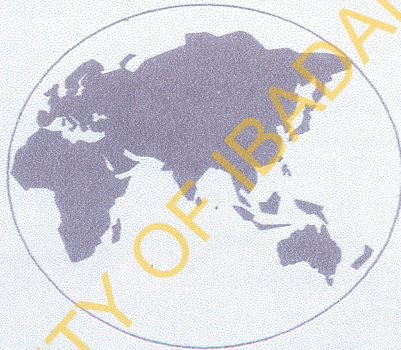


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ATTITUDES OF LIBRARIANS TO CATALOGUING AND CLASSIFICATION OF LIBRARY MATERIALS IN NIGERIAN ACADEMIC LIBRARIES

O. E. L. EGUAVOEN

Cataloguing is one of the most technical responsibilities a practicing librarian engages in. It is a function that exerts much energy, requires great concentration, commitment and application of high intellectual ability on the part of the librarian so as to be able to perform creditably in this onerous task of information processing; It is pertinent to note however, that the poor state of cataloguing tools available for use in academic libraries in Nigeria, like in some other developing countries, make the cataloguing and classification of library materials a tedious task.

The difficulties involved in cataloguing library materials have long been appreciated by the Library of Congress which embarked on a number of projects aimed at reducing cataloguing problems for libraries using the Library of Congress (LC) Classification Scheme. This it did with the production of Library of Congress National Union Catalogue (LCNUC) in book format to aid cataloguing of books and other library materials whose cataloguing information could be adapted or modified to suit individual libraries using LC classification system.

The National Union Catalogue (NUC) was however, replaced in 1982 with the LC Microfiche format which itself became outdated in 1991 and was eventually replaced with the more sophisticated and less cumbersome LC Machine Readable Cataloguing (MARC) bibliographic tapes. It is important to mention here that LC has also stopped the production of this cataloguing tool but has made all its cataloguing information available on the Internet for users to access. As academic libraries in Nigeria are poorly funded, it becomes difficult for them to afford these cataloguing tools with particular reference to Internet connectivity.

In addition to the aforementioned, the LC had in the past also produced card catalogues containing all the bibliographic information of foreign acquisitions in academic libraries in the United States. These cards were made available to

libraries on subscription. Subscription to LC card catalogues is, no longer popular in academic libraries in Nigeria because of the delay involved in the receipt of the cards. Since library materials are processed as they are acquired, it becomes unnecessary to subscribe to LC card with its attendant delay.

One useful project carried out by LC was the Cataloguing-in-Publication (CIP) project. This involves cataloguing of books as they are published so that the cataloguing information is published with the books. The cataloguing information is usually found behind the title page or at the end of the text before the index.

Cataloguing information are found mostly in foreign acquisitions notably from Europe and America, while most local publications acquired in academic libraries in Nigeria are processed originally with the attendant difficulties involved in cataloguing such materials.

FUNCTIONS OF THE CATALOGUING SECTION

The Cataloguing Section in any academic library is the 'engine room' of the library. It is the department where one of the most technical duties in librarianship is performed. It has as its major function, the organisation and provision of bibliographic access to the total holdings of the library. The acquisitions processed in the cataloguing section according to University of Ibadan Library Cataloguing Policy (1973) include monographic publications as well as monographs issued serially and unpublished theses. Also processed in the section are certain government documents and non-print media like microforms of monographic publications, phonorecords and tapes.

It is important to mention that the methods used for organising and recording library holdings are descriptive cataloguing, subject cataloguing and classification. This is in consonance with the submission of Greaves (1972). Descriptive cataloguing involves the determination of the access point or main entry. That is, the person or people, or body chiefly responsible for the publication being catalogued. Subject cataloguing involves the assignment of subject headings to appropriate titles

acquired in the library, based, as the case may be, on the Library of Congress Subject Heading list. Classification on the other hand involves assignment of call marks on books derived from the first subject treated in a book. These require expertise on the part of librarians to properly catalogue and classify library materials in such a way that they are easily retrieved when needed.

PURPOSE OF STUDY

The problems associated with cataloguing and classification of library materials has given librarians in academic libraries serious concern and this in turn has affected their attitudes to cataloguing responsibilities as observed by Eskov (1990). This assertion is particularly true when viewed from the perceived negative attitudes of librarians to cataloguing in academic libraries in Nigeria. This has provided the background for this study. The purpose of this study therefore is to determine the attitudes of librarians to cataloguing and classification of library materials using sex, age and working experiences of the respondents as variables.

HYPOTHESES

The following null hypotheses will be tested at 0.05 level of significance.

1. There is no significant relationship between the attitude of male and female librarians to cataloguing and classification of library materials
2. There is no significant relationship between the attitudes of old and young librarians to cataloguing and classification of library holdings.
3. There is no significant relationship between the attitudes of highly experienced librarians and inexperienced librarians to cataloguing and classification of library materials.

METHODOLOGY

The design of the study is in the form of a descriptive survey of the attitudes of librarians to cataloguing and classification of library materials. The subject of this

study consisted of fifty (50) librarians randomly sampled with a total of twenty-six (26) females and twenty-four (24) males. The age range of the respondents is between twenty (20) and fifty-five (55) years while their mean age was 41.90. Classification was also done according to their working experience.

The instrument employed in this survey was a twenty item questionnaire tagged ALCCS (Attitudes of Librarians to Cataloguing and Classification Scale). The questionnaire consisted of two major sections. Section A was designed to collect the demographic data of the respondents while Section B consisted of fifteen (15) items made up of factors affecting attitudes of librarians to cataloguing and classification of library materials.

The Chi-square rating scale was used for all the 15 question items in section B with the three (3) weighted points. The validity of the questionnaire was established by its ability to differentiate and distinguish between 'Agree; Disagree; and Not Really' views people hold about their attitude towards cataloguing and classification of library materials. Fifty copies of the questionnaire were distributed out of which forty-seven copies were returned representing 94% response rate.

DATA ANALYSIS AND RESULTS

To quantify responses to the three hypotheses tested in this study, the Chi-square (X^2) statistical method was adopted. When statistical decisions were affected, the 0.05 alpha level was used, the findings are summarised in Tables I - 3 below:

HYPOTHESIS 1

In testing the first null hypothesis, the results showed that there was no statistical significance in the views held by male and female librarians as to their attitudes to cataloguing and classification of library materials. The computation observed X^2 of 6.42 compared to the X^2 critical value of 7.82 under the degree of freedom of 3 ($P < 0.05$). The details are summarised in Table I.

TABLE 1A 2X3 CONTINGENCY SUMMARY COMPARING THE RESPONDENTS ALONG THE INDEX OF SEX

Category of Variables	3 A	2 D	1 NR	No.	Row Total	X ² Obs	df	X ² Critical	P
Male	411 434.4	232 219.5	117 106.1	25 24.1	760	6.43	3	7.82	NS
Female	432 408.6	194 206.5	89 99.9	22 22.8	715				
Column Total	843	426	206	47	1475				

HYPOTHESIS 2

The results of this hypothesis showed that the null hypothesis was supported and therefore confirmed. Here, the views held by younger librarians and older librarians on their attitudes to cataloguing and classification of library holdings showed no statistical significance as evident in the observed X² of 1.7 when compared with the critical X² of 7.82 under degree of freedom of 3 (P < 0(050). This is further explained in Table II below.

TABLE 2A 2X3 CONTINGENCY SUMMARY COMPARED THE RESPONDENTS ALONG THEIR AGE STATUS

Category of Variables	3 A	2 D	1 NR	NO.	Row Total	X ² Obs	df	X ² Critical	P
20 - 37 years	231 *220.3	104 111.9	51 53.8	12 12.3	386	1.7	3	7.82	NS
28 - 55 years	432 *408.6	612 *522.7	324 316.1	35 34.7	1091				
Column Total	843	428	206	47	1477				

HYPOTHESIS 3

The computed outcome of the third hypothesis was also confirmed as the finding was not statistically significant in the views held by respondents of different working experiences. Their attitudes to cataloguing and classification of library materials showed that the observed X^2 values was 6.11 while the critical X^2 value was 12.59 under the degree of freedom of 3 ($P < 0.05$) as could be seen from the Table III below.

TABLE 3
A 3X3 CONTINGENCY SUMMARY COMPARING THE
RESPONDENTS ALONG THE INDEX OF WORK EXPERIENCE

Category of Variables	3 A	2 D	1 NR	NO.	Row Total	X^2 Obs	df	X^2 Critical	P
1 - 10 years	507 *496.4	242 260.9	130 121.9	28 27.8	907				
11 - 20 years	215 *216.7	121 113.9	48 53.2	12 12.1	396	6.11	6	12.59	NS
20 - 30 years	117 *125.9	78 66.2	28 30.9	7 7.1	230				
Column Total	843	441	206	47					

DISCUSSION

The computed outcomes in this study as indicated from the tables shows that the three predicted null hypotheses at the 0.05 alpha level were confirmed. The argument is that while the indexes of the respondents' sex, age and working experience could be important in examining librarians' attitudes to cataloguing and classification of library materials, differential factors could be subsumed under other competing phenomena. For example, respondents' views on how they feel when an

entry is adequately catalogued or otherwise, arose out of availability of adequate cataloguing tools which should facilitate cataloguing and classification of library materials rather than on the sex, age and working experiences of librarians. The difficulties involved in cataloguing library materials was particularly noted by the Library of Congress which carried out series of projects aimed at reducing cataloguing problems for libraries using the Library of Congress Classification Scheme.

In conclusion and arising from the information provided in this study, the provision of adequate bibliographic information necessary for the physical and intellectual description of library holdings is very important. This would be better achieved with the aid of relevant tools. The implication of this is that it will enable practicing librarians in academic libraries in Nigeria develop interest in and be more comfortable with cataloguing and classification of library materials.

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