

## Career Aspiration as Predictor of Students' Performance in Cataloguing and Classification

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### Abstract

This paper investigated career aspiration as predictor of students' performance in cataloguing and classification with the major objectives of identifying the career aspiration of students studying cataloguing and classification and identifying the relationship between career aspiration and academic performance. The descriptive research design was used for the study. The population was made up of 129 students of Information Resources Management, Babcock University, Nigeria. Sampling was enumerative. Data was collected using a questionnaire. Results show that minority of the respondents desire to work as librarians or archivists. Even though respondents who aspire to work as librarians were more consistent in their perceived utility of cataloguing and classification, they were still outperformed in academic performance by those aspiring for careers as bankers and system analysts. Based on the findings, the study concludes that library schools should find a way of accommodating varied career aspirations in a way that would enable students fit into their career choices while retaining the core librarianship courses. The study recommends that librarians and indeed library organisations make concerted efforts to market the library profession in order to attract prospective students who desire to pursue careers in librarianship amongst others.

**Keywords:** Academic performance, Career aspiration, Cataloguing and classification, Librarianship, Subject utility.

### Introduction

Librarianship as a profession has undergone changes in recent times mainly due to the advancement in information technology (IT). Among the areas of noticeable change is the removal of the word "library" from the name of some library schools. Some schools that have managed to retain the word "library" have, however, added the word "information science" to reflect the integration of information technology into the curriculum. As a result, most library schools now offer courses such as Introduction to Computer Science, Database Construction and Management, Planning and Financing of Information Systems among others. According to Ochogwu (1990) the introduction of new courses, even those outside the confines of traditional library science, is a necessary response to the needs for multidisciplinary course work. These new courses expose students to areas outside the library environment where they can pursue future careers. It is, therefore, not out of place to assume that some students in today's library schools do not have any intention of pursuing a career in librarianship; it is possible also that they may not be interested in traditional library courses such as cataloguing and classification.

The department of Information Resources Management at Babcock University, Nigeria, started out as Department of Library Studies in 1999, but with poor student enrolment, the department changed its name in 2002 to Information Resources Management (I.R.M.) with the introduction of courses from other departments, notably, Computer Science, Mass Communication and Business Management to enrich the curriculum. The renamed department (I.R.M.) soon experienced a boom in students' enrolment. The objectives of Information Resources Management, according to Babcock University Undergraduate Bulletin (2009-2011), is to produce graduates who possess knowledge about basic principles of selection, acquisition, organisation, storage, retrieval and use of recorded knowledge and information sources of all kinds in a variety of environments like libraries, archives, museums, records centers, information centers, and to produce workers who possess basic skills in current Information Technology as an integral part of the operation and services of information agencies among others.

### Statement of the Problem

The integration of information technology into the library curriculum is, no doubt, a welcome development as it broadens the knowledge base of students and makes it possible for them to pursue careers in a variety of IT environment. However, this has encouraged the enrolment of students into library schools who may have no intention of working in libraries and who may not be interested in traditional or core library courses. It is in the light of this that the present study investigates career aspirations as it affects performance in cataloguing and classification.

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## Objectives of the Study

This study aims to achieve the following objectives:

- 1 Identify the career aspiration of students in Information Resources Management programme
- 2 Investigate the difference in the perceived utility that students attach to studying cataloguing and classification based on their career aspirations
- 3 Examine the relationship between career aspiration and academic performance in cataloguing and classification

## Literature Review

The training of librarians in a technological era has been the focus of some recent studies (Malinconico, 1992; Gupta, 2001; Raju, 2003; Hudon, 2011) as efforts are being made to make librarians more relevant in the age of technology. Indeed, Taylor as cited by Ochogwu (1990) asserts that to educate librarians to think only in terms of a place called the library, as we currently know that institution, is to do them a disservice and probably doom them to ineffectuality. However, while training librarians to be more versatile, Lancaster (1997) states that the library must continue to perform one of the most important functions, which is, the organization of information resources. No wonder then that cataloguing and classification remains a core course in most library/information schools. As noted by Nwalor (2012) Cataloguing and Classification remains a compulsory course for undergraduates and masters degree students in all Nigerian library schools due to its importance in librarianship.

Although most library professionals and educators agree that cataloguing and classification are at the core of library education (Holley, 2002; Ocholla and Ocholla, 2011; Nwalor, 2012), some authors such as Spillane (1999) and Davis (2008) however, describe a disturbing trend in some library schools that eliminate courses devoted to either descriptive or subject cataloguing in the core curriculum, replacing them with integrated courses bearing the words “information” and “organization” in their titles. Despite this trend, Jin (2008) asserts that cataloguers’ skills in describing, classifying, and organizing information for access will take on increasing importance, particularly in the areas of metadata schema and controlled vocabulary. Indeed, Bello and Mansor (2011) affirm that cataloguing skills are necessary for the management of metadata, the design of database and application of search engines, including the creation of organizational thesauri. As noted by Holley (2002), students in library schools can benefit from taking a cataloguing course, especially if it stresses cataloguing as one specific answer to the problems of managing information and places cataloguing within a larger context that also includes indexing and Internet search engines.

The versatility of library school curriculum, however, provides diverse range of job opportunities for students on graduation. According to a report by the United States Bureau of Statistics (2004) as cited by Ismail (2006) library science graduates are now courted for jobs as Database Managers, Webmasters, or Information Network Administrators as well as in more jobs that are traditional. Indeed, Genoni, Exon and Farrelly’s (2000) tracer study found out that the graduates from the MLIS programme at Curtin University of Technology, Australia are occupying jobs in sectors outside the realm of information work. Considering the current trend, it will not be out of place to say then that some students who join library schools have no intent of pursuing librarianship as a career and as such, may have diverse career aspirations.

Markus and Nurius (1986) in Bakar and Mohammed (2004) describe aspiration as an individual's ideas of their possible selves, what they would like to become, what they might become, and what they do not wish to become. VandenBos (2007), however, sums up career aspiration as long-term individual work related goals. Miller, DeBacker, and Greene (1999) opine that in school, it is students' future goals and sub-goals that set the stage for their perceptions of the utility value of the subject matter content being studied and the utility value of their performance (e.g. grades).

Utility value is the value or importance a task acquires because it is instrumental in reaching one’s goals. Utility value thus is determined by how well a task or subject relates to current and future goals (Eccles and Wigfield, 2002). Miller, DeBacker, and Greene (1999) affirm that students who perceive school performance as instrumental to reaching valued future goals are more likely to perceive school content as having extrinsic utility value. Deci and Ryan (1985), however, note that a task can have positive value to a person because it facilitates important future goals, even if the person is not interested in the task for its own sake.

## Methodology

The descriptive research approach was used for the study. The study consists of 129 students of I.R.M at Babcock University, who registered for cataloguing and classification in 2012/2013 academic session. Enumerative sampling method was employed as all members of the population were given the opportunity of participating in the study. A questionnaire titled “Career aspiration and perception of subject utility questionnaire (CAPSUQ)” was used for the study. The measure of academic performance was the final course grade (FCG) of the students (respondents) in cataloguing and classification.

## Discussion of Findings

Out of 129 copies of the questionnaire sent out, 101 were filled and returned successfully achieving a response rate of 78.3%.

### Career Aspiration

In order to ascertain career aspirations of the respondents, seven career options were listed out for respondents to choose from. Respondents were also given the opportunity to indicate any other career choice not listed as an option in the data collection instrument. The finding is presented in Table 1.

**Table 1: Career Aspiration of Respondents**

Career aspiration	Frequency	Percentage
Information consultant	29	28.71
Information broker	20	19.80
System analyst	12	11.88
Banker	6	5.94
Librarian	4	3.96
Archivist	4	3.96
Editor	4	3.96
Others	22	21.78

From Table 1, it is obvious that few respondents 4 (3.96%) desire to work as Librarians, Archivist or Editors. A larger number of respondents 29 (28.71%) desire to become Information Consultants, followed closely by 20 (19.80%) respondents who desire to work as Information Brokers. Although only seven career options were listed in the questionnaire, 22 (21.78%) indicated other career options as: Human Resource Manager, 8 (7.92%), Business/Entrepreneurship 10 (9.90%) and Risk Manager 4 (3.96%).

The finding implies that while most of the respondents would want to work within the information profession, as seen in the number of those who aspire careers as information brokers and consultants 49, (48.51%), they do not necessarily want to work in organized settings such as libraries. The finding is also an indication that students in today’s library schools are not restricting their future to libraries and other related information environments as some of them want to pursue careers as Business Entrepreneurs, Risk Mangers, Human Resource Mangers, etc. The finding supports the report by the United States Bureau of Statistics (2004) as cited by Ismail (2006) and the findings of Genoni, Exon and Farrelly’s (2000) tracer study which found out that MLIS graduates now occupy jobs in sectors outside the realm of information work.

### Perceived Utility Attached to Studying Cataloguing and Classification

In order to ascertain the difference in the perceived utility that respondents attach to studying cataloguing and classification based on career aspirations, respondents were asked to agree or disagree to five statements using a likert type scale. The findings are presented in Tables 2-6.

**Table 2: Cataloguing and Classification in Knowledge Organisation**

Statement	Career aspiration	Frequency	Mean rank
Cataloguing and classification will broaden my understanding of the principles of knowledge organisation.	Librarian	4	78.50
	Editor	4	67.38
	Information consultant	29	57.14
	Risk manager	4	56.25
	Information broker	20	54.92
	Business/Entrepreneurship	10	49.15
	System analyst	12	46.62
	Human Resource Manager	8	34.44
	Archivist	4	34.00
	Banker	6	20.75
	Total	101	

Findings in Table 2 indicates that respondents who intend to pursue a career in librarianship have the highest perception that studying cataloguing and classification will broaden their understanding of the principles of knowledge organisation, followed closely by those who aspire to pursue careers as editors and information consultants. Respondents aspiring for careers as Human Resource Managers, Archivists and Bankers, however, have the least perception that cataloguing and classification will be useful in broadening their understanding of the principles of knowledge organisation. The finding in this case may not be unrelated with the job descriptions associated with the different career groups as respondents with high perception fall within the information profession.

**Table 3: Need for Cataloguing and Classification**

Statement	Career aspiration	Frequency	Mean rank
I have no immediate or future need for cataloguing and classification	Archivist	4	84.12
	Information broker	20	59.45
	System analyst	12	58.79
	Human Resource Manager	8	50.25
	Business/Entrepreneurship	10	48.30
	Information consultant	29	45.34
	Risk manager	4	44.62
	Editor	4	44.62
	Librarian	4	37.75
	Banker	6	35.33
	Total	101	

From Table 3, it is apparent that respondents who aspire to work as Archivist see no immediate or future need for studying cataloguing and classification, followed closely by those who aspire to work as Information Brokers and System Analysts. This may not be unrelated with the fact that the work in any of those career groups does not demand use of basic cataloguing tools. It was however, surprising to note that although the mean rank for respondents who aspire to work as Bankers was lowest when it came to agreeing that cataloguing and classification would broaden their understanding of the principles of knowledge organisation (20.75), their mean rank was however, low in the statement “I have no immediate or future need for cataloguing and classification”, an indication, that they may have immediate or future use of it.

**Table 4: Who Needs Cataloguing and Classification?**

Statement	Career aspiration	Frequency	Mean rank
The study of cataloguing and classification is only useful to those who want to work as librarians/cataloguers	Risk manager	4	66.62
	Archivist	4	61.62
	System analyst	12	60.75
	Human Resource Manager	8	60.69
	Business/Entrepreneurship	10	54.60
	Information consultant	29	49.55
	Information broker	20	48.22
	Banker	6	45.58
	Librarian	4	28.75
	Editor	4	21.88
	Total	101	

From Table 4, indications are that the studying of cataloguing and classification is mostly useful for respondents who aspire for careers as Editors, Librarians, and Bankers. Other respondents who aspire for careers as Risk Managers, Archivists, System Analysts and Business/Entrepreneurs scored quite high in their mean ranking that the studying of cataloguing and classification is only useful to those who want to work as Librarians /Cataloguers. This is a further indication that they do not see the subject as being useful to their career aspirations.

**Table 5: Usefulness of Cataloguing and Classification in Diverse Areas of Information Services**

Statement	Career aspiration	Frequency	Mean rank
The principles I learn in cataloguing and classification class can be applied to diverse areas of information work	Risk manager	4	69.38
	Librarian	4	69.38
	Editor	4	58.25
	Information broker	20	56.02
	System analyst	12	50.83
	Banker	6	50.83
	Archivist	4	47.12
	Business/Entrepreneurship	10	46.65
	Human Resource Manager	8	45.94
	Information consultant	29	45.00
Total	101		

Table 5 gives a clear indication that even though some respondents such as those who aspire to become Risk Managers do not see the studying of cataloguing and classification as necessary for their career choice, they however, affirm that the principles learnt in cataloguing and classification can be applied to diverse areas of information work.

**Table 6: Necessity of Cataloguing and Classification in Future Career**

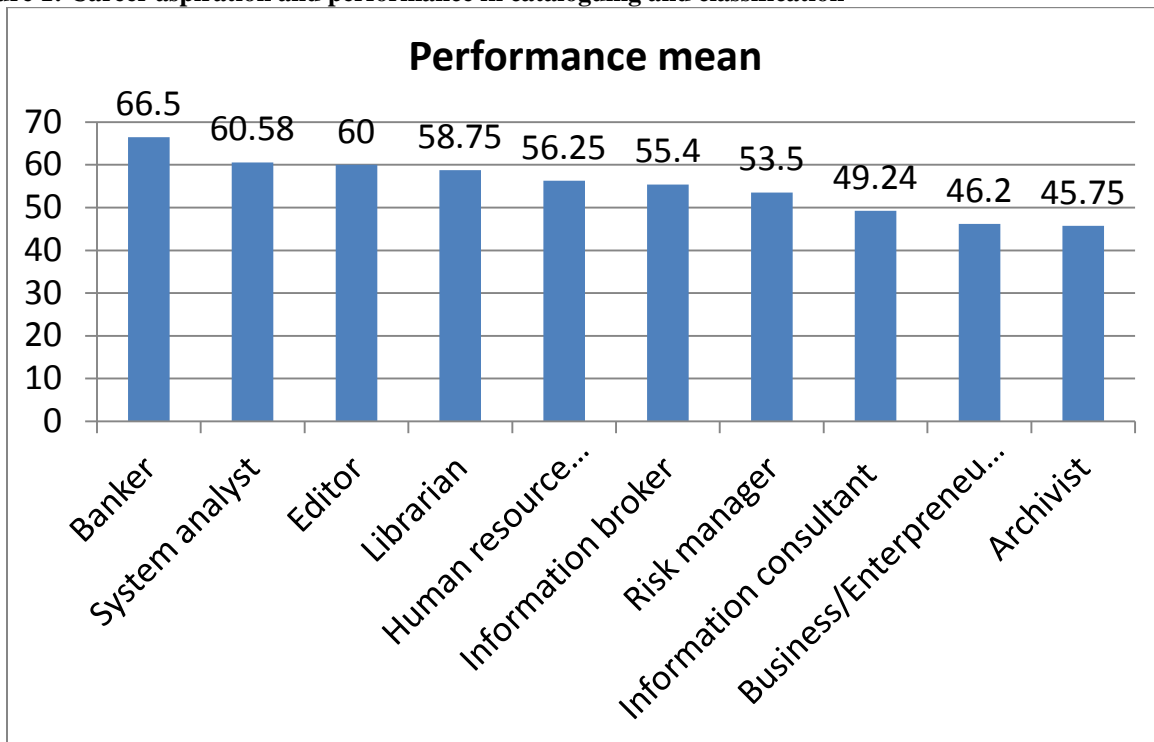
Statement	Career aspiration	Frequency	Mean rank
Knowledge of cataloguing and classification is not necessary for anything I want to do in future	Archivist	4	77.62
	Business/Entrepreneurship	10	64.00
	Human Resource Manager	8	62.94
	System analyst	12	57.54
	Information broker	20	49.35
	Banker	6	45.50
	Information consultant	29	45.36
	Risk manager	4	45.00
	Editor	4	43.25
	Librarian	4	19.50
	Total	101	

Findings from Table 6 further affirm that those aspiring for careers as Archivists feel strongly that the knowledge of cataloguing and classification is not necessary for anything they want to do in future as seen in the mean rank of 77.62, followed closely by those aspiring to become Entrepreneurs, Human Resource Managers and System Analysts. Respondents aspiring for careers as Librarians and Editors feel more strongly that the knowledge of cataloguing and classification is necessary for their future career as seen in their mean scores in Table 6. The findings can be attributed to the fact that careers in both editing and librarianship require the ability to arrange things or actions in a certain order or pattern according to specific rules. The finding is in agreement with the assertion of Eccles and Wigfield (2002) that utility value is determined by how well a task or subject relates to current and future goals.

**Relationship Between Career Aspiration and Performance in cataloguing and Classification**

In order to ascertain the relationship between career aspiration and performance in cataloguing and classification, respondents' career aspiration was matched to their examination scores in cataloguing and classification. Findings are presented in Figure 1.

**Figure 1: Career aspiration and performance in cataloguing and classification**



Even though respondents who aspire to work as Librarians and Editors were more consistent in their perceived utility of cataloguing and classification, they were still out performed by those aspiring for careers as Bankers and System

Analysts. Those aspiring to become Archivists consistently saw little value in studying cataloguing and classification and also had the least performance grade. This is an indication that perceived subject utility may not always affect academic performance.

### Conclusion

The library and indeed the library school are growing organisms and would continue to adapt to new circumstances to remain relevant in any day and age. As library schools continue to make adjustments in their curriculum, there is no doubt that they would continue to attract students with varied career interest, hence, there is a strong need to find a way of accommodating all in such a way that they can fit into their career choices on graduation while retaining the core of librarianship.

### Recommendations

Based on the findings of this study, the following are recommended:

- 1 Librarians and library organisations should make efforts to market the library profession in such a way that it can regain its attraction to prospective students to increase the enrolment of students who desire to pursue career in librarianship.
- 2 Considering the fact, that most of the respondents who aspire to pursue careers in information related environment appreciate the fact that the knowledge gained through cataloguing and classification will broaden their understanding of the principles of knowledge organisation, library schools should take time to interview applicants into library schools and, possibly, grant admission concession to those who aspire for careers in information related fields.

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