ROLE OF LIBRARIANS IN TEACHING INFORMATION LITERACY IN ZIMBABWEAN AND SOUTH AFRICAN UNIVERSITIES: A COMPARATIVE STUDY

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ABSTRACT

Information and communications technologies (ICTs) and the Internet have to a large extent influenced the way information is made available, published and accessed. More information is being produced too frequently and information users now require certain skills to sift through this multitude in order to identify what is appropriate for their purposes. Computer and information skills have become a necessity for all academic programmes. As libraries subscribe to databases and other peer-reviewed content (print and electronic), it is important that users are also made aware of such sources and their importance. The purpose of this study was to examine the teaching of information literacy (IL) in universities in Zimbabwe and South Africa, and the role played by librarians in creating information literate graduates. This was done by examining whether such IL programmes were prioritised, their content and how frequently they were reviewed. An electronic questionnaire was distributed to 12 university

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libraries in Zimbabwe and 21 in South Africa. A total of 25 questionnaires were returned. The findings revealed that IL was being taught in universities library and non-library staff, was compulsory and contributed to the term mark in some institutions. The study also revealed that 44 per cent of the total respondents indicated that the libraries were collaborating with departments and faculty in implementing IL programmes in universities. The study recommends that IL should be an integral part of the university programmes in order to promote the use of databases and to guide students on ethical issues of information use.

Keywords: database use, ethics, information literacy, information and communication technologies

1. INTRODUCTION

The purpose of a library is to collect information and make that information available, but the ultimate goal is to ensure that library users gain ready access to the information they need in a timely manner so that the information is not only collected but used appropriately (Idiodi 2005, 225). Information literacy (IL) has been broadly defined as the ability, or set of abilities, to know when information is needed; to be able to find information; to evaluate information; and to use the information that has been found (Bothma, Cosijn, Fourie and Penzhorn 2009, 10). The American Library Association (ALA 2000) defines IL as a set of abilities requiring individuals to recognise when information is needed and have the ability to locate, evaluate and use effectively the needed information. Webber and Johnston (2003) view IL as the adoption of appropriate information behaviour to identify, through whatever channel or medium, information well fitted to information needs, leading to wise and ethical use of information in society. Campbell (2004, 1) observes that so much effort and ink has been dedicated to defining this term that Edward Owusu-Ansah has suggested calling a halt to defining the term and just getting on with the business of doing IL. Idiodi (2005, 223) posits that the definition of IL as the ability to access, evaluate and use information helps us to see IL as both a combination of learning competencies and as a mixture of ways of experiencing information use.

In view of the above definitions, in this study, a comparison was made between IL teaching in universities in Zimbabwe and South Africa, and the role played by librarians in creating information literate graduates. This involved an analysis of the different components of courses and modules and key issues highlighted or emphasised in these programmes. The purposes of these IL programmes were also examined against the intended and unintended outcomes. The study sought to examine the different IL practices among universities and its prioritisation. Is IL teaching the sole responsibility of libraries or a contributory delivery programme, for instance do libraries dwell on computer skills as well? In the new electronic information environment, computer and information skills become a necessity for all

academic programmes. Where these skills are inadequate, how are libraries dealing with such scenarios?

The article is based on empirical evidence from the university librarians who are involved in the teaching of IL, observing the evolution of the curricula and changes which have been effected to accommodate challenges associated with the information overload.

2. PURPOSE OF THE STUDY

The purpose of the study was to identify universities offering IL programmes in Zimbabwe and South Africa, comparing their teaching, and the role played by libraries in creating information literate students. This involved an analysis of the different components of courses and modules and key issues highlighted or emphasised in these programmes. The study sought to examine the different practices among universities and, for example, who is involved and how the programmes are prioritised. The study also sought to investigate whether IL teaching is the sole responsibility of libraries or a contributory delivery programme, for instance, whether libraries dwell on computer skills as well. The study sought to address the following questions:

1. What are the purposes of the IL programmes?
2. What is the programme content?
3. What are the major challenges associated with IL implementation?

3. LITERATURE ON RELATED STUDIES

Various studies, among them, Idiodi (2005), Dadzie (2007), Chipeta, Jacobs and Mostert (2009), Bothma, Cosijn, Fourie and Penzhorn (2009), Baro (2011), and Baro and Zuokemefa (2011) have been conducted on IL, focusing on design, methodologies, applications and outcomes. IL standards have been articulated by organisations such as the ALA's Association of College and Research Libraries (ACRL) (2000); the Australian and New Zealand Institute for Information Literacy (Bundy 2004); the United Nations Education Scientific and Cultural Organization (Horton 2013); and the Council of Australian University Librarians (CAUL). The Society for College, National and University Libraries (SCONUL) in the United Kingdom (UK) has also produced IL models and standards (De Jager and Nassimbeni 2003; Jiyane and Onyancha 2010; Stoffberg and Blignaut 2008).

According to Ward (2008, 6), 'information literacy in UK centres on the SCONUL seven pillars model (2003), and the standards devised by the US based Association of College and Research Libraries in 2000'. The same trend was also observed in the designing of the IL programme in Zimbabwe, introduced as a formal programme in the 2004/2005 academic year at the University of Zimbabwe,

cascading to other universities through the Zimbabwe Universities Library Consortia (ZULC) (Mbambo-Thatha 2007). The programme design and curriculum was based on the traditional library orientation guide and largely influenced by the ALA's IL guidelines and competencies. In South Africa, according to De Jager and Nassimbeni (2003, 108), in 1996 the Cape Library Co-operative (CALICO) was instrumental in a large IL needs assessment study whose findings were published in a monograph by Sayed in 1998. The National Qualifications Framework (NQF) of the South African Qualifications Authority (SAQA) Act (No. 58 of 1995) sets guidelines which recognise skills acquisition and knowledge among learners' achievement which encourages lifelong learners (SAQA 2010). Furthermore, De Jager and Nassimbeni (2003, 109) point out that among SAQA's expected outcomes, a student should exit from higher education with competencies to collect, analyse, organise and critically evaluate information, among other skills.

It is against this background that a list of IL competencies was compiled by the Library and Information Association of South Africa (LIASA), in consistence with other established standards for IL, such as those published by the ACRL and in Australia (De Jager and Nassimbeni 2003). Other notable initiatives have been INFOLIT (established in 1995); the LINK centre at the University of Witwatersrand (Jiyane and Onyancha 2010); and the Technology Enhanced Learning Initiative (TELI), an initiative of the Department of Education (De Jager and Nassimbeni 2003). Selematsela and Du Toit (2007) sought to investigate whether librarians teaching IL had the knowledge and skills to make the programmes successful. The study revealed that capabilities considered very important for instructional librarians bordered on developing and delivering instructional programmes; integrating electronic formats into programmes; and being able to design print and electronic instructional materials (Selematsela and Du Toit 2007, 124).

3.1. Traditional orientation

Library orientation is usually mandatory in universities and initiation takes place during the general orientation week for enrolling new students. The aim is to familiarise students with library facilities and services and during this period, students are taken round the various sections of the library, given brochures and handbooks highlighting resources and services, given introductory lectures on library use, and, where possible, given demonstrations on how to locate and retrieve materials (Baro and Zuokemefa 2011; Idiodi 2005, 227; Somi and De Jager 2005, 261). Somi and De Jager (2005, 265) observed that more than half the students do not attend library orientation sessions in spite of their being compulsory. They further observed that even if students do attend IL sessions, they still face challenges in finding and critically evaluating the information at their disposal. Modern ICTs have, however, transformed this process with some libraries now offering interactive

and video tutorials and guides which offer convenient ways of learning about library resources and use (Lo and Dale 2009; Marcus and Beck 2003).

3.2. IL content

Lwehabura (2008) looked at the IL content and methods of delivery and their effectiveness by sampling four universities in Tanzania and observed that the main IL teaching methods used include lectures, web pages and seminars. Somi and De Jager (2005, 261) observed that occasionally lecturing staff responsible for certain subjects send their students to the library to be trained more specifically in the identification and use of information resources of their particular subject areas. Content covered information search skills, use of library facilities, information evaluation, and use of information sources. According to Baro (2011, 213), course content in library schools in Africa shows that the emphasis is on areas, such as: basics of information accessing; evaluation and utilisation; skills to help students recognise information needs; location of various information resources; assessment and synthesis of information; effective use of information; and judging the result of using the information. In Ghana, Dadzie (2007, 275) observed that courses, such as Information Retrieval, Communicative Skills and Academic Writing, were taught to all freshmen (level 100) of the university.

Examples of studies on IL in Libraries and Information Science (LIS) schools are those conducted by Jiyane and Onyancha (2010) focusing on South Africa; Chipeta et al. (2009) focusing on South Africa and Malawi; Baro (2011) focusing on Ghana; and Chanakira and Madziwo (2013) focusing on Zimbabwe. They established that LIS schools and academic libraries were running IL programmes albeit with variations in implementation and emphasis. The programmes were also offered as formal courses within LIS schools and non-formal ones in academic libraries. Baro (2011) observed that only a few schools were teaching IL as a stand-alone course in their curricula and many discussed it as a topic in related courses. The programmes are mostly offered to first years in order to help them gain knowledge in accessing and using the collections available in libraries.

3.3. Challenges to IL

Lack of interest by staff, low attendance and students' apathy, lack of basic information handling and a lack of computer skills, the absence of policies to govern IL implementation, inadequate time, lack of resources, including teaching staff, were some of the challenges to IL that were observed by Kavulya (2003), Dadzie (2007), Lwehabura, (2008), Chipeta et al. (2009), Jiyane and Onyancha (2010), Baro (2011), Baro and Zuokemefa (2011), and Chanakira and Madziwo (2013). They further observed that large enrolments, the teaching of IL as stand-alone programmes on a voluntary basis, and non-involvement of teaching staff

extended the challenges. These experiences were similar across many African institutions (Lawal, Underwood, Lwehabura and Stilwell 2010). Williams and Zald (1997) established that support from university administrators and cross-functional staffing helped in the programme's acceptance and also increased the technological expertise and visibility of librarians. According to Dadzie (2007, 275) and Baro and Zuokemefa (2011, 552), another great challenge which has to be overcome is the willingness of the various departments already handling components of the various IL programmes to collaborate with each other. Owusu-Ansah (2004, 10) also notes that the unwillingness of teaching faculty to give up classroom space and time is documented. Defending the librarian's teaching role and status often evokes concern and unease. The academic as well as administrative environment of higher education has not made it easy on the librarian (Owusu-Ansah 2004, 12). This view is supported by Mar-Rounds (n.d., 6) who observes that several dated research studies have claimed that academics' attitudes towards librarians are negative and subordinate in nature and that although generally academic communities value the services offered by librarians, a deep appreciation for the full contribution that librarians make to the educative mission of universities is not always apparent.

According to Baro (2011, 212), librarians have to take the lead in incorporating IL into their school curriculum. Libraries and library school professionals are the strongest points in every country for the promotion of IL (Dadzie 2007, 274). Co-operation between faculty and the persons responsible for IL instruction, usually librarians, in planning the courses is considered important. Studies by Kavulya (2003), Stevens (2007), Selematsela (2009), Lawal et al. (2010), Baro (2011), Baro and Zuokemefa (2011), Jiyane and Onyancha (2010), Scheepers, De Boer, Bothma and Du Toit (2011), and Wiggin (2011) highlight the significance of collaboration among and between librarians and faculty in curriculum design and implementation.

4. RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

The survey method was used in which a questionnaire containing both structured and unstructured questions was distributed electronically to 21 university libraries in South Africa and 14 in Zimbabwe. Using the electronic questionnaire was considered appropriate as all institutions had Internet access. According to Burns (2000, 83), the major task in sampling is to select a sample from the defined population using an appropriate technique that ensures the sample is representative of the population and, as far as possible, not biased in any way. Due to the number of institutions involved, sampling was not considered necessary. Using the selected university library websites, the email addresses of directors were identified and questionnaires were sent to them. Where these were not available, known individuals were contacted to provide the correct details. For universities in Zimbabwe positive responses were received from 11 institutions. For universities in South Africa, a total of 14

responses were received but one institution had to be excluded as the questionnaire needed to be authorised by the respective university's research committee. For all the participating institutions, however, a letter of consent was attached as part of the introduction. A total of 25 questionnaires (responses) were used in the study. The data was analysed using the Statistical Package for the Social Sciences (SPSS).

5. RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

This section presents the results and discussion of the responses.

5.1. Responses by country and institution

This section sought to ascertain the characteristics of the responding institutions. As already shown above, a total of 25 responses were received of which 14 were from South African universities and 11 from Zimbabwean (see Appendix A). The total number of students enrolled ranged from 1 250 to 316 179 for undergraduates, while the number of postgraduates ranged from 110 to 12 000. The number of professional librarians in the respective institutions ranged from three to 80. These were defined as having a degree or postgraduate qualification in library and information studies/ science.

5.2. IL teaching

The purpose of this section was to establish which institutions were teaching IL. The responses indicated that 84 per cent of the university libraries surveyed were teaching IL, while 16 per cent were not. Analysis by country indicated that 93 per cent of South African libraries were teaching IL, while 73 per cent of libraries in Zimbabwe were doing so. Despite the challenges to IL highlighted in studies by Kavulya (2003), Dadzie (2007), Lwehabura, (2008), Chipeta et al. (2009), Jiyane and Onyancha (2010), Baro (2011), and Baro and Zuokemefa (2011) above, it is evident from the study that IL teaching is being embraced by the South African and Zimbabwean university libraries.

5.2.1. Library orientation

The study further sought to establish which institutions were offering staff and students the general 'traditional' library orientation. The responses indicated that 76 per cent of the institutions offered library orientation, while 24 per cent did not respond to the question. When the results were analysed by country, 100 per cent of the libraries in Zimbabwe and 57 per cent South Africa indicated that they did, while 43 per cent did not respond to the question. Library orientation remains the preferred method of inducting new students and staff to the resources in libraries (see

5.5 below), and this concurs with studies by Idiodi (2005, 227), Somi and De Jager (2005, 261), and Baro and Zuokemefa (2011).

5.3. IL as a standalone module

This question sought to establish how the IL programme was taught. The results indicated that 32 per cent of the institutions were teaching IL as a module on its own; 56 per cent indicated that it was not taught as a standalone module; while 22 per cent did not respond to this question. A breakdown by country showed that 42 per cent of South African university libraries were teaching IL as a module on its own, and 36 per cent were not; while 22 per cent did not respond to the question. Comparatively, 18 per cent of university libraries in Zimbabwe indicated that IL was taught separately, while 78 per cent indicated that it was not taught as a standalone module.

5.3.1. IL incorporated in other modules

The respondents were further probed to indicate whether IL was taught as part of another existing course/module. The results indicated a slight contradiction from above in that 60 per cent of the respondents indicated that IL was taught as part of another module, with 20 per cent indicating that it was not; while 20 per cent did not respond to the question. Further analysis by country showed that 78 per cent of the university libraries in Zimbabwe taught IL as part of another module, while 22 per cent did not. Comparatively, 43 per cent of South African university libraries taught IL as part of another module/course, and 23 per cent did not; while 35 per cent did not respond to the question.

The teaching of IL as part of another course is common practice at the institutions surveyed. At two institutions in Zimbabwe (University of Zimbabwe and Bindura University of Science Education), based on the researcher's experience, IL is taught as part of Communication Skills (CSC101). One of the reasons advanced is that it is not a fully-fledged programme in the universities and that the librarians still retain their other duties besides teaching.

5.4. Duration of IL programmes

The purpose of this section was to ascertain the period for which the IL programmes had been running in the respective institutions. The responses showed that 8 per cent of the institutions had been teaching IL for less than a year; 20 per cent for between 2–5 years; 16 per cent for between 6–10 years; 24 per cent had over 10 years of IL teaching; while 32 per cent did not respond to the question. The results indicated that for South Africa, 43 per cent of university libraries (at the time of data collection) had more than 10 years of IL teaching, while 27 per cent of Zimbabwean universities had

up to 10 years of IL teaching. In total, 20 per cent of all institutions in South Africa and Zimbabwe had been teaching IL for between 2–5 years. The study indicated that IL teaching was a considerably recent phenomenon in universities in Zimbabwe and South Africa. According to Mbambo-Thatha (2007), for example, IL was formally introduced at the University of Zimbabwe in 2004. However, as Idiodi (2005, 226) observes, IL activities in higher education institutions in Nigeria have existed in the guise of various user education programmes, such as library instruction, library orientation and bibliographic instruction. By comparison, in the developed world, Shapiro and Hughes (1996), and the ACRL (1997, 2000) point to initiatives having commenced much earlier.

5.5. Target groups

One of the study objectives was to identify the target groups for the IL programmes in the respective institutions. The responses indicated that 84 per cent of the institutions targeted all undergraduate students, particularly in their first year, being 93 per cent of institutions in South Africa and 73 per cent of universities in Zimbabwe. This observation is consistent with studies by Baro (2011) and Jiyane and Onyancha (2010) who observed that IL and library orientation were targeted at students in their first year at university. The complexity and volume of information is usually different from pre-university studies; hence, students require skills to be able to use these resources effectively for their studies (Bothma et al. 2009; Dadzie 2007).

The study also indicated a reduced emphasis/focus on postgraduate students with 56 per cent of institutions indicating that they did so, and 44 per cent indicating that they did not focus on this group. Only 27 per cent of universities in Zimbabwe were focusing on postgraduate students compared to 79 per cent of their counterparts in South Africa. According to the respondents, the assumption is that postgraduates would have learnt to use library resources at undergraduate level, hence there is less focus on IL. Postgraduate students' information seeking patterns are driven by independent research, whereas undergraduates' patterns are driven by lecture notes and suggestions from lecturers.

IL training was also extended to teaching staff as indicated by 52 per cent of respondents (10 institutions from South Africa and 3 from Zimbabwe), while 48 per cent responded in the negative. The respondents indicated that this was done as formal traditional orientation for new members of staff, as generic training and to increase accessibility to library resources. According to Agaba (2005) and Chanakira and Madziwo (2013), the demand from academics is due to lack of familiarity with e-resources, particularly those subscribed to by the institutional libraries. Some academics were also pursuing postgraduate studies which required them to use such resources. The libraries also promoted these e-resources to justify continued subscriptions.

5.6. IL and student assessment

The respondents were requested to indicate whether the IL programme contributed to the students' course assessment. An analysis by country showed that 55 per cent of university libraries in Zimbabwe indicated that IL assessment contributed to the students' term mark; 18 per cent indicated that it did not; while 27 per cent did not respond to the question. Responses for South Africa showed that 43 per cent of respondents indicated that IL contributed towards students' assessment; 50 per cent from South Africa indicated that it did not; while 7 per cent did not respond to the question. Because IL is at various stages of implementation, coupled with the challenges of apathy, resources and personnel in the institutions under study (see 5.4 above), these could be some of the reasons for low assessment contribution.

5.7. Compulsory and voluntary application

This section sought to establish whether the IL course was compulsory for all learners or was done voluntarily. This is taking into account that even where courses were compulsory, students were found to be not attending (Dadzie 2007; Jiyane and Onyancha 2010; Kavulya 2003; Lwehabura 2008; Somi and De Jager 2005). The results indicated that IL was voluntary in the majority of institutions (36%), (i.e. 50% of South African responses); 20 per cent indicated it was compulsory (i.e. 36% of Zimbabwean responses); 24 per cent mentioned both, due to different levels at which it is offered (i.e. 36% of South African responses); while 20 per cent of total respondents did not respond to this question. The study indicated that if IL were to become fully embedded in the curriculum as a pre-requisite to other modules or graduation (as in the case of the University of Zimbabwe), students would take the course seriously. This observation is shared by Scheepers et al. (2011, 75) who note that low IL class attendance at the University of Pretoria has indicated that students are not motivated to attend the module. However, the impeding factors of resources, facilities, and so on, should be overcome first.

5.8. Responsibility for IL curriculum design

The respondents were requested to state who was responsible for the IL curriculum design. Indications were that 36 per cent of total responses mentioned that it was the responsibility of library staff and user education committee (i.e. 50% and 18% of South African and Zimbabwean responses, respectively); 16 per cent mentioned IL librarians; 12 per cent mentioned the English departments; eight per cent deputy directors and librarians (directors); and 4 per cent project and subject librarians. The results indicated that despite the varying titles of those responsible, the majority worked in the library. It was, however, important to note that in some institutions (e.g. Solusi University, Zimbabwe), the English department was totally in charge

of the curriculum, including reviewing and teaching it. As pointed out by Wiggill (2011, 51), collaboration between librarians and academics is important to ensure both effective information-literacy training and service provision to students and to the academic community. The above studies have also highlighted the relationship between academics and librarians, for example, McGuiness (2003 in Mar-Rounds n.d., 7) discovered that academics do not necessarily value the contribution of librarians to teaching and learning. Zabel (2004, 18) concurs pointing out, however, that it is a disservice to the profession when librarians lament about the lack of respect teaching faculty have for librarians. He observes that this negativism only marginalises librarians and continues the perception that librarians are on the peripheral, taking a backseat to faculty when it comes to instructional issues. However, Mar-Rounds (n.d., 7) points out that at the University of Michigan, Dearborn, 86 per cent of faculty who did not ask librarians to provide instructional sessions nonetheless incorporated activities into their classes to help their students learn to use library resources.

5.9. IL teaching responsibilities

The respondents were asked to indicate who was responsible for teaching IL. The assumption was that not everyone who was involved with curriculum design would necessarily be involved in the actual teaching, particularly in a collaborative environment. The results showed that in the majority (56%) of cases, Information, Training and Faculty librarians were responsible (i.e. 64% and 45% of South African and Zimbabwean responses, respectively); followed equally by 12 per cent each for the English departments and Library Directors and Deputy Directors; while 20 per cent did not respond to the question. The results indicated that librarians were generally responsible for IL programmes in universities, indicated also from the number of professional staff in 5.1. Jiyane and Onyancha (2010, 16), and Chanakira and Madziwo (2013) also established that librarians' qualifications ranged from first degrees to PhDs. Teaching is also done in collaboration with other entities, as shown in 5.10.

5.10. IL collaboration within universities

The respondents were asked to indicate other stakeholders (faculties/departments), if any, working in collaboration in IL teaching. The responses showed that 44 per cent of the respondents indicated that they did collaborate; 40 per cent answered in the negative; while 16 per cent were not applicable. The areas of collaboration mentioned were:

- IL given teaching slots in the departmental timetables (time);
- IL taught in the computer centre (venue and facilities);

- IL taught as part of communication skills module (shared assessment);
- IL taught as a module in the Library School;
- Curriculum content and design.

The fact that 40 per cent of the respondents did not collaborate with other stakeholders raises concern. Wiggill (2011) and Cunningham and Lanning (2002) posit that lack of understanding, knowledge and communication regarding academic libraries' teaching and research role and a shared common goal is proving to be an obstacle in obtaining a true librarian-academic collaboration. Mar-Rounds (n.d., 6) observes that, generally, academic communities value services offered by librarians although a deep appreciation by all for the full contribution that librarians make to the educative mission of universities is not always apparent. According to Owusu-Ansah (2004, 12), the academic as well as administrative environment of higher education has not made it easy on the librarian. According to Lindstrom and Shonrock (2000, 18), as the importance of IL grows within the academy, so does the importance of the role of librarians as integral members of the teaching and learning mission of the college and university. Zabel (2004, 18), however, notes that despite negative perceptions, librarians have successfully partnered with teaching faculty and they view IL as a joint venture. In this regard collaboration among professional library staff, teaching staff, and university administrators in fostering IL across the curriculum as well as inculcating IL knowledge and skills among students is inevitable (Lwehabura and Stilwell 2008, 189).

5.11. IL components

The purpose of this section was to identify the topics or content of the IL programmes conducted by the respective university librarians. The following were listed by country:

5.11.1. Zimbabwe

- Introduction to IL;
- Information organisation;
- Information finding/seeking tools (manual and electronic resources);
- Information retrieval and search strategies (manual and online sources);
- Evaluating information and information sources;
- Ethical issues and plagiarism;
- (Economic, social and legal issues of information);

- The Internet and electronic resources (including formats-html, pdf);
- Citation styles (including print and electronic sources).

5.11.2. South Africa

- General library orientation is part of the first year programme;
- Overview of Library services and facilities;
- An extended orientation programme was (all first year students were invited to attend a more in-depth library training course);
- Search strategies and evaluation of Information sources and tools;
- Academic integrity (Plagiarism and Copyright Act);
- Referencing (reference list and in text);
- Information and its sources;
- Databases access and utilisation.

The content of the courses reflects what has been reported in the literature, and is guided by the ALA competency standards, focusing on information searching and retrieval, tools and ethical issues (Baro 2010; Chipeta et al. 2009; Dadzie 2007; Lwehabura 2008; Somi and De Jager 2005). Database and online retrieval also constituted part of what the learners are taught, while computer literacy is taken separately (see 5.12).

5.12. Computer literacy and IL

The question required respondents to state whether computer literacy (CL) skills formed part of the IL programmes. The majority of the respondents (64%) indicated that computer skills training was not part of IL (i.e. 79% and 45% of South African and Zimbabwean university librarians' responses, respectively); with 16 per cent indicating that it was; while 20 per cent did not respond to the question.

5.12.1. CL teaching

For responses where CL was not part of IL the respondents were asked to indicate where computer literacy was taught. The ICT department/centre was mentioned by 24 per cent of total respondents; followed by 12 per cent who indicated the Faculty; another 12 per cent indicated that CL was a compulsory course in the university curriculum; while 36 per cent said it was not applicable. The responses indicated that various stakeholders are involved in CL in universities either as compulsory modules or taught on a voluntary basis. Some degree programmes have ICT courses embedded in their curriculum, particularly the sciences and engineering courses.

5.12.2. Perceived effect of CL on IL

The respondents were asked to indicate their perceived effect of CL on IL in which 36 per cent of the respondents indicated that computer skills enhanced online information retrieval (i.e. 45% of Zimbabwean responses); 28 per cent indicated that CL require broad knowledge (i.e. 49% of South African responses); 12 per cent felt CL enabled ease of access to e-resources; 4 per cent felt it improved keyboard skills; while 20 per cent said it was not applicable. Computer skills are an essential component of IL as most content is computer based. Baro and Zuokemefa (2011, 557) observed that librarians still offered basic computer skills working in windows environment, software packages (Word, PowerPoint, Excel, email) and general introduction to institutional IT environment. While teaching IL at the University of Zimbabwe and Bindura University of Science Education, the researcher observed that students in science who had IT embedded in their courses went through the IL components faster than their counterparts whose degree programmes did not include IT components. According to Selematsela and Du Toit (2007, 122), a common scenario is that technically skilled students grow bored waiting for the less technical students who struggle with, for example, mouse navigation.

5.13. IL content review

The study sought to establish how often the IL course content was reviewed in the institutions under study. For South African institutions, 43 per cent mentioned annually; followed by 21.4 per cent who mentioned ‘continuously on need’ 7 per cent who mentioned ‘once a semester’; 14.2 per cent said at the beginning of new a course’; while 14.2 per cent did not respond to the question; hence, it could not be ascertained whether they conducted any content review in the first place. Comparatively, responses from Zimbabwe indicated that the IL course content was reviewed: annually (45.4%); once per semester during vacations (9%); dependent on the English department (18.2%); once since inception (18.2%); while 9 per cent were not applicable. The changing nature of information provision and access demands that learners be taught relevant and up-to-date skills. Not only is the content available from outside sources/databases, institutions are building their own repositories which students must know of and access. It is imperative that content be revisited regularly as shown from the results.

5.14. Outcomes of IL programmes

The respondents were asked whether the IL programmes were achieving their intended objectives. Based on their perception/experiences in delivering the IL programmes, the responses from South Africa showed that 79 per cent felt the objectives were being met; 7 per cent answered in the negative; while 14 per cent

were not applicable. By comparison, the responses for Zimbabwe indicated that 64 per cent felt the objectives were being met; 27 per cent responded in the negative; while 9 per cent were not applicable.

5.14.1. Outcomes of IL programmes (positives)

Positive outcomes for both countries were summarised as follows:

- improved e-resources usage;
- quality referencing;
- improved quality of student projects (based on the lecturers' perceptions as reported in faculty board meetings);
- increased research output by lecturers
- increase in the usage of electronic resources as well as traditional library resources (as users become aware of alternative sources available);
- increase in user enquiries in the Reader Services section.

5.14.2. Outcomes of IL programmes (negatives)

Negative outcomes for both countries were summarised as follows:

- There is not much increase in the usage of e-resources.
- Students and staff are still more on print sources.
- E-resources statistics indicate that the university community is not using the resources as they should do.
- Impact still to be felt since the module has just been introduced.

IL training is certainly contributing positively institutional objectives as shown in the results for both areas of study. The respondents have seen an increase in e-resources usage, impacting on the quality of students' projects and research output for lecturers.

5.15. Challenges in IL teaching

The respondents were requested to indicate the constraints/challenges the libraries faced in teachings IL. These are summarised as follows:

- limited resources;
- limited computing facilities;
- limited printing facilities;
- the number of teaching librarians against students is too high (hence at times university librarians have to be involved);

- poor internet connectivity;
- electricity interruptions;
- stakeholder participation: one library indicated that its staff are not involved in the programme and are not given an opportunity to make contributions. The sole responsibility was determined by the English department. This contrast with observations made in 5.10;
- getting slots on the timetables is a major struggle;
- lack of personnel and policy guidelines;
- IL not being part of the main curriculum;
- done voluntarily;
- lack of support from faculty and administration.

There are numerous challenges facing institutions in implementing IL programmes and these experiences are similar across many African institutions (Lawal et al 2010). The universities in South Africa and Zimbabwe are no exception and the results have shown that limited resources in terms of personnel and facilities, and lack of policy frameworks to drive IL were at times not articulated clearly. IL is not fully integrated into most university curricula and is voluntary in most cases making it difficult to implement according to Kavulya (2003), Stevens (2007), Selematsela (2009), Lawal et al. (2010), Baro (2011), Baro and Zuokemefa (2011), Jiyane and Onyancha (2010), Scheepers et al. (2011).

5.16. Acceptance of IL by the university community

The respondents were asked to indicate whether they felt that the IL programme was being embraced by the university community and indications were that 72 per cent were positive (representing 71% and 73% of South Africa and Zimbabwean responses, respectively); while 8 per cent indicated 'No'; and 20 per cent were not applicable. According to Lawal et al (2010, 54), the challenges of globalisation and other technological advances demand that students are empowered with the essential information skills that enable them to function in a knowledge driven economy. Despite the challenges facing institutions, it is encouraging to observe that university communities are embracing IL in both countries.

6. CONCLUSION

The study has shown that IL is taught in universities in South Africa and Zimbabwe and so is the traditional library orientation. IL is taught mostly as part of another course targeting mainly first-year students, although it has been extended to postgraduates and teaching staff. Although contributing towards a term mark, the programme

is largely done on a voluntary basis. Collaboration was evident in the study, both in terms of curriculum design and implementation with library staff remaining largely in charge. The challenges facing institutions are mostly to do with resources availability, personnel, space and time. Collaboration among university departments in facilitating IL is important. Conflicts and tensions underlie the relationship between teaching faculty and academic librarians, between the desired recognition sought by the library and the limited role university administrations will have it play (Owusu-Ansah 2001, 282). The study recommends that IL become part of the curriculum and that more support be given to the libraries for successful implementation of the programme by recognising its contribution to students' academic performance. Lastly, as Martin (2011, 273) points out, the explosion of new media and information sources is not only a reason to reinvent IL instruction but also provides an ideal place to research actual practices and explore IL practices in depth.

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APPENDIX A: LIST OF PARTICIPATING UNIVERSITIES

South Africa

Cape Peninsula University of Technology; Durban University of Technology; Mangosuthu University of Technology; Nelson Mandela Metropolitan University; University of Cape Town; University of Fort Hare; University of KwaZulu-Natal (Westville); University of Limpopo; University of South Africa (Unisa); University of Stellenbosch; University of the Witwatersrand; University of Venda; University of Western Cape; University of Zululand

Zimbabwe

Africa University; Bindura University of Science Education; Catholic University; Chinhoyi University of Technology; Great Zimbabwe University; Harare Institute of Technology; Midlands State University; National University of Technology; Solusi University; University of Zimbabwe; Women's University in Africa

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