PARTNERSHIPS IN LIBRARY AND INFORMATION SCIENCE (LIS) TRAINING: THE CASE OF SWAZILAND NATIONAL LIBRARY SERVICE

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Abstract

The aim of this study is to investigate the scholarship partnerships for Library and Information Science (LIS) training in the Swaziland National Library Service (SNLS), which is the highest posting body of library staff/ LIS professionals in the country. Previously, a number of this institution's LIS professionals benefited from the partnerships coordinated by the Swaziland government, through the Ministry of Public Service. The scholarship partners include: the British Council, American Embassy, Fulbright Scholarships, Australian Government, etc. and such partnerships made a great impact. This study sought to explore the role of the partnerships in LIS training of library staff; investigate the effects of lack of the partnerships in LIS training of SNLS library personnel; and to find out strategies that can be devised to restore and ensure continuous LIS training of SNLS library staff. The research method was predominately a qualitative approach to allow face to face interaction with participants and for statistical manipulation, a quantitative approach was used. Specifically, general direct observation, questionnaire, face-face, telephone and structured interviews were used for data collection. Findings show that most of the beneficiaries attained qualifications up to Masters Degrees in LIS and acquired skills and competences that made them good managers and leaders in the LIS profession. They are holding higher categories/ positions in this institution. It has been discovered that the majority of the SNLS library staff (49 out of 72) are practising librarianship with minimal qualifications such as Diploma in LIS and they all entered the profession without LIS training which compromises the LIS profession with regards to skills and competences. The study's participants recommended that LIS training be offered by the University of Swaziland for easy access and provision of part time LIS training. Moreover, change of recruitment system and employ trained library staff up to at least Diploma level is recommended. It has been observed that the MPS could not control the scarcity of the scholarship partners.

Keywords: *Partnerships, LIS Training, LIS Professionals, Library Staff, Swaziland National Library Service (SNLS)*

Introduction

All professional fields require good training at various levels in order to produce skilled personnel. Library and Information Science (LIS) is a field that also

require intensive training of staff in order to fulfil its mandate. According to (Yei,1996), LIS training of library staff/ LIS professionals is essential for purposes of empowering them to be developed professionals, ensuring that they deliver relevant services and preparing them to be skilled future leaders and managers in the LIS profession. IFLA mentioned that "the need for a well-trained staff is very important" (IFLA 2001, 66). In Swaziland, funding SNLS library staff/ LIS professionals to pursue LIS training was made possible through scholarship partnerships with several Government partners through the coordinating body, the Ministry of Public Service (MPS). However, currently the situation has changed and SNLS library staff/ LIS professionals no longer get enough support and scholarship partners to fund LIS training. As a result, the institution has a high number of un-qualified library staff.

Contextualization

What is SNLS?

SNLS stands for Swaziland National Library Service and it is a Department under Ministry of Information and Communications Technology (MICT) that is located in Mbabane, the capital city of the country, Swaziland. Although the institution was established in 1971, it is currently operating by the established Act of 2002 and governed by an Advisory Board which was appointed through Swaziland Legal Notice No. 129 of 2008. SNLS is the highest posting body of library staff/ LIS professionals in the country. It operates the National Library in Mbabane and the main Public Libraries that are located in Mbabane and Manzini as well as thirteen (13) branch libraries that are located in the small cities around the country, namely; Bhunya, Big Bend, Hlatikhulu, Lavumisa, Lomahasha, Mankayane, Mhlume, Mpaka, Nhlangano, Pigg's Peak, Simunye, Siteki and Tshaneni. Moreover, above the responsibilities of traditional library functions and its mandate of being the United Nations Depository Library, the National Library Service has both a legal and bibliographic function in the administration of the (Legal Deposit Act, 2000).

Figure 1. *Map of Swaziland showing SNLS Public branches*
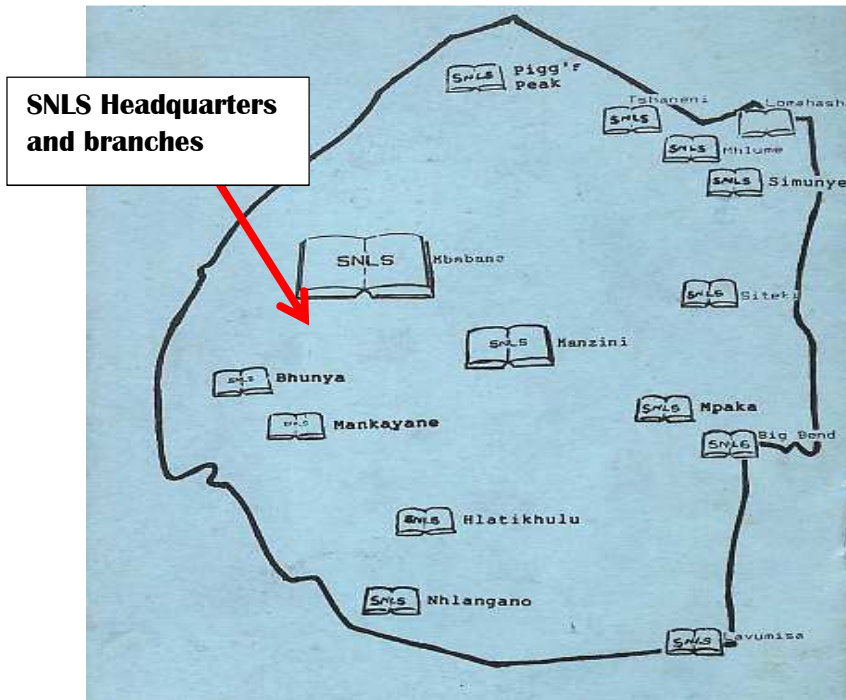

Source: *SNLS Brochure*

The norm with SNLS LIS training was that staffers are employed as school leavers, holding Form Five (5) Certificates or Matric and the MPS through the partners is responsible to train them. As (Ndlangamandla 2012, 1) indicated in her study that the general norm in Swaziland is that before the library staff goes for LIS training in a formal tertiary institution, they gain exposure in a library setting. This has happened in many libraries globally. According to (Hicks & Given, 2013; Rathbun-Grubb, 2016; Saunders, 2015), the study revealed that there is significant evidence that most professionals acquire management and leadership skills on the job or through practical applications, such as internships and as a result of this skill gap, many issues arise due to entering the profession without a solid foundation in management and leadership skills.

In an interview with a retired former Director of the SNLS, it was learned that when LIS profession was introduced in the country, employed library staffers would serve for at least two years in a paid internship programme. She mentioned that the partnerships coordinating body, the MPS was then responsible to search for an appropriate LIS School for those candidates who were due for LIS training. The next step would be that the candidates were informed to submit application forms to the LIS Schools and then candidates

would go for the LIS training with funds covered by the MPS coordinated partners.

Over the years the partners made great impact in the Kingdom of Swaziland in attaining her goal to have trained public staffers in most ministries and departments. SNLS is one of the departments that benefited a lot from these partnerships. However, due to the increase of the library staff/ LIS professionals, the demand for LIS training could not be handled well anymore and they transferred the process of searching for LIS schools to SNLS and later to individuals. Candidates were then responsible to identify LIS schools of their choice mostly in the SADC region especially Botswana, Namibia and South Africa. This concur with the study by (Ndlangamandla, 2013) that there is still lot of dependence of studying outside Swaziland.

Figure 2 shows the Map of SADC Countries where Swaziland's library staff go for LIS training

://maps-africa.blogspot.com/2012/05/southern-africa-map-pictures.html
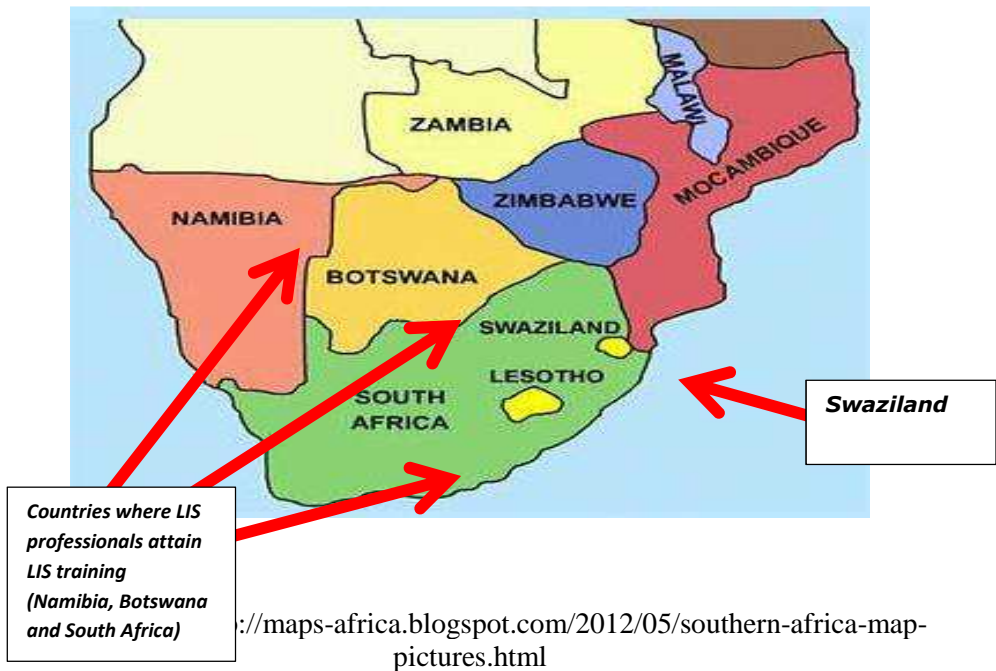
MPS Partnerships

Like most countries' governments globally, bilateral agreements are made and Swaziland Government through the MPS, the coordinating body of the scholarship partners is one of those countries who made agreements with regards to training of Swazi Citizens, whether public servants or private

organisations staffers way back in the 1960s (MPS Training Policy).   Hence, the existing partnerships with regards to LIS training of the SNLS library staff started since the establishment of the institution in 1971.

Problem and purpose of the study
For years the SNLS has been in partnerships for LIS training with several organizations that include British Council, German Embassy, Fulbright Scholarships, American Embassy and Australian Government, etc through the Swaziland Government's coordinating body, MPS. These partnerships benefited a number of LIS professionals in this institution. SNLS would submit a list of library staff/ LIS professionals who were due for LIS training to the MPS every year, for whatever the need of library staff or LIS training programme and then a country of choice because there is no tertiary institution offering LIS training in Swaziland (Ndlangamandla, 2013). In most cases the countries of choice would be in the SADC countries, depending on where the library staff wishes to go for study. For example, they would be due to pursue Certificates, Diploma, Degree or Masters Programmes in Botswana, South Africa, Namibia etc. However, some LIS professionals attained their LIS training in countries like Australia, United States of America, etc.

The SNLS LIS training was on rotational bases. For instance, some library staff would go for certificate programmes and some come back with diplomas qualifications and some would go for degree programmes and some come back with Masters Qualifications. That is how SNLS managed her LIS training and as a result the institution had strong competent LIS professionals.

Unfortunately, nowadays LIS training of the SNLS is faced with challenges. There are no longer frequent LIS training programmes the way it was in the past decades, and as a result the SNLS finds itself without fresh and qualified youthful personnel to man the institution's various activities.

In order to broadly explore the issue under discussion, the following objectives were formulated as a basis for the study:

   a) To explore the role of partnerships in LIS training of library staff
   b) To investigate the effects of lack of partnerships in LIS training of library staff
   c) To find strategies that can be devised to restore and ensure continuous LIS training of library staff

Literature Review

The literature in this section of the paper shall be reviewed under separate headings guided by the objectives of the study. It is worth noting that the lack of literature covering the field of LIS is common. In a study by (Rahmatullaev,

Ganieva & Khabibullaev, 2017) although there are a number of studies that address the issue of LIS training in other developing countries, a preliminary review of existing literature in English confirmed that there is a lack of scholarship that fully pertains to LIS education in Uzbekistan, which is the same situation in Swaziland. However, the main concern that triggered the initiation of this study is the observation of the trend of retiring SNLS LIS professionals.

Role of partnerships in training library staff
Importance of LIS training

It is vital that library staff goes through LIS training. According to (Ard et al., 2006) a trained library staff is technological developed in the field of information creation and dissemination, which includes the increasing use of computers, microforms, word processing equipment, and the use of lasers and a wide range of developments in the field of communications, including satellites. This technological change greatly indicates that there is need for continuous LIS training.

In a study by (Chaudhary, 2001) cited in (Khan & Rafiq, 2013), the authors adds that it is important for library staff to realise "the rapid growth of new knowledge; social needs of highly educated population; introduction of new technology in libraries; outreach programs to attract new groups of library users; and changing trends in library services". This brings the need for training of library personnel. According to (Ard et al., 2006) when the people working in the library are well trained, they create the level of morale and the calibre of service. This kind of attitudes determine whether the library will be developed, dynamic or static, user or inward focused in other words, whether the library will be an information powerhouse or a dreary warehouse. LIS training contributes to library staffers attitudes. This indicates that without training the mandate of libraries cannot be successfully realised.

Skills and competences of library staff

Once library staff/ LIS professionals receive LIS training, they are also expected to acquire variety of management and leadership skills and competences. According to Khan and (2013, p.1) "Training is being widely considered a key tool for enhancing job-related skills and performances. In the research by (Singh & Vorbach 2017, 95) "LIS professionals believe that strong leadership and management skills are incredibly essential" as cited by (Dewey, 2012; Le, 2014; Winston & Hazlin, 2003). According to ALA (2009), in the study by (Singh & Vorbach 2017, 95), it is stated that the required important "competences include planning, budgeting, managing teams and personnel, assessment of library services, networking, and transformational leadership".

Need for partnerships

Training is a necessity. Most developing countries like Swaziland, cannot afford to send personnel abroad for training in the various fields of library work. This shows the need for partnership since due to budgetary constraints most countries hardly prioritise on training of personnel working in libraries.

Therefore, partnerships in LIS training have played a big role in a number of countries. In Nigeria a study by (Okojie & Omotoso, 2013) indicated that the Librarians' Registration Council of Nigeria (LRCN) had to put necessary strategies in place to harness the potentials in education and training of librarians to achieve quality information service delivery for national development. They further argued that the Librarians' Registration Council of Nigeria (LRCN) had to carry out some of its professional regulatory functions and training of information professionals to deliver quality information services through collaborative effort and by fostering enduring local and international partnership.

Effects of lack of scholarship partnerships in training of the library staff

Retiring LIS professionals

In a study by (Ard et al., 2010), it was revealed that in 2009 over 25 per cent of librarians would have reach or passed the age of 65, and nearly two out of three current librarians will retire by this year, 2017. As a result, the LIS profession especially in the developing countries faces a number of challenges that include lack of LIS training funding or scholarship partners to assist and fund new library staff that will take forth the profession after the old ones have retired.

Lack of financial support

In India, (Johnson, 2007) as cited in (Khan & Bhatti, 2012) mentioned that LIS training in developing countries continue to suffer from lack of financial support by government. Moreover, (Khan & Bhatti, 2012) also cited in a study carried out in India by (Ali & Bakshi, n.d) stated that the LIS profession is faced with many challenges such as lack of finance, inadequate infrastructure, lack of knowledge and training, etc. In a study by (Khan & Bhatti, 2012) he further cited Pakistan conducted studies that do not show the healthy picture of LIS profession and among them was a study by (Asghar, 1992) that listed some of the main challenges of the LIS profession which include lack of opportunities for proper LIS training, availability and access to information sources, financial assistance and sponsorship, etc.

Strategies that can be devised to restore and ensure continuous training of library staff

Suitable options for LIS training

According to (Tella & Issa, 2012) the University of Zambia Library employed a number of strategies to foster and develop leadership among its library staff which included mentoring of library staff, training workshops, short and long term training, full time and distance learning. The option that was normally suitable for the University of Zambia library staff was evening programme.
2.3.2 Creation of both local and international partnerships

In Uganda, due to the LIS challenges, a study by (Okello-Obura & Kigongo-Bukenya, 2011) suggested creation of both local and international partnerships that can promote teaching, research, and innovations in the field of LIS.

In an attempt to address some of the challenges caused by lack of partnerships in LIS training, a study in Pakistan was carried out by (Khan & Rafiq, 2013) and it revealed a list of few local organizations that were making a difference in LIS training and that included "Pakistan Library Association, National Centre for Rural Development, Pakistan Library Automation Group, Pakistan Academy for Rural Development, Pakistan Library Club, Pakistan Scientific and Technological Information Centre etc".

Methodology

The study was carried out in Swaziland, Mbabane between January and April 2017.

A mixed approach research method was adopted. However, it was predominately using a qualitative approach to allow close interaction with participants and for statistical manipulation during the course of the study, the quantitative approach was used.

Data collection methods
The author's general direct observation, SNLS and MPS structured interviews conducted face-face, and through the telephone, former SNLS Director face to face interview and SNLS staff questionnaire were the data collection methods used on selected respondents.

Observation
Since the author worked for SNLS for more than 20 years, she observed the situation of SNLS with regards to LIS training.

Structured interview

The structured interview that was designed for the SNLS Management was aimed at eliciting information on the following regarding some of the following areas: qualifications of the personnel, number of those who benefited from the scholarship partnership, and policy issues regarding recruitment and promotion, challenges in soliciting funds for staff training either through government or partnership and strategies that are in place to ensure continuous training of staff. The structured interview was also directed to the Under Secretary at the Ministry of Public Service and the aim was to get information on the following:

- Library and Information Science (LIS) training partnerships;
- establish if MPS has a policy in place regarding LIS training of Swaziland National Library Service (SNLS) library staff;
- find out if the LIS training of library staff is recognised the same as the other professionals;
- the challenges that the MPS encounter with partners regarding LIS training of library staff;

Structured questionnaire

Ten (10) copies of the questionnaire were emailed and sixteen (16) were hand delivered to SNLS library staff and LIS professionals participants, which means a total of 26 copies of questionnaire were issued. However, only 21 of them were returned. The study population consisted of seventy two (72) SNLS library staff including LIS professionals and eight (8) former LIS professionals who were holding senior positions and have the background and benefited from SNLS LIS training partnerships because one (1) was deployed to another field. Therefore, purposive sampling was used for the study. Three (3) retired and long served Librarians (all more than 35 years with SNLS service) who were at Senior Management positions formed part of the study participants.

The SNLS library staff structured questionnaire comprised of twenty (20) questions that was designed to solicit personal information as well as job related information such as qualifications, job positions holding and training.

Findings and Discussion

Below are the findings and the discussion of key issues that emanated from the study, and they are discussed according to the key themes, which are; the role of scholarship partnerships in LIS training of library staff; the effects of lack of scholarship partnerships in LIS training of library staff; and strategies that can be devised to restore and ensure continuous LIS training of library staff.

Role of scholarship partnerships in LIS training of the SNLS staff

Importance of LIS training

For every institution to be relevant, it needs to continuously train it personnel. The library staff participants were asked if they did receive any training after they were employed by SNLS and where institutions are located. A total participants of 70% indicated that they did receive training and 10% of studied in Botswana, 10% studied in South Africa, 5% studied in Namibia and 45% studied in local unaccredited institutions. Although among the 45% some did from one week to three months short courses, it is important that they received training in LIS training. Unfortunately, 30% said they did not receive any training and they need motivation to study at least short courses.

Skills and competences of the library staff

To find out the skills and competences acquired through LIS training as well as beneficiaries of the scholarship partnerships of the library staff, the SNLS management participant was asked to provide the library staff categories, positions holding, indicate if they are beneficiaries, qualifying for the positions and name the qualifications they are holding. To confirm the fact that the partnerships role is quite significant, the findings show that the beneficiaries sixteen (16) holds highest categories/positions' from Assistant Librarian to Director and highest qualifications from Degree in LIS to Masters in LIS in this institution. They could not have attained that without the partners' support in LIS training. The qualifications made them to be empowered with skills and competences for management and leadership positions. **Table 1** below illustrates these.
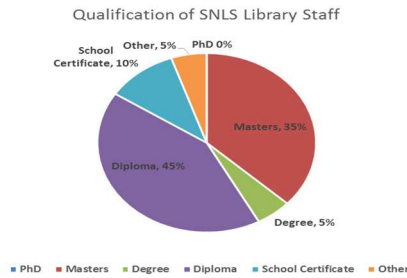
Table 1 Categories, beneficiaries of scholarship partnerships and obtained qualifications

Director	1	Yes	Yes	Must be LIS Masters with 5 + years experience	Masters in Library and information Science
Senior Librarian	1	Yes	Yes	Must be LIS Masters with 5 + years experience	Masters in Library and Information Science
Librarian	5	Yes	2 Yes and 3	Must be LIS Masters with 5 +	Masters in Library and

			No	years experience	Information Science and Bachelor of Library and Information Science
Assistant librarian	16	Yes	9 Yes and 7 No	Must be Bachelor Holder from recognised institution	Bachelor of Library and Information Science and Diploma in Library and Information Science
Senior Library Assistant	16	Not all	6 Yes and 10 No	Must be Diploma holder with 2 + experience	LIS Diploma
Library Assistant	22	No	No	Must be Diploma holder from recognised institution	None
Junior Library Assistants	11	No	No	Must be certificate holder from recognised institution	None

The study sought to explore the SNLS library staff/ LIS professional qualifications in order to find out the institution's library staff available skills and competences. The library staff participants were requested to indicate their qualifications. Findings in Pie chart 1 below show that none (0%) has yet attained a PhD level in Library and Information Science. It means that the SNLS LIS professionals have not yet achieved the highest level of librarianship qualification and short of those skills and competences acquired at that level. Participants holding Masters in LIS are 35% which means the MPS partners has empowered LIS professionals up to this level. Participants with Degree in LIS are 5% and it is one of the qualifications that have few LIS professionals which indicate the challenge of LIS training. The qualification with more participants is the Diploma in LIS with 45%. However, the majority of them are the product of local institution which eventually stopped training LIS staff due to issues of accreditation. School certificate holders are 10% of SNLS participants which means these are unqualified library staff. Other qualifications (mainly in irrelevant fields) are 5%.

Table 1 Categories, beneficiaries of scholarship partnerships and obtained qualifications

Qualification of SNLS Library Staff

PhD 0%
Other, 5%
School Certificate, 10%
Masters, 35%
Degree, 5%
Diploma, 45%

■ PhD ■ Masters ■ Degree ■ Diploma ■ School Certificate ■ Other

Pie chart 1 shows qualifications of SNLS library staff

To find out if the library staff participants gained skills and competences on the job with the support of MPS partners, they were asked to how they received their qualification and options were to indicate as follows: Benefited from MPS partnerships; Employed already qualified; Studied through distance learning in South Africa; Studied with local institutions; Any other qualifications and Not studied at all. Finding show that 48% participants benefited from the MPS partners which means the partnerships played a big role. None in this institution employed qualified in LIS which concur with the study by (Ndlangamandla, 2013) that library staff in Swaziland gain experience on the job and attain formal tertiary education later.

The study shows that 16% of the participants studied through distance learning with University of South Africa which means that some of the library staff members have the interest to get LIS training and develop themselves in order gain skills and competences. In a study by (Tella & Issa, 2012) the University of Zambia employees had to go for part time programs in order to get their LIS training which might eventually happen with SNLS library staff. It is unfortunate that 16% of the participants studied with unaccredited institutions; however, they did get exposure to librarianship. At least 10% do have exposure in training although it is not LIS training. The study shows that 10% of the participants have not studied at all which really compromises the LIS profession and result to incompetent library staff.

Table 2 shows how SNLS library staff achieved their qualifications

Benefited from MPS partnerships	48%
Employed already qualified	0%
Studied through distance learning with University of South Africa	16%
Studied with local institutions	16%
Other (not related qualification)	10%
Not studied	10%

Need for partnerships

Although the benefits of partners in LIS training look positive and the library staff needs LIS training, it is with concern that a number of SNLS staff and management no longer benefit from the scholarship partnerships since the partners are now scarce. According to the SNLS Management participant, a recently revised SNLS training plan shows that about 95% of the library staff members are in a queue, waiting to be offered scholarships or go for Diplomas and Bachelors in LIS training. This is crisis because funds are not available. To find out if the participants recognize the Swaziland Library and Information Association (SWALA) in terms of offering LIS training, they were asked how this body could help. Some indicated that there are people who are not doing their job in their positions because this organisation has been existing in the industry for so many years. In study in Nigeria, the Librarians' Registration Council of Nigeria (LRCN) similar to SWALA had to carry out some of its professional regulatory functions and training of information professionals to deliver quality information services through collaborative effort and by fostering enduring local and international partnership.

Scholarship partnerships go a long way in maintaining trained library staff. When responding to the question about when the partnerships were established, the MPS participant mentioned that many Swazi Citizens from various fields had benefited from a number of the scholarship partnerships coordinated by MPS since way back in the 1960s.

Effects of lack of partnerships in LIS training of library staff
The lack of scholarship partnerships in LIS training of the library staff is a cause of concern. It brings along a number of shortfalls for the entire existence and operations of the library service in Swaziland. Key concerns that arise as a result of the lack of partnership are discussed below.

Demographic details of respondents

The study sought to find out the ages and gender of the participants in order to find out if all genders are well represented in this institution. According to (Australian Library and Information Association, 2014) the issue of gender and age need to be addressed. Actually, there is usually a lack of males and young people in the LIS profession. **Pie chart 1 and Pie chart 2** below show the age and gender of participants of this study. The age and gender information resonates with a study conducted by the Australian Library and Information Association's study. Again, the youngest participants between the ages of 20-30 are 15% which means there is lack of young people in this institution who will take forth the LIS profession. Males in this study there were 28% and females were 72% of the total participants. This becomes evident that this profession is more dominated by females.

Pie chart 1: Age ranges of the Participants
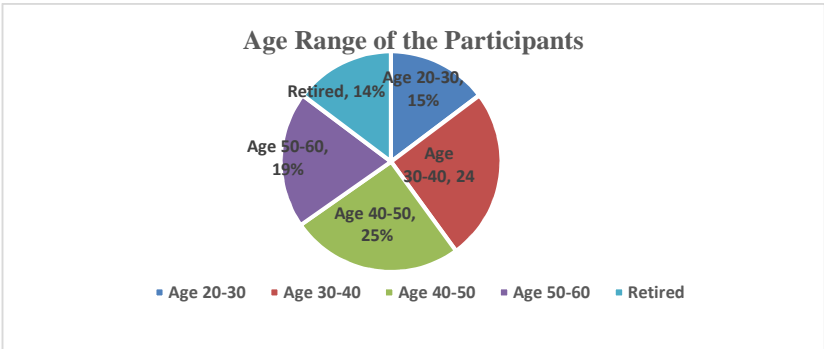
**Pie chart 2: Gender of SNLS participants**
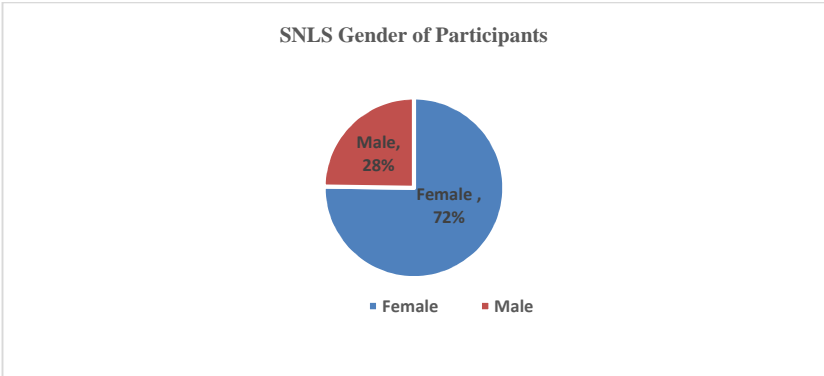
Retiring LIS professionals/ beneficiaries of partnerships

The beneficiaries of the partnerships should have served in the SNLS between 10-20 years and over 20 years. To find out if the participants were still going to serve in this institution or about to retire, they were asked as to when they joined the SNLS and options ranged between 0-10 years; 10-20 years and over 20 years. The study shows that participants with experience below 10 years of experience were 38% which is a big number and a challenge because this means that these are quite fresh library staff that are affected by the lack of partnerships in LIS training.

The participants that have served between 10 – 20 years in this institution were 10%. Although it is not a big number, these are library staff that not going to benefit from the scholarship partnerships because they might be affected by age limit. When the SNLS participant was asked the challenges that the institution has encountered regarding the LIS training of library staff in the past 2 decades, she mentioned the lack of scholarship for undergraduate studies due to stopped in-service training and the challenge for postgraduate officers that usually do not qualify due to age limit to scholarship legitimacy.

It further transpired that 52% have work experience of over 20 years. In the below **Bar chart** 1, the findings, therefore, indicate that most of the competent and experienced LIS professionals were almost at the exit door, meaning they are about to retire. This is a cause of concern because these are the beneficiaries of the scholarship partnerships. **Bar chart 1: Number of Years with SNLS**

Compromising the LIS profession

Number of Years with SNLS
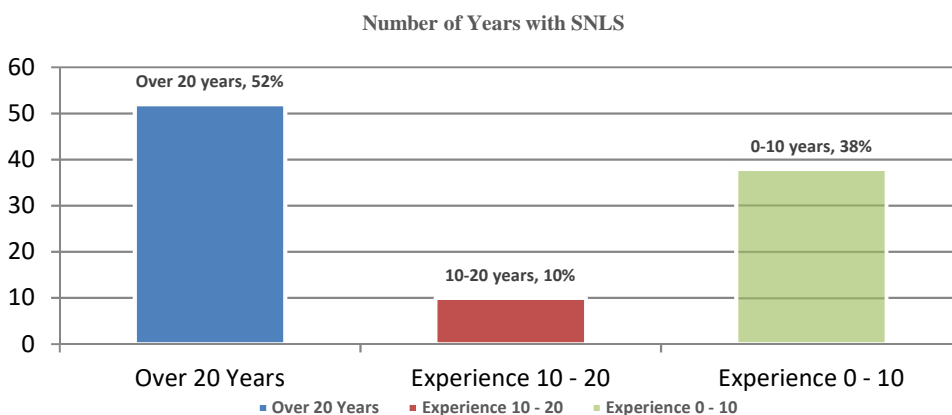
It has been observed that mostly, the library staff joining SNLS gets promoted to various categories/ positions some after attaining qualifications, and others

without LIS qualifications which really compromises the LIS profession because untrained personnel is incompetent.

According to the SNLS participant, the norm was that the institution would motivate its library staff by promotions after receiving qualifications. Further, the study found that the SNLS promoted library staff, revealed that all the participants have experienced promotions, even those who were less than 10 years with SNLS yet they did not even go for LIS training.

Lack of financial support

The situation of SNLS of lack of financial support resulted in the participants' various views include that: the system of SNLS LIS training as not transparent; not been reviewed; very slow; should allow many people to train at once to avoid the long queue; poor with no training plan; challenge is the funding; bad and the best way is to leave the institution. These comments show that most participants (staff members of the SNLS) do not have an idea of what is going on with regard to the LIS training of SNLS. Moreover, the age limitations deprive some library staff/ LIS professionals opportunities to get LIS training opportunities.

Furthermore, when the MPS participant was asked to indicate challenges of the LIS training in the past two decades with regards to scholarships from partners, he noted challenges that include issues of reduced budget for candidates who were supposed to be awarded scholarships from the partners. He made an example that partners would previously provide ten scholarships but this number was later reduced to about five (5) which is unfortunate situation because partners decide anytime and anyhow to withdraw their scholarships budgets. It also transpired that some of these scholarship partners decided to stop awarding scholarships and focused on other government projects which unfortunately impacted negatively to the LIS training of library staff/ LIS professionals.

Lack of LIS training institutions

On the question regarding challenges of the LIS training, most participants mentioned that the challenges regarding LIS training include the lack of training institutions in the country which means that even those who may want to study part-time find it difficult. At least in Uganda the training schools are not adequate, but the country has them. In a study by (Okello-Obura & Kigongo-Bukenya, 2011) it was stated that "the challenges facing LIS education and training are many. Some of these include the lack of adequate education and training schools. She added that going out of the country for LIS training is costly.

Strategies that can be devised to restore and ensure continuous training of library staff

Suitable options for LIS training

Recruitment system in an institution goes a long way. It is important for institutions to consider best recruitment system. Ard et.al., (2006) noted that it is the responsibility of administrators and managers to accordingly make job searches one of the top priorities in their organizations. They should recognize the importance of the hiring process to their particular library.

The SNLS participant stated that it was high time for SNLS to consider what LIS profession mean and change her recruitment system which will mean employ at least diploma LIS holders in order to avoid the situation that is compromising the LIS profession.

When the library staff participants responded on the question of options and strategies regarding SNLS LIS training, despite the fact that all of them were employed without qualification, the highest percentage of 71% suggested that SNLS revise her recruitment system and employ trained library staff, at least Diploma holders. Other participants, about 52% suggested that Collaboration with LIS training institutions for distance education and formation of partnerships with sponsoring institutions for full time LIS training. None suggested of change recruitment system, that is to say, none suggested the recruitment of Degree holders, and this is obviously because it is a higher requirement looking at the fact that very few an get hold of that.

Table 3 shows the options and strategies that SNLS can implement regards LIS training

Collaborate with LIS training institutions for distance education	52%
Form partnerships with sponsoring institutions for full time LIS training	52%
Change recruitment system and employ trained library staff up to at least Diploma level	71%
Change recruitment system and employ trained library staff up to at least Degree level	0%

Moreover, when the SNLS Management was asked what the institution had devised as some form of strategies or options regarding LIS training of its library staff, she mentioned that there was none. However, when asked if SNLS would consider options to eliminate LIS training challenges of library staff and

enable the institution to have professionals or trained library staff. She agreed that to collaborate with LIS training institutions for distance education, form partnerships with sponsoring institutions for full time LIS training and change of the SNLS recruitment system and employ trained library staff up to at least Diploma level could be the best option.

Creation of both local and international LIS training partnerships

The MPS partners included international organisations such as the British Council, German Embassy, Fulbright Scholarships, American Embassy and Australian Government who came in handy to offer funding, scholarships to the LIS professionals. The lack of funds for LIS training is crippling the LIS profession and needs to be re-established.

Most library staff participants blamed SNLS and the Swaziland Library and Information Association (SWALA) for not making means that LIS training is offered in the country and searching for funders of the LIS profession locally.

LIS training policy

The best way for any institution to operate and achieving its goals is when there are good strategies in place. The same applies with SNLS. If this institution wishes to restore its LIS training, some strategies need to be devised which include having a good LIS training policy in place.

The study revealed that SNLS does not have a policy in place to assist in guiding the management in the LIS training. However, there is a training plan in place that is designed and it is discussed during training meetings which takes into account seniority, dates of appointment, qualifications and observed dedication of the library staff and that guides the SNLS management on who is due for LIS training.

However, the MPS participant mentioned that there is a policy in place that actually cuts across and covers all government ministries and departments including SNLS. However, it does not specifically cover the scholarship partnerships but it is for general training of the government ministries and departments' staffers; hence, it is not effectively helping to solve problems that engulf LIS training.

Encouragement for library staff to engage in distance learning

When the participants were asked if there were any devised form of strategies or options regarding LIS training of its library staff, it transpired that currently there is nothing in place because SNLS was relying on the MPS partners and was hoping that there will be some improvements in terms of providing more

scholarship partnerships as it was a trend. Hence, SNLS encourages library staff to engage in distance learning especially with University of South Africa (UNISA), a recognised institution that provides part-time studies. It was noted that the University of Swaziland does not offer LIS training through its distance education and other local institutions which provided training in the area of LIS stopped due to issues of accreditation.

Collaborative partnerships with the University of Swaziland

The participants stated that SNLS is considering establishing collaborative partnership with the University of Swaziland so that it can introduce the LIS training programme locally which can definitely enable easier distance education, easy access and save costs for library staffers.

On the question as to which tertiary institution in the country can be recommended to offer LIS training, surprising all the 100% participants recommended University of Swaziland. This again concurred with the study by (Ndlangamandla & Ocholla, 2012) on her study for the feasibility to offer Library and Information higher education in Swaziland. Her study findings indicated that LIS profession employers expressed interest that LIS training be offered locally.

Revisiting scholarship partnerships strategy

According to SNLS management, the library staff may not all afford costs of LIS training, of which partnerships with sponsoring institutions for both full time and part-time LIS training can highly benefit SNLS library staff. She added that it would work well if MPS could revive the partners to continue with the scholarships because library staff cannot afford the costs of LIS training. This is in line with the study by (Okojie & Omotoso, 2013) that recommended that institutions should embark on environmental scanning and identify potential partners that could help identify efficient and effective management of scarce resources such as funding.

The study revealed that there is a need for MPS to revive the partners to continue with the scholarships because library staff cannot afford the costs of LIS training. Again, this concur with the study by (Okojie & Omotoso, 2013) who recommended that institutions should embark on environmental scanning and identify potential partners that could help identify efficient and effective management of scarce resources such as funding.

The participant from the concerned ministry also advised that LIS professionals could seek other means of getting LIS training such as distance education. Approaching local partners with regards to LIS training was under consideration.

The study revealed that most of the participants need LIS training. It is only those with Masters' qualifications that didn't show interest in training.

Conclusion and Recommendations

After successfully conducting the study, the following conclusions can be made:

- The institution has few beneficiaries from the MPS coordinated partnerships.
- The MPS seem to have no control on the challenge of the observed scarce scholarship partners.
- The University of Swaziland is suggested by all participants to offer LIS training in the country which can create better training opportunities especially part-time LIS training.
- The need for training is huge as almost half of the institution's staff members do not hold relevant qualifications and some are not qualified at all.

Based on the findings of the study, the following recommendations are made:

- SNLS needs to strategize with regards to LIS training and change her recruitment system in order retain relevant library staff/ LIS professionals and future competent leaders.
- SNLS must embrace change and develop new policies and adopt the LIS trends for the better future of the LIS profession.
- SNLS must again put strategies in place with regards to scholarship partners for instance, it should partner with the local private sector.
- LIS Professionals' standards and norms must be developed for quality service in the SNLS especially because the institution affiliates with International Federation of Library and Institution Association that sets LIS standards.
- SNLS must avoid compromising the standards for LIS profession and desist from promoting unqualified library staff to leadership positions.
- The Swaziland government should consider training the LIS professionals locally to reduce costs of LIS training.

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