

Letter to the editors

Dear Sirs,

It is understandable that *Education for Information* might sometimes wish to go out of its way to attract and publish papers from Africa. Unfortunately, publishing mediocre papers, such as Ochogwu's (producing of basic competencies in information science education in Nigeria, volume 11, number 2, pp. 147–154), does give the impression that *anything* from Africa would do. It is particularly embarrassing when *Education for Information* has an African on its Editorial Board!

The author makes no attempt whatsoever to collect, analyse, or interpret the wealth of available data and information on the subject of his paper. He asserts that only two library schools in Nigeria – at Ibadan and Zaria – “offer postgraduate courses with some degree of specialization in either library science or information science or both” (p. 149). But the courses listed on the same page are from the schools in Zaria and Maiduguri. And yet the author's “critical appraisal” of these unrepresentative programmes constituted the sole basis for his generalizations on information science education in Nigeria as a whole.

The paper has many more inconsistencies and inaccuracies. Examples:

- (1) It is simply not true that “... in Nigeria is an absence of teaching and research in the field of information science” (p. 148) as material on pages 149 and 150 of the paper clearly shows.
- (2) No doctoral program in information science was planned to take off in 1987 at the University of Ibadan's library school, as claimed by the author (pp. 149–150).
- (3) It is incorrect to state that “there are hardly any libraries in the country with automated systems” (p. 151); accounts of successful library automation programs in Nigeria have been published in local and foreign professional literature.
- (4) Contrary to the author's claim at the top of p. 151, the library and information science field in Nigeria has attracted, since 1966, some of the most brilliant and innovative students from about every discipline. Indeed, at least two of such are the leading lights in the Nigerian information science scene today.
- (5) Having cited at least three Nigerian library schools with postgraduate programs in information science, it is difficult to follow the author's logic that “opportunities (for overseas training) should be extended to the library and information science field (in Nigeria) where postgraduate programs are virtually nonexistent ...” (p. 152).
- (6) What is the reader supposed to understand by “an absence of teaching research in

the library schools” (p. 153) in Nigeria? If it means that “Research Methods” is not taught in Nigerian library schools, then it is a damned lie!

- (7) Research and consultancy work carried out by ARCIS faculty at the University of Ibadan shows that a significant and growing information brokerage industry exists in Lagos, and possibly in other big cities in Nigeria as well. Therefore, the author’s categorical statement that “There has also been no entrepreneurship activities in the information industry” in Nigeria (p. 153) is far from the truth.

The five-line entry on the Africa Regional Centre for Information Science (ARCIS) on page 150 seems completely out of place in the article. Was it inserted by the author’s reviewers or by the Editorial Board of *Education for Information*? If it was part of the author’s manuscript, then it is a further demonstration of his laziness as he could easily have found out all about the background, structure, objectives and programs of ARCIS. Incidentally, ARCIS commenced operation in November, not October, 1990.

Finally, it is a matter for regret that the reader of Ochogwu’s paper is given very little of the true situation of education for library and information science in Nigeria. His sweeping generalizations are a disservice to a country:

- (a) with six university-based library schools, one of which is 34 years old;
- (b) whose premier library school produced its first doctorate degree (in an aspect of information science) two decades ago;
- (c) which has subsequently produced fourteen (14) doctorate degrees, including one (in 1984) on the very subject of education for information in Nigeria and three more (two in 1986 and one in 1991) in the area of information science from the same library school; and
- (d) whose professionals (as teachers and practitioners) have published, in local and international journals, carefully researched papers on all aspects of the subject of Ochogwu’s paper for some forty years.

Thank you.

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