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ORIGINAL

LIS Educators' Perception Towards the Adoption of AI Tools in Nigerian Library Schools

Percepción de los educadores en biblioteconomía y documentación sobre la adopción de herramientas de IA en las escuelas de biblioteconomía nigerianas

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ABSTRACT

The incorporation of Artificial Intelligence (AI) into education marks a significant shift in how students learn, teachers teach, and educational institutions operate. This research delved into the knowledge and views of Library and Information Science (LIS) educators regarding the use of AI in library schools in Rivers State. The study employed a survey approach, combining qualitative and quantitative methods. A total of 44 LIS educators from various institutions in Rivers State participated, selected through random sampling, and data were collected using an online survey.
The study found that while many LIS educators are aware of AI and have integrated it into their teaching and research, there remains a considerable gap in formal training and professional development in this area. Despite this, there is a clear understanding among educators of the value of AI in library and information science education, in line with broader trends in education and industry. The research also identified positive attitudes towards AI as a tool to enhance education quality and prepare students for careers in librarianship and information science. However, several barriers hinder the integration of AI into curricula and practices, including lecturer attitudes, credibility of information sources, internet connectivity, negative institutional perceptions, and low lecturer competency in AI. To address these challenges, the study recommends that Nigerian library schools fully implement AI technologies like chatbots, barcodes, RFIDs, and robotics to enhance teaching activities. It also suggests that higher education institutions develop specialized training programs and workshops on AI for library schools, covering both basic and advanced concepts. This would enable educators to effectively integrate AI into their teaching and research practices.

Keywords: Artificial Intelligence; Technologies; Library Schools; Educators; Library and Information Science; Awareness; Perception; Adoption.

RESUMEN

La incorporación de la Inteligencia Artificial (IA) en la educación marca un cambio significativo en la forma en que los estudiantes aprenden, los profesores enseñan y las instituciones educativas funcionan. Esta investigación profundizó en los conocimientos y puntos de vista de los educadores de Biblioteconomía y Documentación sobre el uso de la IA en las escuelas de Biblioteconomía del Estado de Rivers. El estudio se basó en una encuesta que combinaba métodos cualitativos y cuantitativos. Participaron un total de 44 educadores de Biblioteconomía y Documentación de diversas instituciones del Estado de Rivers, seleccionados mediante muestreo aleatorio, y los datos se recopilaron utilizando una encuesta en línea.
El estudio puso de manifiesto que, aunque muchos educadores de biblioteconomía y documentación conocen la IA y la han integrado en su docencia e investigación, sigue habiendo un vacío considerable en la formación oficial y el desarrollo profesional en este ámbito.

A pesar de ello, los educadores comprenden claramente el valor de la IA en la enseñanza de la biblioteconomía y la documentación, en consonancia con las tendencias generales de la educación y la industria. La investigación también identificó actitudes positivas hacia la IA como herramienta para mejorar la calidad de la educación y preparar a los estudiantes para carreras en biblioteconomía y ciencias de la información. Sin embargo, existen varios obstáculos que dificultan la integración de la IA en los planes de estudio y las prácticas, como las actitudes de los profesores, la credibilidad de las fuentes de información, la conectividad a Internet, las percepciones institucionales negativas y la escasa competencia de los profesores en IA. Para hacer frente a estos retos, el estudio recomienda que las escuelas de biblioteconomía nigerianas apliquen plenamente tecnologías de IA como chatbots, códigos de barras, RFID y robótica para mejorar las actividades docentes. También sugiere que las instituciones de educación superior desarrollen programas y talleres de capacitación especializados en IA para las escuelas de biblioteconomía, que abarquen conceptos básicos y avanzados. Esto permitiría a los educadores integrar eficazmente la IA en sus prácticas docentes y de investigación.

Palabras clave: Inteligencia Artificial; Tecnologías; Escuelas de Biblioteconomía; Educadores; Biblioteconomía y Ciencias de la Información; Concienciación; Percepción; Adopción.

INTRODUCTION

In an age characterized by rapid technological progress, the field of library and information science (LIS) is undergoing a profound evolution. Libraries, once static repositories of knowledge, now serve as dynamic hubs for information dissemination, enriched by the integration of Artificial Intelligence (AI) technologies. The advent of AI has not only transformed how information is curated, organized, and accessed but has also prompted critical inquiries into the roles and duties of LIS educators in preparing upcoming professionals for this digital era (Panda & Kaur, 2023). The educational landscape in Nigeria reflects global trends in the library and information science domain, witnessing a growing demand for professionals equipped with the skills and expertise to effectively utilize AI tools (Adetayo, 2023). As AI technologies such as machine learning algorithms, natural language processing, and recommendation systems become essential for enhancing the efficiency and pertinence of library services, educators need to remain updated on these advancements (Taylor, 2023). Furthermore, educators wield significant influence in shaping the attitudes and proficiencies of future librarians, thus impacting the trajectory of AI adoption within library environments.

Several previous studies have investigated teachers' perceptions of AI adoption in education. Kim et al. (2020) investigated teachers' and students' perceptions of AI in education. It found that teachers recognized the potential of AI to provide personalized learning experiences and assist with administrative tasks. However, some expressed concerns about the loss of human interaction in the learning process. Petko (2019) further explored the acceptance of educational technology, including AI, across various European countries. It revealed that teachers' perceptions were influenced by cultural and professional factors. Teachers in some countries were more open to AI adoption, while others expressed skepticism. In a related study, Isah et al. (2021) focused on teachers' perceptions of AI in educational assessment. It found that teachers recognized the potential of AI to provide efficient and timely feedback to students. However, concerns were raised about the need for transparency and fairness in AI-driven assessment. Furthermore, Lund et al. (2020) highlighted that while many educators saw the benefits of AI, there was a need for more research on teacher training and support in AI integration.

Moura and Carvalho (2024) carried out a study of teachers' Perceptions of Artificial Intelligence in the Classroom. The authors observed that teachers generally had positive attitudes toward AI in education but emphasized the importance of professional development and pedagogical support. Similarly, Tunmibi and Okuonghae (2023) found that perceived benefits, concerns about job security, and ethical considerations played significant roles in shaping teachers' perceptions about AI's adoption. Supporting this, Ayanwale et al. (2022) revealed that teachers in the study had generally positive attitudes toward AI in education, with an emphasis on its potential to enhance teaching and learning processes. These previous studies collectively illustrate the diverse range of perspectives held by teachers regarding the adoption of AI in education. While many educators recognize the benefits of AI, concerns about job roles, ethical considerations, and the need for professional development and support remain important factors influencing their perceptions and acceptance of AI technologies in educational settings.

Teachers' attitudes toward Artificial Intelligence (AI) in education are shaped by a multitude of factors, reflecting their perceptions, beliefs, and experiences. These factors can significantly influence their acceptance and willingness to integrate AI technologies into their teaching practices (Isah et al., 2021). Teachers' attitudes are influenced by their perception of the potential benefits AI can bring to education. They may view AI as a

tool that can enhance personalized learning, provide real-time feedback, and assist with administrative tasks (Adetayo, 2023: Ajani et al., 2022). Tunmibi and Okuonghae (2023) state that teachers' existing pedagogical beliefs and practices play a crucial role. Those who align their teaching philosophy with AI's capabilities for adaptive learning and individualized instruction may have more positive attitudes. In addition, Ayanwale et al. (2022) discuss that the availability of training and professional development opportunities in AI can significantly impact teachers' attitudes. Going further, Okunlaya et al. (2022) discover that the easier AI tools are to use, the more likely teachers are to have positive attitudes toward their adoption.

Another factor contributing to the use of AI is the presence of supportive policies and leadership within educational institutions that can encourage teachers to embrace AI. Clear guidelines and a supportive environment can positively influence their attitudes (Owolabi et al., 2022). Subaveerapandiyan et al. (2023) add that cultural and contextual factors, such as national or regional perspectives on technology in education, can impact teachers' attitudes toward AI. Cultural norms and values may influence their acceptance. Given the review of the literature, the researchers observed that no study has been empirically conducted to investigate the awareness and perception of LIS educators towards the adoption of AI technologies in library schools in Rivers State. Therefore, this is the gap that this present study filled. This research endeavors to explore the depth of awareness and the nature of perceptions held by LIS educators in Rivers State regarding AI technologies. By examining their level of familiarity with AI, their attitudes toward its integration into the curriculum, and their concerns or reservations, this study seeks to provide a comprehensive understanding of the current landscape. Furthermore, it aims to shed light on the challenges faced by educators in adapting their teaching methods and materials to accommodate AI, as well as the opportunities that arise from embracing these technologies to enhance the educational experience and professional readiness of LIS students. In doing so, this investigation contributes to the broader discourse on the role of AI in library science education and informs strategies for effectively preparing the next generation of library professionals. As the synergy between traditional librarianship education practices and AI continues to evolve, this study serves as a critical first step in gauging the readiness and receptiveness of LIS educators to embark on this transformative journey in the context of Rivers State Library Schools.

Problem Statement

The integration of Artificial Intelligence (AI) technologies into library and information science (LIS) education is a promising avenue for enhancing the quality and relevance of future library professionals in Nigeria. However, there exists a significant gap in understanding the awareness and perception of LIS educators in Nigerian library schools regarding the adoption of AI technologies. Without a solid foundation of awareness, educators may struggle to integrate AI-related content into their curricula or effectively prepare students for AI-driven learning environments. A fundamental concern is the extent to which LIS educators in Nigerian library schools are aware of AI technologies, including their capabilities, applications, and implications for the field of library and information science.

Research has shown that the preparedness of LIS graduates to navigate AI-driven learning environments is a pressing concern. This could be due to perceived gaps in the curricula of Nigerian library schools in preparing students with AI-related competencies. It is against these backdrops that the study sought to investigate the awareness and perception of LIS educators towards the adoption of AI technologies in library schools in Rivers State.

Objectives

1. To determine the extent to which LIS educators in library schools are aware of AI technologies for teaching and research activities.
2. To determine perceptions of LIS educators regarding the significance and relevance of AI technologies for library and information science education.
3. To identify the perceived barriers and challenges that may hinder the integration of AI technologies into the curricula and practices of library schools.
4. To determine whether LIS educators perceive gaps in the existing curricula of library schools in terms of adequately preparing students with AI-related knowledge and skills.

METHODOLOGY

This study employed a descriptive research design, combining both quantitative and qualitative data collection and analysis methods. A total of 44 LIS educators ranging from polytechnics to universities in Rivers State participated in the study. The participants were selected using a random sampling technique, and data were collected using an online survey questionnaire. The survey questionnaire consisted of closed-ended questions that sought to gather information on the demographic characteristics of the participants, their level of awareness and perception of artificial intelligence by LIS educators. The semi-structured interviews, on the

other hand, were conducted via phone calls to gather more in-depth information on the participants' level of awareness and perception of artificial intelligence by LIS educators. Data collected were analysed with several descriptive statistical techniques, encompassing frequency distribution, percentages, mean, and standard deviation scores. Mean values below 2,5 were disregarded, while those surpassing 2,50 were considered valid. The collected data underwent analysis employing the Statistical Package for the Social Sciences (SPSS) software, a reputable and widely employed tool for statistical assessments. The subsequent outcomes of this analysis were presented in clear and concise tables, facilitating the comprehension and interpretation of the study's findings.

RESULTS

The study aimed to investigate the LIS educators' awareness and perception on the adoption of artificial intelligence in library schools in Rivers State. 44 participants responded to the online survey shared on the WhatsApp group of Nigerian Library Association Chapter of Rivers State. The participants cut across educators in polytechnics and universities in library schools understudied. The findings centre on the extent in which LIS educators are aware of AI technologies, perceptions of LIS educators regarding the significance and relevance of AI technologies, perceived barriers and challenges that may hinder the integration of AI technologies into the curricula and practices of library schools and perceived gaps in the existing curricula of library schools in terms of adequately preparing students with AI-related knowledge and skills.

Awareness of AI technologies by LIS educators

The goal of the study was to determine the level of awareness of Artificial Intelligence (AI) technologies for teaching and research activities in library and information science, types of AI training received by LIS educators and level of utilization of AI technologies by LIS educators for teaching and research activities.

The results showed that 57 % of the respondents said they were aware of AI technologies, suggesting that the majority of LIS educators were aware of these technologies, 41 % were moderately aware while only 1 % of them were slightly aware, as shown in figure 1.

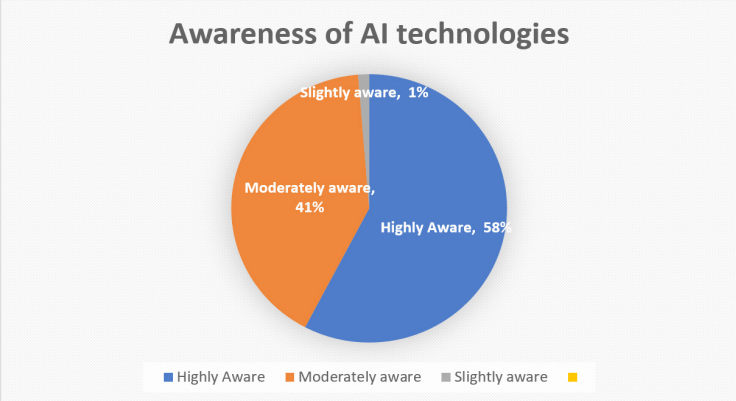

Figure 1. Awareness of AI technologies by LIS educators

According to data in figure 2, the bulk of respondents (95 %) indicated that they had not received any formal training or professional development related to AI technologies, while just 5 % said they had received formal training on AI technologies. This suggests that each respondent ae digitally inclined to have been exposed to AI training.

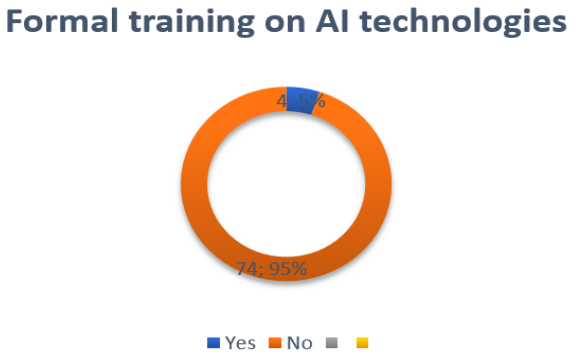

Figure 2. Formal training or professional development related to AI technologies

Furthermore, data in figure 3 also indicate whether LIS educators have utilized AI technologies in their teaching and research activities. Data reveals that 81 % of the respondents had utilized AI technologies for teaching and research activities while 19 % indicated that they had not utilized AI technologies for either teaching or research activity.

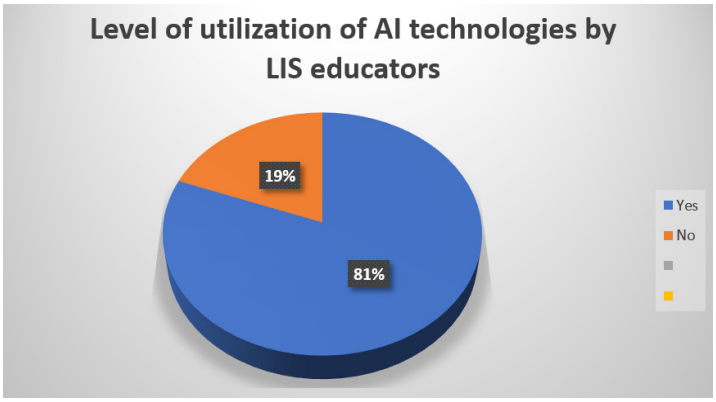

Figure 3. AI technologies utilized by LIS educators for teaching and research activities

Perceptions of LIS educators regarding the significance and relevance of AI technologies

This study collected information on the perception of LIS educators regarding the significance and relevance of AI technologies. Results in Table 1 shows that 57 % of the respondents indicated that AI technologies are significant to the field of library and information science education, followed by 29,5 % who believed that the relevance of AI technologies to librarianship education is moderately significant while 1,5 % indicate a slight significance of AI technologies. Overall, the data shows that the contribution of AI technologies to librarianship education remains a huge significance.

Table 1. How significant do you consider AI technologies in the field of library and information science education

Variables	Percent (n = 44)
Very significant	57 %
Moderately significant	29,5 %
Slightly significant	11,5 %

Also, data in table 2 shows the extent in which LIS educators believe in the use of AI technologies. Data shows that 73,1 % of the respondents believed that the use of AI technologies is highly relevant to improve library and information science education.

Table 2. Extent in which LIS educators believe in the use of AI technologies

Variables	Percent (n = 44)
Highly relevant	73,1 %
Somewhat relevant	19,2 %
Not very relevant	7,7 %

Perceived barriers and challenges that may hinder the integration of AI technologies

The findings presented in table 3 indicate the barriers that hinder the integration of AI technologies into the curricula and practices in library schools. Data further reveals that the greatest challenges that hinder the integration of AI were attitude of lecturers to accept the integration of AI as evidenced by a mean score of 3,52. Other barriers associated with the integration of AI technologies into curricula and practice in library schools include: AI lacks credibility of information sources and citations, internet connectivity, negative perception about AI by institutions, lecturers' low competency to use AI due to its complex knowledge, epileptic power and lack of professionals to engage in AI training. These findings indicate that the integration of AI technologies into library schools' curricula and practice holds potential barriers.

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Table 3. Barriers or challenges you perceive that may hinder the integration of AI technologies into the curricula and practices of library schools in Nigeria

S/n	Variables	Mean	Std.Dev	Rank	Decision
1	Lecturers low competency to use AI due to its complex knowledge in terms of skills and knowledge	3,29	0,698	5th	Accepted
2	Attitude of lecturers to accept the integration of AI	3,52	0,554	1st	Accepted
3	AI lacks credibility of sources and citations	3,48	0,617	2nd	Accepted
4	Lack of professionals to engage in AI training	3,13	0,781	7th	Accepted
5	Negative perception about AI by institutions	3,31	0,675	4th	Accepted
6	Internet connectivity	3,46	0,622	3rd	Accepted
7	Epileptic power	3,20	0,703	6th	Accepted

Also, data in table 4 shows that 57 % of respondents were very confident in their ability to address the barriers to AI integration. This could be a result of respondents' interest in adopting AI technologies despite challenges stated in table 3.

Table 4. How confident are you in your ability to address these barriers to AI integration?

Variables	Percent (n = 44)
Very confident	57 %
Moderately confident	29,5 %
Slightly confident	11,5 %

Perceived gaps in the existing curricula of library schools

The findings presented in table 5 indicated whether the current curricula of library schools adequately prepare students with AI-related knowledge and skills. Data further shows that 78 % of respondents support that the current curricula do not adequately prepare students with AI-related skills and knowledge while 22 % believe that the current curricula to adequately prepare students with AI-related knowledge and skills.

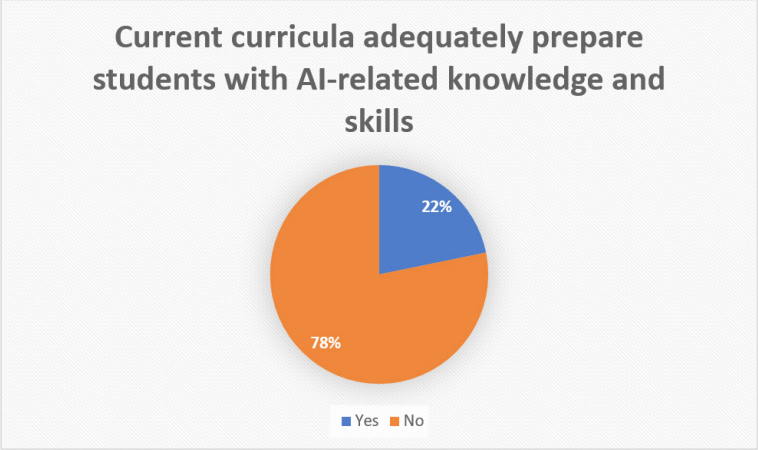

Figure 4. Current curricula of library schools adequately prepare students with AI-related knowledge and skills?

Consequently, when some of LIS educators understudied were interviewed on areas or topics where they perceived gaps in the curricula. One of the interviewees said that, "….the curriculum in library schools are not updated to capture the areas of AI and most of the courses are still embedded in traditional methodologies.". Another respondent when asked stated that, "….in many library schools in Nigeria, especially Rivers State, lecturers' skills do not match the global trends. Also, the respondent added that there are no trainings or workshops that place LIS educators in the forefront of technology." Going further, another interviewee stated that, "….policy formations and educational planning failed to capture the integration of AI technologies in teaching and learning."

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Against these odds, the data in table 5 reveals that 80 % of respondents agreed that LIS students need to be equipped with AI-related knowledge and skills for their future careers.

Table 5. How important do you think it is for LIS students to be equipped with AI-related knowledge and skills for their future careers?

Variables	Percent (n = 44)
Very important	80 %
Moderately important	14 %
Slightly important	6 %

Discussion of the Findings

Regarding Objective 1, results revealed the majority of LIS educators have a significant level of awareness about AI technologies, which is essential for understanding their potential applications in the field of library and information science. This suggests that a majority of LIS educators have at least some levels of awareness regarding AI. This study validates the findings of Bassey and Owushi (2023) and Oladokun et al. (2023). Furthermore, the findings revealed that 95 % of the respondents had not received any formal training or professional development related to AI technologies. The low percentage of educators who have received formal training on AI technologies indicates a gap in their professional development. With the increasing importance of AI in various industries, including information science, there may be a need for more comprehensive training opportunities to bridge this gap. The study also found 81 % of the respondents had utilized AI technologies for teaching and research activities. This is in line with the findings of Bassey and Owushi (2023) and Ajani et al. (2022) who found that AI tools have been used to revolutionize the practice of librarianship and research. The fact that a majority of respondents have utilized AI technologies in their teaching and research activities demonstrates a positive trend towards integrating AI into LIS education and research.

On the perceptions of LIS educators regarding the significance and relevance of AI technologies, findings revealed that 57 % of respondents indicated that AI technologies are significant to the field of library and information science education. This finding agrees with the study of Ajani et al. (2022) who supported that teachers have a distinct understanding of the use AI technologies in higher education institutions. The majority of respondents (57 %) acknowledging the significant importance of AI technologies in the context of library and information science education suggests a strong recognition of AI's potential impact in this field. Further findings revealed the high percentage of respondents (73,1 %) who believe that AI technologies are highly relevant for improving library and information science education signifies a strong positive attitude toward incorporating AI into teaching and educational practices. This suggests that there is significant support for integrating AI technologies into the curriculum and pedagogy to enhance the educational experience and prepare students for the evolving demands of the field.

Findings in objective 3 indicated that the barriers that hinder the integration of AI technologies into the curricula and practices in library schools include attitude of lecturers to accept the integration of AI, lack of credibility of information sources and citations, internet connectivity, negative perception about AI by institutions, lecturers' low competency to use AI due to its complex knowledge, epileptic power and lack of professionals to engage in AI training. This finding corroborates the study of Bassey and Owushi (2023) who found that there is a variant attitudinal disposition of librarians towards the use of AI technologies for library activities. This also validates the findings of Owolabi et al. (2022).

Furthermore, the results of the study in Objective 4 indicating whether the current curricula of library schools adequately prepare students with AI-related knowledge and skills revealed that 78 % of respondents believe that the current curricula do not adequately prepare students with AI-related skills and knowledge. The majority of LIS educators express concerns about the existing curricula, suggesting that they may not be sufficiently equipping students with the necessary skills and knowledge related to AI. The study also highlighted specific challenges, including outdated curricula, a lack of faculty expertise, and a need for policy changes to encourage the integration of AI technologies. Despite the perceived inadequacies in the current curricula and related challenges, there is strong support among educators for the idea that LIS students should be well-prepared with AI-related knowledge and skills.

CONCLUSION

This study concludes that while a significant number of LIS educators are aware of AI technologies and have even integrated them into their teaching and research, there is still a substantial gap in formal training and professional development in this area. Addressing this gap through tailored training programs could further enhance the adoption and effective use of AI technologies in the field of library and information science, potentially leading to more advanced and efficient information management practices. Furthermore, this study

also observed that there is a notable recognition among LIS educators of the importance and relevance of AI technologies in the field of library and information science education. This recognition aligns with the broader trends in education and industry, where AI is seen as a valuable tool for improving efficiency, information retrieval, and decision-making processes. It also highlights a positive attitude towards embracing AI as a means to enhance the quality of education and better prepare students for careers in librarianship and information science in the digital age.

However, the barriers that hinder the integration of AI technologies into the curricula and practices in library schools include attitude of lecturers to accept the integration of AI, lack of credibility of information sources and citations, internet connectivity, negative perception about AI by institutions, lecturers' low competency to use AI due to its complex knowledge, epileptic power and lack of professionals to engage in AI training. The study indicates a clear consensus among LIS educators that there is a deficiency in the current curricula when it comes to preparing students with AI-related knowledge and skills. The interviews provide valuable insights into the specific challenges, including curriculum out-datedness, faculty preparedness, and policy constraints. The overwhelming support for equipping students with AI-related skills suggests that there is a shared vision for enhancing LIS education to better align with the evolving demands of the information science field. Addressing these challenges will be crucial in ensuring that future LIS professionals are adequately prepared for their roles in an AI-driven information landscape.

RECOMMENDATIONS

1. Library schools in Nigeria should fully implement artificial intelligence technology, such as chatbots, barcodes, RFIDs, and robotics, in order to provide top-notch teaching activities.
2. Management of higher education institutions should create specialized training programs and workshops focused on AI technologies for library schools. These programs should cover both the fundamentals and advanced aspects of AI, enabling educators to effectively integrate AI into their teaching and research.
3. Library schools should also encourage continuous learning and professional development among LIS educators and emphasize the importance of staying updated with AI trends and technologies to remain relevant in the rapidly evolving field.
4. Library schools should conduct awareness campaigns and initiatives to highlight the benefits of AI technologies in teaching and research activities. Also, library schools should offer faculty development programs that enhance the competency of educators in using AI technologies.
5. Policymakers and educational authorities should advocate for the inclusion of AI technologies in curriculum development and planning. This may involve collaboration with AI experts and professionals.

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CONFLICT OF INTEREST

The authors declare that there is no conflict of interest.

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