021; Kurbanoglu & Unal, 2018). However, some students are dissatisfied with practical training and IT content, which creates the issue of curriculum relevance. In East Africa, Tanzanian students enrol to study LIS without prior knowledge of the profession, which is often because they were unable to get admission to study their desired programmes (Kanyika, 2022). Similarly, studies from Ghana show that work experience and association with librarians are predictors (Adanu and John-Oswald, 2010), but their study is based on diploma students only and cannot be extended to undergraduates. Okoro and Anyanwu (2019) conducted a large-scale study in Nigeria and discovered that the majority of LIS students in eight universities did not select the programme as their initial option, and enrolment was significantly influenced by previous experience working in libraries as well as family members and peers. This confirms previous results by Issa and Nwalo (2008), who emphasized the importance of social networks and previous exposure to library environments in the development of career

decision-making among students. Equally, Posigha (2021) indicated that undergraduates are being enrolled to study LIS as a last resort due to admission restrictions, supporting the view that the programme is not a popular choice among students. Despite these studies being informative, they are quite old and fail to reflect current forces like the digital revolution, social media exposure, and changing labour market forces or requirements, which might have transformed the motivation of students. Furthermore, Abata-Ebire et al. (2018) found that self-interest, career expectations, and perceived economic benefits significantly predicted LIS enrolment at a federal polytechnic in Osun State. Overall, existing studies indicate that economic considerations, prior library exposure, and limited alternatives largely drive LIS enrolment. However, the research remains context-specific and outdated, creating a gap this study seeks to address using robust statistical methods.

Students' perceptions of LIS as a course of study

Several studies generally report favorable perceptions, but these findings are frequently qualified by underlying dissatisfaction related to curriculum relevance, career motivation, and prior career aspirations. For instance, Tanacković et al. (2018) found that students in Croatia and Turkey viewed LIS as socially relevant and expressed satisfaction with their career choice; however, this satisfaction was undermined by concerns about inadequate information technology content and limited practical training within LIS programmes. It means that the positive attitude towards the profession does not always imply the level of satisfaction with LIS education itself. On the same note, Abata-Ebire et al. (2018) indicated that students saw LIS as a professional and economically sustainable course that provided employment opportunities, and hence their perceptions could be indicative of pragmatics (and not necessarily the interest in the field of study). The latter is supported by Sibiya (2020), who found that a significant percentage of LIS students in South Africa were not satisfied with the fact that LIS was not their initial choice, and some students were still willing to shift to different careers. These implications indicate that the motivation for enrolment in LIS can in some cases be motivated by an incomplete choice and is not necessarily motivated by a commitment at all, which can adversely impact students' engagement and professional identity in the long-term perspective.

Furthermore, the perceived lack of connection between LIS curricula and the needs of the modern information setting is frequently cited as the cause of dissatisfaction in the research. According to scholars, the lack of focus on digital skills, new technologies, and practical training is one of the factors that lead students to feel unprepared to enter the labour market (Goodsett and Koziura, 2016; Kurbanoglu and Unal, 2018). Adetayo et al. (2024) also point out that the negative perceptions are not so much related to the rejection of LIS as a discipline but rather limited personal interest, poor career paths, and insufficient orientation before joining the institution. Even though the literature implies that most LIS students gain positive perceptions and satisfaction as over time, it seems to be based on the exposure to pertinent coursework, practical experiences, and the availability of clear career opportunities. There are still quite a few misconceptions, insufficient career guidance, and gaps in the curriculum continue to

create substantial barriers in admitting and keeping students in LIS programmes (Sibiya & Shongwe, 2021; Jain, 2023; Bilawar and Jadhav, 2015). This study highlights the necessity of the long-term curriculum change, better orientation of students and a closer correspondence between LIS education and the changing information profession.

Gender and undergraduates' choice of LIS as a course of study

It has been widely discussed that gender is one of the factors influencing undergraduates to choose LIS as a course of study, though, empirical data has demonstrated that gender impact differs depending on the socio-cultural setting. In Sri Lanka, there is a strong presence of female students enrolling in LIS with up to 80 percent being female students as a result of ingrained gender stereotypes that librarianship is a feminized and service-based occupation that fits the traditional female gender roles (Senarathna and Amarasooriya, 2024). Studies also reveal differences in research interests and methods between genders in LIS, with women favoring qualitative approaches and men more theoretical related topics, indicating broader gendered patterns in the discipline (Choji et al., 2024; Zhang et al., 2023). Similarly, studies on students' information behaviour have shown gender variations in digital engagement. For example, Ogunbodede et al. (2022) found that male students used digital resources more than female students, and the difference was statistically significant, although students generally held positive perceptions regarding the effects of digital resource use. These findings suggest that gender differences may extend beyond academic preferences to patterns of technology and information resource utilization. While this pattern highlights the power of socio-cultural expectations in shaping academic decisions, it also exposes the exclusionary effects of occupational stereotyping, particularly its role in discouraging male participation in the field. Conversely, studies in Nigeria question the belief that gender is a predictor of consistent choice of LIS course. Issa and Nwalo (2008) reported an almost equal gender distribution among LIS students, with a slight male majority, suggesting that labour market realities, institutional accessibility, and changing perceptions of LIS as a professional and technology-driven discipline may override traditional gender norms. This deviation highlights the shortcomings of universalizing the application of gender-based explanations since this would be the blind path of simplifying intricate socio-educational processes. Research in the related areas, specifically, in Information Systems, is even more problematic as it leads to the few differences between men and women in the motivation to choose the course. Rather, personal interest, perceived career opportunities, and self-efficacy become the more significant factors (Acilar and Saebo, 2022), which suggests that gender acts possibly as an intervening or situational variable, as opposed to a causal one. Still, there are gender stereotypes that are powerful. The societal attitudes towards LIS as a female-dominated profession might demoralize the enrolment of male students, and pragmatic reasons like employment security might encourage female students to enrol (Senarathna and Amarasooriya, 2024; Singh and Chander, 2013). On the whole, gender has the greatest influence on the choice of LIS course in those situations when stereotypes are established, but the predictor has less power in situations when economic and institutional, as well as individual factors play a more significant role.

Gender and undergraduates' perception of LIS as a course of study

Gender influences undergraduates' perceptions of LIS as a course of study, but its effect varies significantly across cultural and institutional contexts. In some settings, gender stereotypes play a decisive role in shaping how LIS is perceived. As an example, in Sri Lanka, roughly 80% of LIS students are women, which is deeply rooted by cultural beliefs according to which LIS is a feminized and service-based occupation (Senarathna & Amarasooriya, 2024). These stereotypes shape how the students view the discipline and strengthen occupational divisions against male participation, implying that perceptions are learnt, not inherent in the programme. However, evidence from other contexts challenges the assumption that gender is a universal determinant of perceptions of LIS. In Jordan, Al-Shwabkah et al. (2016) found no significant gender differences in students' perceptions of the LIS curriculum or ICT-related courses, indicating that male and female students held similar views regarding programme content and instructional quality. Likewise, studies conducted in Croatia and Turkey reveal that students generally do not perceive LIS as a female-dominated profession. Rather, male and female students perceive it as interdisciplinary and professional nature, which leads to the insignificance of differences in gender perception (Kurbanoglu and Unal, 2018). These results indicate that the effect of gender stereotypes can be neutralised by institutional orientation and curriculum design. This view is enhanced by wider research on information-related fields. Although there might be slight gender variations in some aspects (including personal interest or perceived learning ease), when it comes to the overall views on the discipline, these elements are more heavily influenced by a career expectation, academic experiences, and self-efficacy (Acilar and Saebo, 2022; Pinto et al., 2019). In general, the impact of gender on the perception of LIS seems to be most important in the situation when the traditional stereotypes are still present, whereas they are less significant in the background of professional relevance and the quality of education.

Theoretical Framework

This study is anchored on the Social Cognitive Career Theory (SCCT) developed by Lent, Brown, and Hackett (1994), which explains how career and academic choices are shaped through the interaction of self-efficacy beliefs, outcome expectations, personal goals, and contextual factors. SCCT offers a proper paradigm of the enrolment of undergraduates into LIS programmes in Nigerian universities. The arguments of the SCCT state that beliefs of students in their capabilities to achieve success (self-efficacy) and the expectations of outcomes are the main factors influencing enrolment decisions. Outcome expectations and intrinsic motivation are reflected in the factors of job opportunities and personal interest in this study. The students with the perception that LIS provides good career opportunities are more likely to enrol, which is in line with the suggestion of SCCT, that people follow educational courses that are linked with good expected future results. Environmental support or impediments to enrolment are contextual factors such as parental influence, exposure to libraries, constraints in admission, and institutional placement. The learning experiences also form an important

part of SCCT, as they empower self-efficacy and support the positive outcome expectations. In the SCCT system, the perception of LIS among the undergraduates is based on their learning experiences, self-efficacy, and expectations of outcomes. The expectations and confidence are strong since there were positive perceptions towards LIS, like its relevancy to national development, ICT orientation, and role in the information economy. Uncertainty about the prestige of the occupation or insufficient interest in additional study, can indicate weaker beliefs about outcome or perceived obstacles. These perceptions influence students' motivation, persistence, and commitment to the programme.

SCCT acknowledges gender as a personal attribute that may influence career choice through socialization and access to opportunities. However, within this framework, the absence of a significant relationship between gender and choice of LIS suggests that cognitive factors, such as personal interest and perceived career outcomes are more influential than gender in shaping students' enrolment decisions. Both male and female students appear to base their choice of LIS on similar evaluations of opportunities and interests. From an SCCT standpoint, perceptions of LIS are shaped primarily by self-efficacy beliefs and outcome expectations rather than demographic characteristics. The lack of a significant gender difference in students' perception of LIS implies that male and female undergraduates share comparable learning experiences and expectations about the discipline. This reinforces SCCT's position that cognitive and contextual factors play a more central role than gender in shaping students' academic perceptions and attitudes toward LIS.

3. RESEARCH METHODS

The study employed a descriptive survey design. 2723 LIS undergraduates in nine federal universities in southern Nigeria comprised the study population. The stratified random sampling method was used to select 408 LIS undergraduates out of the total population. Taherdoost (2017) argues that a study can usually use a sample of 15 percent of the population. According to this statement, a sample size of 408 is adequate for a population of 2,723, which accounts for 15% of the overall population and each of the programs. The data was collected through a self-developed questionnaire, which was administered to the participants. The targeted respondents were given 408 questionnaires, while 321 questionnaires were returned and found usable. The responses and analyses of data collected through the questionnaire operated using a 4-point Likert-type scale and nominal scale measurement. The researchers selected 2.5 as the criterion score to answer research questions 1 through 3. The calculation for the criterion score resulted in a value of 2.5 by dividing $(4 + 3 + 2 + 1)$ by 4. Survey interpretation relies on the 2.5 score on a 4-point Likert scale because it mathematically shows the numerical midpoint between responses of 1 and 4. The selected midpoint score enables survey takers to indicate their positions without completely agreeing or disagreeing with the statement. The 2.5 score functions as the midpoint of the scale when it applies to neutral responses even though the 4-point Likert scale does not provide a specific middle point option. For research question 1, the mean response below 2.5 was considered disagreeing, while the mean response of 2.5 and above was

considered agreeing. Regarding research question 2, the mean response below 2.5 was considered a negative perception, and the mean response of 2.5 and above was considered a positive perception. Descriptive and inferential statistics were used in analyzing the data, where frequencies and simple percentages were employed, and inferential statistics of the mean and standard deviation were obtained by SPSS version 23. Table 1 displays the study's population, sample size, and number of respondents.

4. RESEARCH FINDINGS/RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

Table 1: Population and Sample Size according to the Universities

No	Universities	No. of LIS Students	Sample	Respondents
1.	University of Benin, Edo State	420	63	51
2.	University of Calabar, Cross Rivers State	380	57	44
3.	University of Uyo, Akwa Ibom State	311	47	36
4..	University of Port Harcourt, Rivers State	227	34	26
5.	Nnamdi Azikiwi University, Awka	310	46	36
6.	University of Nigeria, Nsukka	320	48	31
7.	Federal University Ndufa-Alike, Ebonyi State	278	41	35
8.	University of Ibadan	250	38	33
9.	Federal University Oye-Ekiti, Ekiti State	227	34	29
	Total	2723	408	321

Table 2: Demographic Information

Gender	Frequency	Percentage %
Male	119	37
Female	202	63
Total	321	100

The finding in Table 2 suggests that females made up the majority of the faculty involved in the study.

Research Question 1: What are the factors predicting undergraduates' choice of LIS as a course of study?

Table 3: Factors Predicting Undergraduates' Choice of LIS

No	Factors predicting undergraduates' choice of LIS	SA	A	D	SD	Mean	S.D
1.	Job opportunities	86	189	31	15	3.1	0.74

2.	Personal interest in the course	107	134	30	50	2.9	1.02
3.	Assigned to LIS despite choosing a different course	81	100	90	50	2.7	1.02
4.	Unable to meet the requirements of chosen course	90	102	59	70	2.7	1.11
5.	Prior experience working in the library	61	112	70	78	2.5	1.06
6.	Parental influence	78	91	50	102	2.5	1.17
7.	Looking for an easy course to study	47	89	83	100	2.3	1.06
8.	Friends influence	34	72	101	114	2.1	1.00
9.	Gender influence	41	61	108	111	2.1	1.02
10.	I was close with the head of the department	40	49	70	152	1.9	1.08
	Grand Mean					2.5	1.03

Table 3 presents the factors predicting undergraduates' decisions to pursue LIS as a course of study. The analysis shows that the mean scores of items 1-6 are equal to or higher than the criterion mean (2.5); that means that these aspects have a moderate or strong effect on the decision of students. On the contrary, items 7-10 are lower than the criterion mean, which indicates a lesser impact. The criterion mean of 2.5, which is also the grand mean, shows that the factors had a moderate impact on the enrolment decision of students. The strongest influence was from job opportunities ($M = 3.1$), then personal interest ($M = 2.9$), assignment to LIS despite choosing another course ($M = 2.7$), inability to meet the requirements of their preferred courses ($M = 2.7$), etc. The results show a change in students' motivation, mainly due to career opportunities and personal interest, which is a way of changing the attitude of LIS as a course to study in the modern academic environment.

Research Question 2: What is the perception of undergraduates on LIS as a course of study?

Table 4: Perception of LIS Undergraduates

No	Perception of LIS undergraduates	SA	A	D	SD	Mean	S.D
1.	The LIS profession contributes significantly to the information economy	148	145	22	6	3.4	0.69
2.	The LIS profession is relevant to national development	134	144	37	5	3.3	0.72
3.	LIS is quite an interesting and challenging course	123	171	14	13	3.3	0.72
4.	I am satisfied with studying LIS as a course	119	162	26	14	3.2	0.76
5.	LIS is ICT-intensive	86	189	31	15	3.1	0.72
6.	LIS is a lucrative field	86	189	31	15	3.1	0.73
7.	The LIS profession has a positive public image and enjoys high prestige in public	89	143	68	21	2.9	0.86

8.	I love to further my education in LIS	91	115	76	39	2.8	0.98
	Grand Mean					3.1	0.77

Table 4 presents undergraduates' perceptions of LIS as a course of study. Items (1-8) all scored above the criterion mean score of 2.5; and the grand mean was 3.1 shows that the students generally have positive attitudes towards the program. Students understand the importance of LIS as an important part of the information economy ($M = 3.4$) and as a relevant factor in the national development ($M = 3.3$). LIS is also considered interesting and challenging ($M = 3.26$), and students are satisfied with studying the course ($M = 3.20$). The other significant perceptions are the ICT-rich nature of LIS ($M = 3.08$) and the potential of the field as a well-paying one ($M = 3.08$). On the whole, the obtained results indicate that undergraduates hold a favourable view of LIS, combining the academic interest, professional need, and career expectations, which can contribute to motivation and interest in the discipline.

Hypothesis 1: Gender does not significantly predict undergraduates' choice of LIS as a course of study

Table 5: Simple linear regression analysis of gender as a predictor of undergraduates' choice of LIS as a course of study

Model		Sum of Squares	df	Mean Square	F	Sig. (2-tailed)
1	Regression	0.458	1	0.458	1.968	
	Residual	74.254	319	0.233	-	0.162
	Total	74.712	320			

$\alpha = 0.05$; $R = 0.078$; $R \text{ Square} = 0.006$

Table 5 contains the findings of a simple linear regression model to investigate the predictive index of gender in the selection of LIS for undergraduates as a course of study. The $F(1, 319) = 1.968$, $p = 0.162$, low correlation ($R = 0.078$) and R^2 (0.006) were obtained in the model. This means that the contribution of gender to the variation in the choice of LIS by students is 0.6 percent, which represents a very weak relationship. The p-value is more than 0.05, indicating that the outcome is not statistically significant, thus demonstrating that there is no significant difference in the decision of male and female students to study LIS. Consequently, gender is not a determining factor, and the null hypothesis that gender does not significantly predict LIS choice is accepted.

Hypothesis 2: Gender does not significantly predict LIS undergraduates' perception of LIS as a course of study

Table 6: Simple linear regression analysis of gender as a predictor of LIS undergraduates' perception of LIS as a course of study

Model		Sum of Squares	df	Mean Square	F	Sig. (2-tailed)
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1	Regression	1.386	1	1.386	5.097	
	Residual	86.812	319	0.272	-	0.025
	Total	88.198	320			

$\alpha = 0.05$; $R = 0.112$; $R^2 = 0.013$

Table 6 presents the results of a simple linear regression analysis examining whether gender predicts LIS undergraduates' perception of LIS as a course of study. The model yielded $F(1, 319) = 5.097$, $p = 0.025$, with a correlation coefficient of $R = 0.112$ and an R^2 value of 0.013. This indicates that gender explains approximately 1.3% of the variance in students' perception of LIS. Although the relationship is weak, the result is statistically significant. This implies that male and female students differ significantly in their perception of LIS. Therefore, gender is a significant predictor of undergraduates' perception of LIS, and the null hypothesis is rejected.

Discussion

The results indicate that job opportunities and personal interest are the most influential factors driving undergraduates' decision to pursue LIS. This is followed by assignment to LIS despite initially choosing another course, inability to meet the requirements of preferred programmes, prior experience working in the library, and parental influence, among others. The implication of these findings is that practical factors are important in influencing students' enrolment in LIS, especially the perceived career opportunities, but intrinsic interest also contributes significantly to the decision-making process of students. In general, the results show that students who base their choice on career opportunity and their personal preferences exhibit a change in motivation, reflecting a shift in attitude towards LIS as an academic major in the modern academic environment. This finding is in line with the SCCT framework, which highlights that factors such as job opportunities and personal interest reflect outcome expectations and intrinsic motivation. Students who perceive LIS as offering favourable career prospects are more likely to enrol. This result is in contrast to the works of Posigha (2021), Okoro and Anyanwu (2019), and Issa and Nwalo (2008), who found that the enrolment of LIS students depends mostly on previous experience working in libraries, family and peer pressure, or it is chosen as the final option because of the admission limitations. In contrast to these studies, the present findings indicate that career opportunities and individual interest play a more significant role in motivating students, indicating a shift from social or situation-driven motivations towards practical and professional concerns.

Research question two shows that LIS students have a positive perception of LIS as a course of study, with strong opinions on the role of LIS in enhancing the information economy, the interesting and challenging study program, and the relevance of the LIS profession to the nation's development. The positive perception held by these students suggests that LIS programs are able to enroll students with a natural passion for the subject or information science and who appreciate the usefulness of LIS. This could lead to more effective, committed, and enthusiastic future professionals looking for employment in LIS. This finding supports the SCCT framework, which emphasized that

undergraduates' perception of LIS reflects their learning experiences, self-efficacy, and outcome expectations. Positive perceptions, such as LIS relevance to national development, ICT orientation, and contribution to the information economy, indicate strong outcome expectations and confidence. The result aligns with Tanackovic et al. (2018), who discovered that students perceive LIS positively as they hold the idea that the profession is relevant in the society and are usually content with the choice of profession they have made.

The results of hypothesis one show that gender does not significantly affect the decision of males and females to study LIS, suggesting that the gender factor does not influence the choice of LIS by undergraduates. This implies that the choice of enrolment is motivated more by other factors, including the opportunity and career prospects, individual interests or educational conditions, instead of gender-related factors. This observation confirms the SCCT framework, which emphasized that both male and female students seem to make their selection of LIS on the same consideration of opportunities and interests. This finding is not consistent with the results of Senarathna and Amarasooriya (2024), Choji et al. (2024), and Zhang et al. (2023), who reported that gender plays a significant role in LIS, particularly in students' choice of the programme as well as in shaping research interests and methodological preferences. In contrast, the result from hypothesis two reveals that male and female students differ significantly in their perception of LIS as a course of study, implying that gender is a significant predictor of undergraduates' perception of the discipline. This suggests that while gender does not influence the decision to enrol in LIS, it shapes how students experience, evaluate, and interpret the programme, possibly due to differences in socialization, expectations, or exposure to career-related information. The significant gender difference in undergraduates' perception of LIS is consistent with SCCT, which recognizes that personal attributes such as gender can influence career perceptions indirectly through their effects on self-efficacy, outcome expectations, and contextual learning experiences. While gender does not affect students' decision to enrol in LIS, it appears to shape how male and female students experience, evaluate, and interpret the programme. This finding does not align with that of Al-Shwabkah et al. (2016), who reported no significant gender differences in students' perceptions of the LIS programme.

5. CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

The findings reveal that undergraduates' decision to pursue LIS is primarily driven by job opportunities and personal interest among other factors, indicating that practical career considerations and intrinsic motivation now play a dominant role in programme selection. Furthermore, the study found that students generally hold positive perceptions of LIS as a course of study. Respondents acknowledged the importance of LIS to the national development, the information economy, and the tendency to become a more ICT-oriented profession. The findings also reveal nuanced gender dynamics. While male and female students do not differ significantly in their decision to enrol in LIS, gender significantly influences their perceptions of the discipline. In general, the research findings indicate that career-oriented and interest-based influences are becoming more significant in the motivation of LIS enrolment, that there are positive perceptions on the

discipline generally, and that gender has a stronger effect on the development of perceptions than on the decision to enrol in this discipline. Based on the findings, the researcher recommended LIS programmes should actively promote the wide range of career opportunities in the field and early guidance, strengthen ICT focused and practice oriented curricula, and adopt gender sensitive teaching and mentoring approaches to support informed enrolment and positive student perceptions.

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