Research Paper

International and Comparative Librarianship Research Methods

Dr. Chipo Mutongi[1], Dr. S. B. M. Marume[2]

[1]PhD, MBA, MSc, Dip-LIS, ,BA, HND-LIS,Dip-Edu. Dip-P Magnt, Dip- Salaries Admn.

[2] Phd, MA, Madmin, Msoc Sc, Hons BA, BA.

City Of Harare, Zimbabwe Open University,

ABSTRACT: *We will not be really in a position to understand and compare issues in international and comparative librarianship without research. Research clearly pin point some concerns that cannot be easily seem by the naked eye. There is therefore need for research lens in international and comparative librarianship. This article focuses on different research methods that can be used in international and comparative librarianship. It includes but not limited to comparative studies, area study, case study, comparative problem study, literature search, historical research, international surveys and cross cultural research.*

Keywords: area study, case study, comparative librarianship, cross cultural research, literature search, comparative study, librarianship, library, international librarianship, research methods.

I.   INTRODUCTION

In order to understand and be able to compare and articulate issues as well as coming up with reliable findings and conclusions of international and comparative librarianship, we need to use different research methods. Enough research will tend to support our conclusions (Bloch, 2016). Comparative librarianship is a methodology. Lijphart (1971:682) situated the comparative method as a basic method in its own right, alongside the experimental, statistical and case study methods. Ragin (1987:1) points to significant differences between the orientations of most comparativists and most, non-comparativists. These differences have methodological implications. The distinctive orientation of comparative social science is that it is concerned with what he calls "large macro social units", a term he uses to refer to countries, nations and other larger political entities. This article introduces us to the concepts of international and comparative librarianship research methods. Some examples of comparative studies are given which includes area study, case study and comparative problem study. Literature Search as a way of getting information concerning international and comparative librarianship is explained. Comparative and Historical research are shown as forming some forms of international and comparative librarianship methods. International surveys and cross cultural research are explained.

II.   OBJECTIVES

The objectives of this article are to:

- identify research methods in international and comparative librarianship
- give examples of comparative studies
- explain the importance of literature search in international and comparative librarianship
- describe cross cultural research

III.   RESEARCH METHODS IN INTERNATIONAL AND COMPARATIVE LIBRARIANSHIP

Simsova (1982:12) experiences that most librarianship courses expect the student to do a practical project. The angle of such study can be either wide, covering the whole of librarianship or narrow dealing with a part of it. The study can vary depending on the geographical or cultural context. The study can also vary depending on the geographical or cultural context.

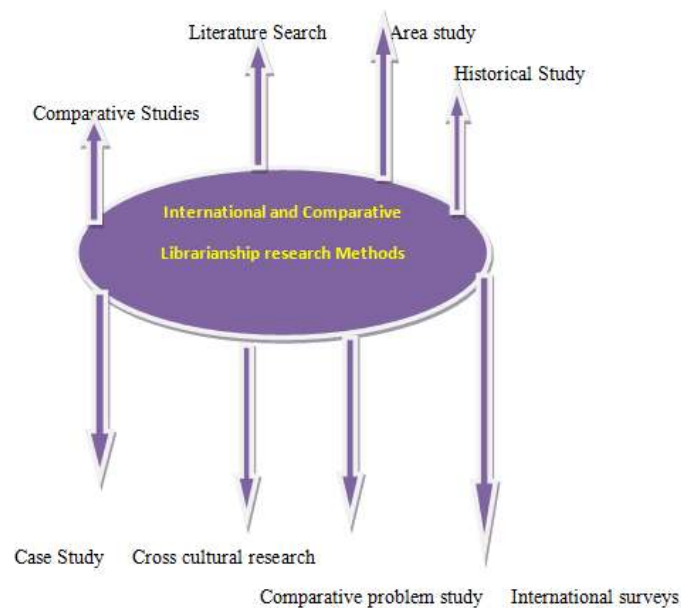**International and Comparative Librarianship Research Methods**

Figure 1: International and Comparative librarianship Research Methods

The research methods that can be chosen by researchers may include comparative studies, literature search, area study, Historical study, case study, cross cultural study and International surveys.

3.1 Comparative Studies/Research/Design

Comparative study is the design that embodies the logic of comparison. it implies that we can understand social phenomena better when they are compared in relation to two or more meaningfully contrasting cases or situations (Bryman, 2009:58). In comparative research, researchers compare people's experience of different societies, either between times in the past or in parallel situations in the present (Walliman, 2005). The study of differences help to reveal the origins and development of social phenomena, locating them in a certain time and place and thus defeating claims that they are universal and a temporal (Walliman, 2005). Comparative research is often used together with historical research. The following are the topics that can be researched on in comparative librarianship:

- A comparative study of library and information science education in African countries
- Special library services in Zimbabwe and South Africa: A comparative study
- A comparative study of academic library collections in Zimbabwe.

The following are types of comparative studies:

3.2 Area study

An area study is the study of the whole of librarianship in one geographical area for example libraries in India. Simsova (1982:12) asserts that although strictly speaking an area study is not comparative itself and any comparisons are only implied, it is an essential preliminary to comparative work. It provides systematic knowledge about the whole of librarianship in one geographical area which can be used for a total comparison and as background for a case study or a comparative problem study.

3.3 Case Study

Case study emphasizes the full contextual analysis of fewer events or conditions and their interrelations for a single subject (Nakkiran, Nazer and Girmay, 2011). Robson (2002:178) defines case study as "a strategy for doing research which involves an empirical investigation of a particular contemporary phenomenon within its real life context using multiple sources of evidence". It is the study of one problem in one geographical area, for example public libraries in South Africa or user education in teachers college libraries in Zambia. It allows for exploration of solutions for complete issues, develops analytic and problem solving skills and brings room to new knowledge and skills. Case study helps the researcher gain a rich understanding of the context of the

research. While a case study's inclusion in comparative librarianship is justified if it backed up by collecting material for an area study. In practice it means that the student reads up the whole of librarianship in one country, preferably other than his own and then he/she selects one problem to write about using his/her background knowledge to interpret the problem. Case study helps the researcher gain a rich understanding of the context of the research. An important advantage of case study method is that it enables the studying of many different aspects, examine them in relation to each other, and view the process within its total environment. It helps in developing insights into the problem situation. In a case study there can be single or multiple case studies. A single case study focuses on one single case whilst a multiple case study calls for the investigation of several cases.

3.4 Comparative problem study
In comparative librarianship, the term problem is used rather loosely and could refer to any of the following:
• Problems inherent in the social and economic situation,
• Technical problems within librarianship
• Stage or level of development
• Patterns of social behaviour as related to librarianship (Simsova, 1982:12)
• difficulty
• A puzzle
• Issue.

A comparative problem is the study of a problem in two or more geographical areas for example the use of the internet in Zimbabwe and United Kingdom. The geographical areas can be cross-national comparison. That is comparison in two countries. A comparison can be done in two regions in one country or even two towns in the same region. It is also possible to compare a library problem in the context of two cultural environments independently of geographical boundaries for example Moslem and Christian religions libraries or within a geographical boundary that is not directly related to either culture for example a comparison of the reading needs of the Japanese and Chinese in London. A comparison which involves two cultures rather than two countries is called cross-cultural (Simsova, 1982:14). A comparative problem study dealing with two environments is based on two case studies, one for each environment, interpreted against a background of two area studies. The problem cannot be studied in isolation, it has to be seen in the context of librarianship and its social and cultural background (Simsova, 1982:14).

3.5 Literature Search
Libraries cannot be studied in isolation from their social and cultural background. In any comparative study it is therefore necessary to carry out a literature search for background material (Simsova, 1982:14). Exploring the background for a comparative librarianship study is best handled like a reference enquiry. The student should start with an article on the country concerned to form a general picture. This can be statistical and non- statistical information. A study based entirely on written sources suffers from disadvantages which might call for the need to visit the area. White (2000:102) avers that "as you collect information, you must read it through and constantly evaluate it". He then suggested a scheme for literature search which is illustrated in figure 2.
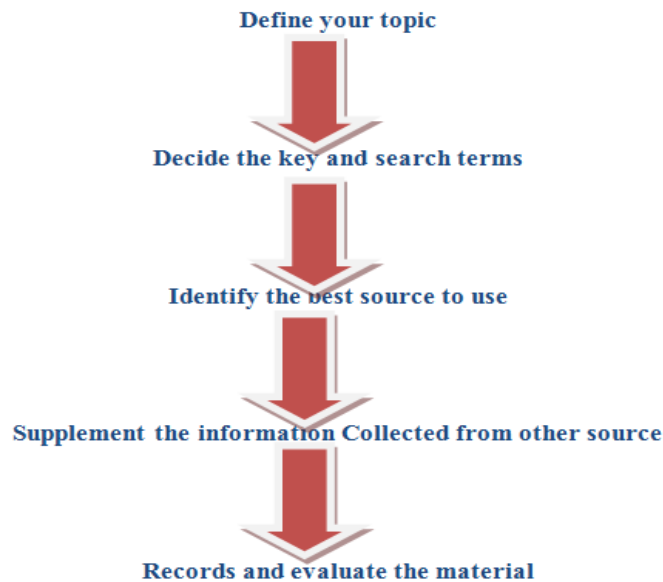
Figure 2: Literature Search Scheme

Howard and Sharp (1993:67) delineate that it is assumed that the researcher is reasonably familiar with the use of libraries, particularly specialist and academic libraries. This then points out that without consulting different libraries, one cannot successful come up with effective literature search. It therefore follows that, we cannot do away with libraries in all our researches which include international and comparative librarianship researches. One can also make use of virtual libraries to conduct literature searches.

3.6 Historical research

Historical research has been defined as the systematic and objective location, evaluation and synthesis of evidence in order to establish facts and draw conclusions about past events (Borg, 1963). Historical research involves interpreting past events to predict future ones and include synthesizing data from many different sources regarding historical developments.

3.7 International Surveys

Survey is an account of some research examination, or enquiry (Devarajan, 2002). International surveys are examinations that are done in one or more countries. It involves looking comprehensively and thoroughly to understand a situation.

3.8 Cross Cultural Research

Cross-cultural research needs a variety of voices, perspectives and methods to advance our knowledge. Theorist should talk with local practitioners and people from the outside should work with those on the inside to develop cross-cultural knowledge (Tjosvold and Leung, 2003:7). The field needs diverse points of views and backgrounds (Tjosvold and Leung, 2003:7). Cross-cultural management should not be allowed to become its own self-contained area, closed off from other disciplines. Cross-cultural research itself thrives on diversity. Cross cultural research occurs when individuals or teams set out to examine particular issues or phenomena in two or more countries.

IV. CONCLUSION

We had an opportunity to learn about comparative and international librarianship research methods. Some examples of comparative studies were given which includes area study, case study and comparative problem study. Literature Search was shown as a way of getting information concerning international and comparative librarianship. It was been identified that libraries play a pivotal role in literature searches. Comparative and Historical research were identified as forming some forms of international and comparative librarianship methods. International surveys and cross cultural research were established.

REFERENCES

[1]. A. Bloch, Famous Quotes about Research. Retrieved (06/07/2016) from http://www.famous-quotes.com/topic.php?tid=1017, 2016.
[2]. A. Lijphart, Comparative politics and the comparative method. American political science review 65(3) (1971), 682-693.

[3]. C.C. Ragin, Charles C. The comparative method: moving beyond qualitative and quantitative strategies (Berkeley (CA): University of California Press, 1987).

[4]. S.Simsova, A Primer of Comparative Librarianship. (London: Clive Bingley, 1982).

[5]. A. Bryman, Social Research Methods (Oxford: University Press, 2009).

[6]. N.Walliman, N Your Research Project (Los Angeles: Sage, 2005) .

[7]. S. Nakkiran, M. Nazer, F. Girmay, Business Research Methods (Delhi: Avinash Paperbacks, 2011).

[8]. C. Robson, (2002) Real World Research (Oxford: Blackwill, 2002).

[9]. B. White, Dissertation Skills for Business Management Students (London: Continuuum, 2000).

[10]. J. Howard and J.A Sharp, The Management of a Student Research Project (Aldershot: Gower Publishing, 1993)

[11]. W.R. Borg, Educational Research: an Introduction. (London: Longman, 1963).

[12]. G.Devarajan, Research in Library and Information Science (New Delhi: Ess Ess Publications, 2002).

[13]. D. Tjosvold, and K. Leung, Cross-Cultural Management (Aldershot: Ashgate Publishing Limited, 2003).

Profiles of contributors and photographs

Dr. Chipo Mutongi: a part lecturer and a PhD/DPhil research thesis supervisor/ under study at the Zimbabwe Open University (ZOU), with more than nine years lecturing experience; Research Supervisor for all levels of education; member of the International Board of Reviewers for the International Journal of Doctoral Studies (IJDS); Journal Reviewer-Journal of Information and Knowledge Management (JIKM); published over twenty articles in International Journals; DCIZ board member-Marketing and Communication, published more than ten modules with Zimbabwe Open University (ZOU); is in the process of co-authoring a book entitled: International Politics Corporation and Integration: Problems Facing Modern Day Africa. Talent Development Officer in the City of Harare specialising in research, Worked as a Librarian at the City of Harare and have more than eleven years experience in library, information and knowledge management; attained the highest and most prestigious degree of Doctor of Philosophy in Information and Knowledge Management (ZOU); Master of Science in Library and Information Science (NUST); the more professional degree of Master of Business Administration (ZOU); Media Studies Degree (ZOU); Higher National Diploma in Library and Information Science (Harare Polytechnic); Diploma in Library and Information Science (Bulawayo Polytechnic); Diploma in Education (UZ); Diploma in Personnel Management (IPMZ); Diploma in Salaries Administration (Stallone Consultancy); Certificate in Desk Top Publishing (CCOSA); Certificate in Web Designing (People's College); Certificate in Computer Repairs (People's College).

Samson Brown Muchineripi Marume: a former senior civil servant for over 37 years serving in various capacities of seniority and 10 years as deputy permanent secretary; thirteen years as a large commercial farmer; well-travelled domestically within Zimbabwe; regionally [SADC countries: Angola, Botswana, Lesotho, Malawi, Mozambique, Mauritius, Swaziland, South Africa, Namibia, Tanzania, Zambia and DRC]; and Africa [Kenya, Ethiopia, Sudan, Egypt, Nigeria, Ghana, Libya, and Uganda]; and internationally [Washington, New York and California in USA; Dublin and Cork in Irish Republic; England in United Kingdom; Netherlands, Frankfurt in Germany; Lisbon in Portugal; Spain (Nice), Paris in France, Geneva in Switzerland, Belgrade in former Yugoslavia-; Rome and Turin in Italy; Nicosia – Cyprus; Athens – Greece; Beijing and Great Walls of China; Singapore; Hong Kong; Tokyo, Kyoto, Yokohama, and Osaka, in Japan]; fifteen years as management consultant and part – time lecturer for BA/BSc and MA/MBA degree levels with Christ College- affiliate of Great Zimbabwe University and National University of Science and Technology; six years as PhD/DPhil research thesis supervisor, internal and external examiner with Christ University, Bangalore, India [2011 – 2016]; and Zimbabwe Open University; external examiner of management and administrative sciences at Great Zimbabwe University (2016 – 2019); currently senior lecturer and acting chairperson of Department of Public Administration in Faculty of Commerce and Law of Zimbabwe Open University; a negotiator; a prolific writer who has published five books, prepared thirty modules in public administration and political science for undergraduate and postgraduate students, and published over seventy referred journal articles in international journals [IOSR, IJSR, ISCA – IRJSS, IJESR, MJESR, IJESI, IJBMI, IJHSS and Quest Journals] on constitutional and administrative law, public administration, political science, philosophy, Africa in international politics, local government and administration, sociology and community development; vastly experienced public administrator; and an eminent scholar with specialist qualifications from University of South Africa, and from California University for Advanced Studies, State of California, United States of America: **BA with** majors in public administration and political science and subsidiaries in sociology, constitutional law and English; postgraduate special Hons BA [Public Administration]; MA [Public Administration]; MAdmin magna cum laude in transport economics as major, and minors in public management and communications; MSoc Sc cum laude in international politics as a major and minors in comparative government and law, war and strategic studies, sociology, and social science research methodologies; and PhD summa cum laude in Public Administration.