Chapter 13

A Framework for Developing Open Distance E-Learning Curriculum for Library and Information Science (LIS) Programme in Eswatini

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ABSTRACT

The dependency by foreign countries institutions such as South Africa, Botswana, and Namibia for library and information science (LIS) training and development of staff members, to acquire higher education, has become expensive and complex for Eswatini government to handle. The expensive nature and complex situation of sending employees out of the country for training has paralysed most of the organisation due to their absence from operations in the office. This study therefore seeks to investigate, developing open distance e-learning curriculum for LIS programme in Eswatini. The University of Eswatini (UNESWA), which is one among other institution of higher learning in the country, does not offer any programme in LIS. Considering this situation in Eswatini, this chapter proposes a framework for developing the ODeL curriculum for LIS. Such a programme could be offered through the UNESWA to accommodate students within and outside the country. Thus, ensuring Eswatini becomes a player in LIS space within the African continent.

INTRODUCTION AND BACKGROUND

The advent and rapid development in Information and Communication Technologies (ICTs), brought about fundamental and dramatic shifts in the global educational landscape. The reason was that the advent and transformation witnessed in ICTs ushered in recent technological, devices now used in the education sector globally. The purpose of applying ICTs in the educational sector was based on its effectiveness and efficiency in fostering service delivery. The increasing use of the Internet worldwide as one of the components of ICTs is now a new phenomenon in open distance e-learning (ODeL). ODeL has created new opportunities for lifelong learning characterised by costless high-quality education beyond the limitations of time zones and physical boundaries (Sonwalkar, 2013). According to Edegbo (2011), the adaptation of ICT in higher education has changed the way and manner through which education is conducted. Edegbo (2011) asserts that, apart from the provision of opportunities in ODeL and collaboration, ICTs has paved the way for a new pedagogical approach characterised for independent learning. Students can communicate, create and share presentations in multimedia format. The interaction between students and teachers is enhanced through technology.

The Library and Information Science (LIS) field of study, has become more vibrant and dynamic due to the emergence and application of ICTs. The application of ICTs in the profession results in novelty concepts of a digital library, metadata, and many more, being topical in the twenty-first century. The rapid changes experienced in LIS spurred educators to continually recommend a revision to course content and program directions in line with the global trends. Such initiatives have seen some LIS institutions introducing new degrees with new nomenclature.

The International Federation of Library Associations and Institutions (IFLA) have recommended that the LIS curriculum should consist of the following core modules:

- The information environment, information policy and ethics, the history of information science;
- Information generation, communication and use;
- Assessing information needs and designing responsive services;
- The information transfer process;
- The organization, retrieval, preservation and conservation of information;
- Research, analysis and interpretation of information;
- Applications of information and communication technologies;
- Library and information products and services;
- Information resource management and knowledge management;
- Management of information agencies; and
- Quantitative and qualitative evaluation of the outcomes of information and library use (IFLA, 2009).

In affirmation of IFLA mandate on how LIS curriculum should consist of, Wilson (2001) made similar remarks on the same note, to include:

- Information content (the traditional function of library and information centres);
- Information systems (human/systems interaction and organizational systems);
- Information users and providers (information use and information seeking behaviour);

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