Continuous Professional Development Activities of Professional Librarians in Nigeria

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Abstract
Considering the dynamic nature of information and information sources, coupled with the sophistication of users and advances in the technology, it is necessary that library and information practitioners actively engage in continuous professional development (CPD) in order to meet up with the challenges and render quality services. This study investigates the CPD involvement of professional librarians in Nigeria. A social survey method of research was adopted for the study and questionnaire was used for data collection. The outcome of the study reveals that libraries have CPD policies but poor budgetary provisions, lack of relevant committees, and motivation for staff hinders its implementation. Also, librarians majorly engage in workshop and conferences as a means of professional development as against networking or group discussion, mentoring, study visits, reading professional literature, etc. Major challenge to the involvement of librarians in CPD activities are lack of instructional support and poor funding. The study recommends among others adequate budgetary provision for CPD, constitution of relevant implementation committees, adequate sensitization of librarians on various CPD avenues, and adoption of robust model professional development of librarians.
Keywords: Professional Development; CPD; Policy; Librarians

1. Introduction

CPD is planning, and shaping the progression or movement of individual within an organization by aligning employee preferences and potential with organizational resourcing needs (CIPD, 2003) in Georgy (2011). CPD involved wide range of activities that are aimed at improving the knowledge, skills, and ability related to the performance of professional work and responsibilities. The activities may be internal and external programmes and activities designed to improve the knowledge and competence of librarians. It involves participation in training workshop and conferences, publication of professional articles, group discussion and networking, reading professional literatures, benchmarking, etc. Librarians like any other category of professionals are challenged in this era of information society to upgrade and update their knowledge and improve competencies through various means that may be available. This is more important as they operative in knowledge environment. The continuous and rapid change in technology, concepts, processes and mechanism in librarianship also make professional development (PD) of librarians very imperative. Librarians need to show competence as their client, keep abreast of trends and developments in the profession. As observed by Chaudhary (2001) librarians are at the centre of information or knowledge explosion, hence they must hasten to implement the advancement in library science in order to handle the mass of new information in all areas of knowledge. According to him, continuous education for librarians is influence by the vast growth of new knowledge, new technology, increasing educated populace, and changing trend in library science. Also Pan and Hovde (2010) stated that professional development of librarians is borne out of the need for the continuing acquisition of knowledge and competencies that was not met by either formal education or on-the-job training. According to them, professional development help librarians to put theoretical knowledge into practice and apply generalized concept. Considering the importance of professional development to service delivery, it is necessary to investigate the level of involvement of professional librarians in CPD in order to identify gaps and develop programmes that will encourage development.

1.1 Objective of the Study

This study is aimed at investigating the involvement professional librarians in CPD and other factors affecting it. It seeks to indentify the CPD activities librarians are involved in and the factors that influence their participation.

1.2 Statement of the Problem

The challenge of the 21st century requires that information professionals regularly update their knowledge. In order to fully earnest the potentials of the information society, a multi-skilled and multi-faceted approach is required. CPD in various forms and concept is what is required among others for librarians and other information professionals to keep abreast of developments in their profession, overcome challenges and deliver quality

information services.

1.3 Research Questions
1. Do libraries have CPD policy?
2. Is there budgetary allocation for professional development of librarians?
3. What form of CPD activities are professional librarians are involved in?
4. Why are professional librarians involved in CPD?
5. What factors influence the involvement of professional librarians in CPD?

1.4 Research Methods
This study was carried out using a social survey method. The research instrument adopted for the study was questionnaire. The instrument was structured to assess relevant information about continuous professional development activities and related issues in among librarians in Nigeria. It was validated using expert opinion. The reliability of the instrument was tested using test-retest method. Thirty questionnaires were administered to librarians in Abuja. The completed questionnaires were returned and another same set of the research instrument was re-administered to the same set of librarians, and the responses tallies with the previous ones. The population of the study was the 603 certified librarians of Nigeria from across libraries in the country that were inducted by the Librarians' Registration Council of Nigeria *(LRCN)* on 4th June, 2013. A systematic random sampling was used to select the librarians involved in the survey. The questionnaire was administered to one out of every three librarians that were inducted on the day. A total of 201 questionnaires were distributed to librarians and 134, representing 63% response rate, were duly completed and returned.

2. Literature Review
CPD as defined by CIPD (2003) in Georgy (2011) is planning and shaping the progression or movement of individuals within an organization by aligning employee preferences and potential with organizational resourcing needs. CPD should be a priority for libraries and librarians across the world. This is apparently due to the dynamic nature of concepts and practices of the profession and the attendant challenges in the 21st century. CPD has been described also as the maintenance and enhancement of the knowledge, expertise and competence of professionals throughout their careers according to a planned formulated with regard to the need of the professional, the employer, the profession and the society. CPD scheme is a means of promoting learning, development and professionalism among practitioners and maintaining standards in a profession (Lester, 1999). Cooke (2011) stated that the field of librarianship is ever expanding and changing, from exploding internet and media technologies, to ever diverse and sophisticated patron groups. Going by this, the concepts of continuous professional development for librarians are further justified.

2.1 Kinds of CPD
There are three dimensions to CPD. These are specific learning which involves particular cases or problems like finding out as you go along; general learning which is concerned with keeping up-to-date and abreast of the trends and developments in the profession by reading journals, networking and discussion, attending courses and conferences; and developmental learning which involves undertaking major study and advance courses or programme of research (Lester, 1999). Larsen (2006) identified external and internal activities of CPD. According to him, external activities include:
- Participation in projects across institutions/ across sectors
- Participation in professional networks /interest groups (personal and virtual).
- Participation in formal continuing education programmes
- Participation in external training courses (including distance education).
- Participation in conferences and seminars
- Study visits
- Preparing a talk for professional meetings
- Writing a paper for publication
- Preparing and teaching a course for library professionals
- Establishment of new formal partnerships

While internal activities include:
- Knowledge exchange with colleagues
- Action learning / learning by doing
- Job rotation
- Reading professional literature
- Testing new products / services
- Mentoring programmes
- Supervision
- Benchmarking

Havener and Stolt (1994) in Smith (2004) found significant correlation between institutional support and

activities like meeting attendance, association membership, committee services, workshop attendance, pursuit of additional degrees and publication. Libraries should provide environment conducive for the professional development of their staff. Policies that are aimed at encouraging participation and involvement in CPDs should be put in place for the career advancement of librarians. Adequate budgetary provision is required by libraries to encourage the professional development of their staff and enhance efficient and effective service delivery. According to Larsen (2006), participation in CPD requires separate budgetary allocation.

Simsova (2000) also in Smith (2004) said that employers of professional staff have a responsibility to ensure that staffs are able to pursue career path which involves a growth of knowledge, experience, and potential for development.

Adanu (2007) in his study on the knowledge and participation of librarians in Ghana on CPD observed that librarians were involved in CPD to an extent but, funding stood out as the biggest obstacle to pursuing CPD activities.

2. Analysis and Discussion

The total number of duly completed and returned questionnaire copies was one hundred and thirty four (134). This represents a response rate of 67%. Statistical package for the social sciences (SPSS) application software was used for the analysis, and simple percentage was adopted for easy analysis and interpretation.

Table 1: Gender Distribution of Respondents

Gender	f	%
Male	80	60
Female	54	40
Total	**134**	**100**

Table 1 represents the sex distribution of professional librarians who participated in the study. Majority (60%) are males while 40% are females.

Table 2: Age Distribution of Respondents

Age	f	%
20-25	4	3
26-30	10	8
31-35	40	30
36-40	26	19
41-45	42	31
>45	12	9
Total	**134**	**100**

From Table 2, majority (31%) of the respondents are within the age bracket 41-45 years, while 3% are 20-25; 8% are 26-30; 30% are 31-35 years; 19% are 36-40 years; and 9% are above 45% years. This represents the age distribution of professional librarians who were involved in the study.

Table 3: Years of Professional Work Experience

Work Experience	f	%
<5	44	33
5-10	46	34
11-15	26	19
>15	18	13
Total	**134**	**100**

Table 3 showed that majority (34%) of the professional librarians have between 5-10 years professional work experience while 33% have less than 5 years; 19% have 11-15 years; and 13% have more than 15 years. This represents the distribution of librarians who were involved in the study by professional work experience.

Table 4: Distribution of Respondents by Library Type

Type of Library	f	%
Academic	86	64
Public	12	9
School	4	3
Private	10	8
National	10	8
Research/Special	11	8
Total	**134**	**100**

From Table 4, professional librarians who participated represent the different types of library in the country. Majority (64%) are from the academic libraries, 9% from the public library, 3% from school library, 8% from private libraries, 8% from national library, and 9% from research/special library.

Table 5: Distribution of Respondents by Job Title

Rank	f	%
Librarian	26	19
Librarian II	36	27
Librarian I	34	25
Senior Librarian	6	5
Principal Librarian	13	10
Assistant Chief Librarian	8	6
Chief Librarian	4	3
Director	6	5
Total	**134**	**100**

Table 5 represents the distribution of professional librarians who participated in the study by job title or positions. Majority (27%) are librarian II, 19% simply bears librarian, 25% are librarians I, 5% are senior librarian, 10% are principal librarian, 6% are assistant chief librarian, 3% are chief librarian, and 5% are director. This represents the professional ranks of librarians involved in the study.

Table 6: Distribution of Respondents by Academic Qualifications

Academic Qualification	f	%
BLIS	44	33
MLIS	62	46
MPhil	10	8
PhD	18	13
Total	**134**	**100**

From Table 6, majority (46%) of the professional librarians who participated in the study had master degree in library and information science, 33% have bachelor degree in library and information science, 8% had master of philosophy in library science, and 13% have doctorate degree in library and information science. This represents the distribution of professional librarians involved in the study by academic qualification.

Table 7: Continuous Professional Development Policy

CPD Policy	f	%
Yes	94	70
No	40	30
Total	**134**	**100**

Table 7 shows the availability of CPD policy in libraries in Nigeria. From the table, majority (70%) of professional librarians indicated that there is continuous professional development policy in their libraries while, 30% indicated that there is no CPD policy in their libraries. It is a good development that many libraries have a policy for the professional development of their staff. This is an indication of the good intention of library management towards capacity building for librarians to deliver quality services. But, how well the policy is being implemented is another thing. This is because, it is common knowledge in Nigeria that the major challenge towards development is not lack of policies but poor policy implementation.

Table 8: Financial Budget for CPD

Budget for CPD	f	%
Yes	66	49
No	32	24
Don't Know	36	27
Total	**134**	**100**

It is obvious from Table 8 that slightly less than average number (49%) of professional librarians reported that there is financial budget for CPD in their libraries. Twenty four (24%) and twenty seven (27%) indicated that there is no budget or do not know whether there is or not. Adequate budgetary provision is part of the policy requirement of CPD programmes. It is equally a sign of commitment to staff professional development. Meanwhile the financial provision should not just be on paper, it should be backed by action that is, actually making the money available for the development of librarians to enhance their knowledge and deliver quality services.

Table 9: Availability of CPD Committee

Committee	f	%
Yes	42	31
No	52	39
Don't Know	40	30
Total	**134**	**100**

Table 9 shows that few libraries have CPD committee. This is obvious as 31% of professional librarians indicated that their libraries have CPD committee. While others: 39% and 30% indicated that their libraries do not have or do not know whether there is or not. It is important to have a committee in place to research, assess the knowledge need, and ensure the implementation of CPD programmes in organizations. The availability of CPD committee represents the presence of a structured system of managing employees' professional development.

Table 10: Motivation to Engage in CPD

Motivation	f	%
Strongly Agree	26	19
Agree	32	24
Undecided	24	18
Strongly Disagree	26	19
Disagree	26	19
Total	**134**	**100**

From Table 10, that put together, 43% of librarians agree they are motivated to engage in CPD, 38% do not agree while 18% are undecided. As professionals, librarians are supposed to motivate themselves to engage in CPD activities even when their institution did not do so. But instructional support is very important for them. Their efforts at seeking and acquiring more knowledge should be commended not necessarily in monetary terms.

Table 11: CPD Activities Librarians ware Involved

CPD Activities	f	%
Workshop & Conferences	122	91
Professional Network or group Discussion	28	21
Benchmarking	8	6
Job Exchange	28	21
Study Visits	40	30
Professional Group meetings	44	33
Job Rotation within organization	36	27
Mentoring	28	21
Reading Professional Literature	56	42
External Formal Training	40	30

From Table 11, majority (91%) of professional librarians reported to have been involved in workshop and conference attendance as a means of developing themselves. Their involvement in other CPD activities as reported includes professional network or group discussion (21%), benchmarking (6%), job exchange (21%), study visits (30%), group meetings (33%), mentoring (21%), reading professional literature (42%), and external training (30%). It is obvious that librarians have not taken good advantage of other means of enhancing their knowledge than workshop and conferences. Unfortunately, these other means of professional development have less financial implication than attending workshop and conferences. Therefore efforts should be made to encourage librarians to explore the other means of professional development.

Table 12: Purpose for Engaging in CPD

Purpose	f	%
For job promotion	46	34
To be abreast of trend in librarianship	114	85
Self fulfillment	64	48
Financial benefits	28	21

Table 12 showed that majority (85%) of professional librarians engage in the CPD to keep abreast of developments in the profession. Other reasons are job promotion (34%), self fulfillment (48%), and financial benefits (21%). This outcome is contrary to the insinuation that librarians engage in CPD particularly workshop and conference attendance because of monetary benefits.

Table 13: Challenges to Involvement in CPD

Challenges	f	%
Lack of institutional support	78	58
Lack of fund	88	66
Bureaucracy	62	46
Lack of promotion on the job	14	11
Favoritism	36	27
Lack of CPD	36	27
Shortage of staff	2	2

Table 13 showed that many (58% and 66%) librarians identified lack of institutional support or motivation, and fund as major challenge to professional development. Other threats identified include bureaucracy (46%), lack of job promotion (11%), favoritism (27%), lack of policy (27%) and shortage of staff (2%). When there is inadequate fund for professional development, basically management decides to select a few to attend workshop and conferences, this is where the issue of favoritism usually comes in, thereby demoralizing others staff who were not selected. Another factor that was identified to affect participation in professional development is shortage of staff as it is being experienced in many libraries in the country. It will be difficult to leave your duty post to attend workshop or conference without having capable hands to relieve you. This deny many librarians particularly those in the private organizations the opportunity to attend conferences and workshops.

Conclusion

No doubt, information technologies have revolutionized information management and work processes in many professions, however, the library and information sector are more challenged. Information technology era brought about rapid change in the way and manner information and sources are being managed and used. This coupled with the need for efficiency and effectiveness at work necessitated library and information professionals' regular knowledge and skill update to meet the challenges. Continuous knowledge and skill update can only be achieved through the concept and practice of continuous professional development (CPD) which comes in various ways: professional workshop and conferences, group discussion, or networking, mentoring, benchmarking, etc. As revealed by the outcome of our study on CPD activities of librarians in Nigeria, libraries have CPD policies but the level of implementation of the policy is poor going by the inadequate budgetary provision, lack of motivation for staff, lack of implementation committee, low level of commitment from library management among others. While there are many avenues for their professional development, librarians in the country have not taken advantage of them. They focused on workshop and conferences attendance as an avenue to update their knowledge. Avenues like benchmarking, mentoring, networking or group discussion, job exchange or study visits have not been adequately utilized. Though, workshop and conferences attendance is important but networking or group discussion offers instant solution or information with less financial implication when the need arises. Our study also reveals that the major reason librarians engage in CPD was to keep abreast of developments in the profession contrary to believe in some quarters that workshop attendance is basically for monetary benefits (financial allowances from parent organization).

Recommendations

Going by the outcome of our study, we recommend that:
1. Professional librarians be sensitized on the various means through which they can acquire knowledge for professional development
2. Librarians should take advantage of other available means like mentoring, networking, study visits, etc, for professional development rather than focusing only on workshop and conference attendance.
3. Relevant LIS stakeholders like the Librarians' Registration Council of Nigeria *(LRCN),* Nigerian Library Association *(NLA)* and National Library of Nigeria *(NLN)* should encourage standard and practices that will facilitate knowledge sharing among librarians by developing a model for mentoring, benchmarking, study visits, group meeting among others.
4. Library and information parent organization should deplore more financial resources towards professional development of their employees.
5. Committees should be constituted to monitor and encourage the participation of staff in various CPD activities.

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