

# Professional Development of Library Professionals in Nigeria

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## Abstract

**Purpose:** The study was carried out to examine professional development activities of librarians, the attitude of library management towards professional development activities and ways of improving professional development activities of librarians in Nigeria.

**Design/Methodology/Approach:** The study adopted descriptive survey design. Questionnaire was used to elicit data from the 246 librarians employed in libraries. The data retrieved from the participants were analyzed using simple count and percentage.

**Findings:** The results revealed that librarians in Nigeria libraries are actively engaged in professional development activities. Self-sponsorship, institutions sponsorship and TET-Fund are the main sources of funding professional development activities in Nigeria libraries. The study also reveals positive attitude of library management towards professional development activities. Finally, compulsory development programmes for all categories of library staff, special annual budgetary allocation, adequate policies on professional development, were some ways highlighted by the participants to improve professional development.

**Implication:** The study will inform librarians or library administrators in developing countries who are interested in developing their staff to maximize efficiency and effective service delivery in the libraries.

**Originality/value:** The findings will be of help to librarians who are interested in professional development programmes in libraries in Nigeria and other developing countries.

**Keywords:** Professional development; Librarians; Continue education; Training programmes; Librarianship profession; Nigeria libraries

## Introduction

Professional development activities in the library are activities designed for personal and professional growth of librarians. These activities are usually formal or informal in nature. Pan and Hovde (2010) posited that professional development (PD) is a lifetime learning process, which is both universal and individualized. It is a universal requirement of all librarians in order to keep up with the rapid changes in the library field and maintain professionalism. At the same time, it is an individualized experience that varies with the needs of specific work duties as well as resources available around one's working, social and academic environment. Professional development for academic librarians fulfilled a need for the continuing acquisition of knowledge and competencies that has not been met by either formal education or on-the training. This need is driven by both the "technological imperative" (the rapid technological change that

characterizes contemporary academic libraries), and by the element that librarians share with other professionals, that they are compensated for what they know as well as for what they do.

The changing role of professional librarian as handler and manager of information need flexible, adaptable individuals who can manage changes effectively. These developments have necessitated librarians the need to update their knowledge, acquire new skills and maintain basic competencies. Library profession is dynamic and challenging and the most productive and effective way for librarians to meet up these challenges is to seek out professional development opportunities in their profession (Matthew, 2011). The rapid changes in the information world and, library and information science education have increased the need for learning almost immediately after completing professional education. Similarly, the new trend in information sources, technology, users' needs and management of

libraries and information services emphasizes the requirement for continuing education and retraining. The demand for continuing education programmes courses arises from a number of areas such as development in the external environment, internal organization factors, or individual requirements. These factors may relate to areas such as technological development, economic situation, social values and educational change. Therefore, one of the main goals of continuing education programme is the provision of successful professional development opportunities and continuing education courses to information professional, librarians and archives/record specialist as well as the wider information community.

Rapid developments in information and communication technologies have raised the need for continue education programmes (CEP) in the field of library and information science (LIS). These developments have affected resources as well as the means of service provision, and so have influenced training for all levels of the profession (Ramaiah & Moorthy, 2002). In Nigeria for example, the federal government established Tertiary Education Trust Fund to provide direct funding to all higher institutions in the country. Experience shows that part of the fund is allocated to professional development activities in the institutions every year. The question that arises is whether the staff particularly librarians are actually making use of

the fund in professional development activities. In spite of the wide interest on professional development in Nigeria education sector, there is no empirical study confirming librarians' engagement on professional development through the TET-FUND and other government agencies sponsorship in Nigeria university libraries.

### **Review of Related Literature**

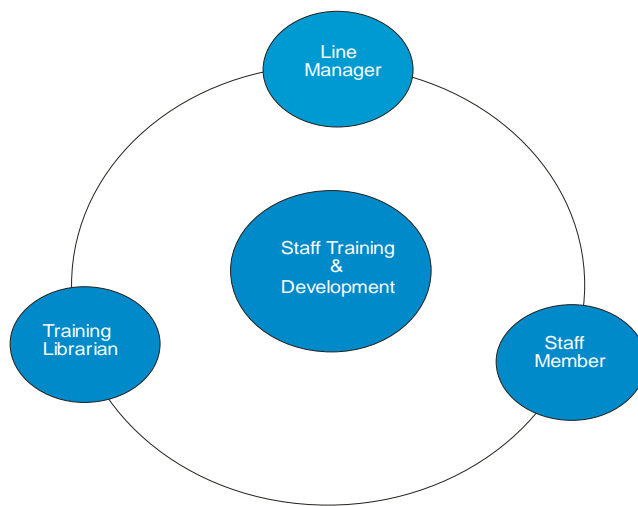
This section of the paper reviewed some related empirical studies on professional development and training. It also discussed the internal library guidelines of Cape Peninsula University of Technology as it is related to the study.

### **Theoretical framework**

#### **Training & Development Internal Library Guidelines (Cape Peninsula University of Technology, 2009)**

The internal guidelines and procedures were developed by Cape Peninsula University of Technology (CPUT) libraries to guide and inform the staff development process in the university library. According to the training and development internal library guidelines (CPUT), (2009) the responsibility of establishing training needs is in threefold. These include Line manager, the staff member and the training librarians' roles. The detail is diagrammatically presented below:

Figure1: CPUT Libraries internal staff training and development relationship model



- **Line Managers**

Line Managers work closely with their staff and are therefore in the best position to identify any needed training interventions. Performance contracts are developed every year at the beginning of the year between the line manager and their employees. Each performance contract has a development needs section where staff and their Line Managers should indicate any training and development needs/gaps. These sections are used by the Training Librarian to plan the training interventions for the year. It is therefore crucial that these sections are completed thoroughly.

- **Staff Member**

Training and development is a primary personal work responsibility of every staff member. If a staff member identifies an area for further development, the staff member should discuss this need with his/her Line Manager as well as with the training Librarian. Agreed needs should then be included in the performance contracts.

- **Training Librarian**

The training Librarian will initiate certain training initiatives based on requests directly linked to the strategic plan of the library and CPUT as a whole, requests related to the job and based on the services offered by CPUT Libraries as well as any other new and continuing training requirements of library staff.

### **Professional Development**

Maesaroh & Genoni (2010) investigated the continuing professional development practices in Indonesian academic libraries. The purpose of their study was to examine the present and desired state of academic library staff education and professional development in Indonesia. They concluded that with the development of electronic resources for remote access, librarians have required skills to manage access through library website rather than through the traditional way.

Similarly, Desai (2001) report a survey undertaken to determine the continuing education needs of science and technology librarians. The study was conducted every

two years as part of the responsibility of the Continuing Education committee of the Science and Technology Section of ACRL. The survey questions covered a wide range of topics of current interest to science and technology librarians, ranging from teaching tips to designing web tutorials to climbing the career ladder. Other topics included the management of electronic resources, coping with the serials crisis, and services to distance learners, to mention a few. The survey found out that librarians are most interested in instructional techniques and technologies and in the teaching of information literacy in the sciences. They are also interested in learning more about electronic resources, including selection, management, and impact. Among subject sources they would like to learn more about, chemistry was most often mentioned. Career advancement and management topics were among the least popular topics for training.

Adanu (2007) report a survey conducted among professional librarians in five state owned university libraries in Ghana. The main objective of the study was to find out if their work environment encourage continue professional development (CPD). The study further investigated who the employees felt should be responsible for their CPD. The importance of a plan for effective CPD was also discussed. Finally, benefits of CPD to the individual professional were looked at. The survey method was used. The instruments used for data collection were the questionnaire and interviews. The study found that the library environment in the state owned universities was supportive to a large extent CPD. The study further revealed that the professional librarians' involvement in CPD was a shared responsibility of the library and individual. Some benefits derived from CPD by the professional librarians were job advancement and updated skills leading to competence. It is hope that the study will encourage library management especially in universities to consider formulating and write down CPD policies and also to adopt management styles that will make them "learning organization".

Nyamboga (2004) also reported the results of a study of training opportunities for library and information professionals in India and how a selection of Indian

university libraries are providing information skills and information literacy programmes for their users. The author stresses the need for training students, researchers and staff to make appropriate use of resources made available in libraries. Library and information professionals need continuing professional development courses as new ways of providing information resources are developed. The study reveals that librarians conducted library orientation programmes (including information on specific aspects such as computer laboratory facilities within the library, library automation and networking activities), although sometimes systems librarians or information technologists undertook this task.

### **Training of Professional Librarians**

Bhatti and Nadeem (2014) study LIS professionals' perception related to their training needs in university libraries of Pakistan. The study adopted a descriptive survey design and the data were collected using a questionnaire administered to 150 LIS professionals in 59 public and private universities recognized by the Higher Education Commission of Pakistan. The response rate was 84 percent. The results obtained show that LIS professionals need training related to troubleshooting new technologies, endnote, data compression, Internet, social media such as Facebook, Blogger, Flickr, Twitter, and online databases. The respondents considered seminars, web-based training, computer tutorials, ad-hoc training sessions by staff members, and group briefings as effective training programmes for improving their professional skills.

Olaniyan & Ojo (2008) conducted a study to examine how staff training and development could effect on the organizational progress. In the study it was suggested that to achieve the goals and objectives of an organization, training and retraining programmes should be made compulsory and that organization should arrange workshops, conferences, and seminars for staff training and development.

Similarly, Brown (2002) examined the training needs of library staff in university libraries. A structured questionnaire was administered for data collection. The results

showed that most respondents had limited IT skills and that they needed informal training programmes but funding is the main issue. The study recommended that informal training programmes should be introduced for employees to gain knowledge in various areas of ICT.

A study carried out by Kavulya (2007) investigated the training of library and information science (LIS) professional in Kenya. The main objectives of the study was to assess the status of the job market for the library and information science professionals in Kenya and the adequacy of current curricula and training resources in LIS training institutions in the country and, to identify priority areas of training and critical skills required by LIS professional in relation to current job market and performance requirements. The findings revealed that job market for LIS professionals in Kenya is perceived to exist. However, there is general observation that the current LIS training programmes in the country do not sufficiently address current job market requirement due to inadequate teaching resources in LIS training institutions, lack of adequate ICT content in the courses, courses that are irrelevant to the job market and inadequate length of industrial attachment.

The reviewed literature centred on theoretical and empirical studies on professional development of librarians in Nigeria. The review revealed that professional development is a area of lively discussion among academia, employers of labour and managers. However, the literature review shows that a majority of the related studies are conducted outside Nigeria. In Nigeria, there are no studies related to librarians' professional development. There is knowledge gap therefore on professional development activities of librarians in Nigerian university libraries. The concern of this study is therefore to fill this gap and add to the existing knowledge on the area.

### **Objectives of the Study**

The aim of the study is to:

1. Evaluate the professional development activities of library professionals in Nigeria.

2. To study the attitudes of library management towards professional development activities of library professionals in Nigeria.
3. To recommend ways to improve professional development activities among librarians in Nigeria.

**Research Methodology**

The study employed descriptive survey design. According to Osuala (2005), descriptive survey attempts to collect detailed facts that describe existing phenomena. It is based on this justification that researcher adopted descriptive survey design. The population for the study comprises librarians in Nigerian libraries. The Table 1: Demographic Variables

study adopted questionnaire method to gather data for the study. A total of 435 structured questionnaires were administered to the librarians permanently employed through online. The respondents e-mail addresses were retrieved from Nigerian Library Association (NLA) 2013 and 2014 conference/AGM bulletin. NLA is a librarians’ professional association established to govern and as well regulates the activities of librarianship practice in Nigerian. Out of the 435 questionnaires administered through online only 246 (56.5 percent) librarians attended to the questionnaires. The data retrieved from the participants were analyzed using simple count and percentage.

**Presentation and Analysis of Results**

Demographic variable	No of Respondents	Percentage (%)
<b>Gender</b>		
Male	165	67%
Female	79	33%
Total	246	100%
<b>Experience</b>		
0-5 years	43	17.4%
6 -10 years	68	27.6%
11 – 15 years	98	40%
16 years and above	37	15%
Total	246	100%
<b>Educational qualification</b>		
HND	24	9.4%
B.Sc	142	58%
M.Sc	73	29.6%
PhD	7	3%
Total	246	100%

Table 1 above shows the characteristics of the respondents. It shows the age range and educational qualifications of the respondents. It

is interesting to note that all categories or ranks of librarians responded to the instrument used in data collection.

Table II: Professional development activities in Nigeria libraries.

List of professional development activities	Percent of respondents	Ranked
Workshops/conferences	69	1 <sup>st</sup>
Distance education programmes	39	3 <sup>rd</sup>
Formal courses offered in classroom/tutorials	34	4 <sup>th</sup>
On-the-job training	45	2 <sup>nd</sup>
Online programmes	23	5 <sup>th</sup>

The above table II shows the professional development activities embarked upon by the respondents in their respective libraries. The participants were asked to list the professional

development programmes they have attended from the inception of their career. It is interesting to know that workshops/conferences (69 percent) ranked 1<sup>st</sup>, followed by on-job-

training (45 percent) 2<sup>nd</sup> while online programmes (23 percent) ranked 5<sup>th</sup>. The ranking of online programmes as 5<sup>th</sup> and least used means of professional development among the librarian could be attributed to the inadequacy of

Internet connectivity and erratic power supply experienced in the country. This is the fact that distance learning programmes solely depends on Internet and energy supply.

Table III: Sources of sponsorship of professional development programmes

Sources of sponsorship	Percent of respondents	Ranked
TET-FUND sponsorship	52	2 <sup>nd</sup>
Institutional sponsorship	33	3 <sup>rd</sup>
Self-sponsorship	56	1 <sup>st</sup>
Corporate sponsorship	22	4 <sup>th</sup>
Professional Association sponsorship	10	5 <sup>th</sup>

Table III shows the various sources of funding used by the respondents in professional development programmes. The respondents were asked to list the sources of funding their professional development activities. The analysis revealed that self-sponsorship (56 percent) ranked first, TET-Fund (52 percent) ranked 2<sup>nd</sup> and institutions' sponsorship (22 percent) ranked 3<sup>rd</sup>. professional association sponsorship (10 percent) ranked 5<sup>th</sup>.

Table IV: The reasons for attending professional development programmes

Purpose of attending professional development activities	% of respondents	Ranked
To acquire new skills	96	1 <sup>st</sup>
For promotion purpose	92	2 <sup>nd</sup>
To improve library services delivery	56	3 <sup>rd</sup>
To be trained in the new technologies applied in the library	47	4 <sup>th</sup>
To be current with the trend of my profession	23	5 <sup>th</sup>
To develop skills	23	5 <sup>th</sup>
To have a competitive edge over fellow librarians	20	6 <sup>th</sup>
To excel in the profession	18	7 <sup>th</sup>
To improve performance	18	7 <sup>th</sup>

Table IV shows the respondents various reasons of attending professional development programmes. The participants were asked to indicate their purpose of attending professional development programmes. It is interesting to know that a majority of the respondents indicated to acquire new skills (96 percent) and promotion (92 percent) as reasons for attending professional development programmes. To excel in the profession (18 percent) and improve performance (18 percent) ranked (7<sup>th</sup>) the least among the reasons of attending professional development programmes. The high ranking of

promotion as a reason for attending the programmes might be the fact that attending professional development programmes is a criteria for promotion. Perhaps that it is the reason why there is high rate of self-sponsorship. We have library associations that are playing key roles in librarianship in Nigeria, but it is interesting to know that the associations are not taking a lead in sponsoring its members. However, a lot factors might have attributed to this ugly situation such as lack of fund, the policies of the associations and the huge amount of money involved in the programmes.

Table V: Library management attitude toward professional development activities in Nigeria university libraries.

Attitude of university management towards professional development activities	Percent of respondents	Ranked
Dedicated to professional development activities	71	1 <sup>st</sup>
Encourage regular attending of workshop /conference	68	2 <sup>nd</sup>
Provide study leave/fellowship with pay to promote continue education programmes in the library	56	3 <sup>rd</sup>
Encourage continues education programmes through funding	45	4 <sup>th</sup>

The above table V shows the attitude of library management towards professional development activities among the library staff. A majority of the respondents indicated that their institutions are dedicated to professional development activities (71 percent) and encourages regular

attending of workshops and conferences (68 percent). Provision of study/fellowship with pay (56 percent) and encouragement of continue education through funding (45 percent) ranked 3<sup>rd</sup> and 4<sup>th</sup> respectively.

Tables VI: Recommended ways of improving professional development programmes in Nigeria libraries

Recommendations	Percent of respondents	Ranked
Provide special annual budgetary allocation for training activities	57	1 <sup>st</sup>
Designing training programmes annually for library staff.	54	2 <sup>nd</sup>
Compulsory professional development programme for all categories of library staff.	49	3 <sup>rd</sup>
Policies to ensure that librarians attend workshop and conference at least once in every academic year.	48	4 <sup>th</sup>
Dedication to the funding of staff development activities in the library.	45	5 <sup>th</sup>

The above table VI shows the recommended ways of improving professional development programmes among librarians in Nigeria libraries. The respondents were asked to indicate ways of improving professional development activities in the institution libraries. The analysis reveals that provision of special annual budgetary allocation for training activities ranked 1<sup>st</sup>, designing of training programmes annually for library staff ranked 2<sup>nd</sup>, compulsory professional development programme for all categories of library staff ranked 3<sup>rd</sup>, policies to ensure librarians attend workshop and conference at least once in every academic year ranked 4<sup>th</sup> and dedication to funding of staff development ranked 5<sup>th</sup> respectively.

**Discussion of findings**

It was noticed that the participants are actively engaged in professional development programmes regardless of the challenges of sponsorship. A majority of the participants sponsored themselves in the programmes. Some also have the opportunity of been sponsored by

TET-FUND and their parent institutions. This finding corroborated with Adanu (2007) when he discovered in his study that professional development activities was a shared responsibility of libraries and individuals.

The main reasons for these professional development programmes according to the participants is to acquire new skills, to get promotion, the need for rendering improve library services, to be trained to use modern information and communication technologies, etc. As it is in some institutions, particularly in the university where the librarians served as academics staff it is a basic requirement for librarians promotion. Therefore librarians have no option than to sponsor themselves to attended professional development programmes in spite of financial challenges.

It is obvious that maximum professional development of librarians can only be achieved when librarians have the full support of their library management. From the findings it shows that the various library management have

positive attitude towards professional development activities of their staff. This was done in most of the institutions through provision of study/fellowship with pay, financial support to attended workshops and conferences, funding of on-job-training, etc. The finding shows that a majority of the participants have benefited from the staff development programmes in the various libraries.

Finally, the participants highlighted several ways of improving professional development such as compulsory professional development programmes for all categories of staff, special annual budgetary allocation for training activities, adequate policies to ensure that librarians attend workshops/conferences at least once in every academic year, etc. The participants believed that these steps if strictly adopted will create a great avenue for librarians and any other staff to develop them while on the job and as well increase efficiency and performance.

### Conclusion

Professional development programmes are available to all librarians in higher institutions, public libraries, private libraries, ministries libraries, etc. in Nigeria. Professional development programmes are the main means through which all categories of librarians in Nigeria are keeping up-to-date in their profession. Nigerian Library Association (NLA) and Nigerian Registration Council of Librarians (NRCL) have played prominent roles in organizing professional development programmes for librarians and other supporting staff in the library. Majority of librarians who attended these programmes have achieved their aims of attending the programmes. Good as these programmes, many librarians are still unable to attend the programmes in Nigerian due to challenges such as high fees, inadequate fund, lack of interest, low self-efficacy, lack of awareness, etc.

There is great need for government agencies and library management to be more concern on effective ways of improving professional development programmes among librarians. The study identified various strategies library management can adopted to encourage librarians to participation in workshop, conferences, continue education and training programmes that will enhance efficiency and effectiveness on their job.

### Recommendations

Arising from the findings of the study, the following recommendations were made:

1. Policies regarding to professional development activities in the institutions should be made public to all staff regardless of their status. This to an extent will give opportunity to staff to benefit from the training programmes.
2. In every year, federal government allocated fund to all federal and state own universities for professional development activities through TET-Fund. In order to create awareness of this fund, the library management should make the information regarding to the availability of the fund and as well the procedure to access the fund public to all their staff.
3. Librarians should avail themselves the opportunities of professional development programmes by registering with their professional associations, sections of the association and online forum to get information about training avenues.
4. Nigerian Library Association (NLA), Nigerian Registration Council of Librarians and any other bodies that are responsible for the organizing of professional development programmes should consider the income of librarians and reduce the fees to affordable rate that any librarian who do not have TET-FUND or institution sponsorship can afford to attend through self-sponsorship.

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