

Full Length Research

Professional Development as Correlate of Job Performance in State University Libraries in South-South, Nigeria

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The study investigated Professional development as correlate of job performance in State university libraries in South-South, Nigeria. The general objectives were to determine the relationship between continuous professional education, conference attendance and librarians' job performance in State university libraries in South-South, Nigeria. Correlational design was utilized for the study. The population of the study consists of (125) librarians from the ten owned States university libraries studied. There was no sample size due to the population size involved, data were gathered using questionnaire and the instrument was validated by experts. 125 copies of the questionnaire were distributed, 98 (78.4%) copies were retrieved and used for the analysis. Mean and Standard Deviation were employed as methods of data analysis as well as Pearson Product Moment Correlation (PPMC) to determine the relationship. The result of the findings shows that continuous professional education positively relates with librarians' job performance while conference attendance negatively relates with their job performance. The study concludes that, acquisition of knowledge and relevant skills through various professional development programmes are essential and critical tools that can enhance productivity of librarians at work environment. The study recommended that librarians should continuously upgrade themselves professionally as this will lead to optimal performance as a result of the knowledge and skills acquired both locally and international; librarians in State university libraries are encouraged to regularly attend conferences and consciously convert the benefits inherent in the programme into organizational productivity.

Keywords: Professional Development, Conferences, Continuous Professional Education, Librarians, Job Performance, University Libraries.

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INTRODUCTION

Education is critical to development in every facet of life. To be able to cope with the challenges advanced by the new information technology and to meet up with the 21st century library and information services, the librarian must be prepared to undergo continuous professional education in order to obtain higher qualifications. This will renew his knowledge of the practice of modern-day librarianship and these will be an imperative to accept new jobs propelled by new technologies (Salisu, 2002). Continuous education also known as professional development has become a crucial aspect of academic library human development policy. This is another means of learning opportunities utilized by employees or individuals in fulfilling their desire to acquire more knowledge for developmental purposes. In the view of Roy (2012), continuing education also referred to as professional development is seen as updating or retooling, all of which encompasses the approaches and content tailored for information workers to advance their learning and education once they are in the workforce. Thus, the concept of librarians' professional education is viewed as an avenue to acquire and enhance new knowledge which can help them perform professionally or carry out professional responsibilities at work. According to Bhattacharjee and Bhattacharjee (2014), professional development is the process of equipping individuals with the understanding, skills and access to information, knowledge and training that enables them to perform effectively. Professional continuing education here is the process of acquisition of more skills and knowledge through additional educational training to enable librarians professionally perform their expected jobs at maximum level to aid high productivity in academic library. When librarians continuously improve in their profession, they will invariably exhibit competence and confidence in their ability to perform credibly and professionally.

Conferences have been demonstrated as an important aspect of capacity development method for librarians in libraries. They are forum where professional colleagues meet to discuss topical issues through which practical skills and knowledge are acquired from well experienced and experts in subject areas. The practical skills gained can empower them to exhibit and discharge their professional responsibilities in an efficient and effective manner. Through this, ideas, policies, etc. are communicated to participants. It brings a change of attitude. However, conferences attendance could be local, national or international.

Well organized conferences attended by librarians enable them to acquire knowledge on some related issues bothering on their profession. However, it becomes necessary as a duty for management of academic libraries to employ available means to develop their subordinate professionally through the relevant associations such as the Nigerian Library Association (NLA), Librarians' Registration Council of Nigeria (LRCN) amongst other. Regular participation in such programmes would serve as bases for improved job performance.

Statement of the Problem

The advancement in technology and the expansion in the frontiers of knowledge in the 21st century poses challenges to the library and information professional in measuring up with the expected performance output especially in rendering adequate services to their clientele. This requires that the library professionals need to be regularly updated in their knowledge and skills. Continuous education is thus, necessary if the professionals are to keep abreast with ever increasing knowledge and overcome the challenges posed by this advancement. Conferences are important in the acquisition of updated knowledge as well as to build networks among colleagues. These will definitely impact on the job performance of librarians. Despite these benefits, observation has shown that much remains to be achieved in this regard in some institutions of higher learning. Could these worries also be applicable to librarians in State university libraries across the South-South zone of Nigeria? This study therefore, seeks to investigate the relationship between professional development and job performance of the librarians in State university libraries in South-South, Nigeria.

Objectives of the Study

The objective of this study is to establish the relationship professional development and job performance of the librarians in State university libraries in South-South, Nigeria. Specifically, the study seeks to:

1. ascertain the relationship between librarians' continuous professional education and job performance in State university libraries in South South, Nigeria.
2. determine the relationship between librarians' conference attendance and their job performance in State university libraries in South South, Nigeria;

Research Questions

In line with the objectives of the study, the following were the research questions posed to guide the study:

1. What is the relationship between librarians' continuous professional education and job performance in State university libraries in South South, Nigeria?
2. What is the relationship between conference attended by librarians and their job performance in State university libraries in South South, Nigeria?

Hypotheses

The following hypotheses were formulated to guide the study at 0.05 level of significance:

1. There is no significant relationship between continuous professional education and librarians' job performance in State university libraries in South-South, Nigeria.
2. There is no significant relationship between librarians' conference attendance and their job performance in State university libraries in South-South, Nigeria.

Continuing Professional Education and Job Performance

Education is a continuous process, hence, increases knowledge which replaces ignorance. It's been observed by Wilson and Soy (2000) that ignorance can be eliminated through proactive education, as staff needs to learn how to monitor and examine current practices. This would boost their performance and proficiency. Since education is not static but dynamic, continuous professional development becomes a lifetime learning process even for librarians. As rightly said by Pan and Hovde (2010), "Keep on learning as long as you live" The essence of this as the authors noted is that professional development is a universal requirement of all librarians in order to keep up with the rapid changes in the library field and maintain professionalism. Along this thought, the objectives of embarking on such continuing education programmes for library and professional librarians according to Singh (2015) to acquire broad and depth knowledge in the profession.

There are short and long-term courses both locally and internationally. Singh (2015) grouped the education programmes as formal and informal. The formal is (formal courses, extension courses, refresher courses) and are undertaken in institutions for a purpose and the informal include (attending seminars and conferences, attending special lectures of experts, reading professional literatures. According to Olowu (2011), refresher courses are short term courses which are organized from time to time mainly to improve the efficiency and effectiveness of worker's performance. This is important for librarians as it helps them to be exposed to new developments in their areas, keep them abreast of modern techniques and their application in libraries and as well aid them to develop better work ethics and to make them more effective in-service delivery.

In line with the formal and informal education programmes for employees, Mathis in Eze (2012) posits that many professions require periodic postgraduate study in order to maintain certification for practice. Consequently, Adeniyi (2010) in Eze (2012) reveals that in many of the academic institutions in this country (Nigeria) especially the universities, part-time and full-time courses of study and correspondence or distant learning programmes are offered. Even the Federal government of Nigeria recognizes the need and value for continuing education of professionals when it states in the National Policy on Education objectives according to Jinna and Maikano (2014) shall be to provide further education for different categories of completers of formal education system in order to improve their basic knowledge and skills, to provide in-service and on-the-job vocational and professional training for different categories of workers and professionals in order to improve their skills. These objectives have one end in view- to equip individuals including professional librarians with part of the necessities needed in order to be relevant to their society by helping to solve some of its problems (Jinna and Maikano, 2014). This solution to problems can equally be applied in the academic library work environment by solving information related challenges of users.

Furthermore, Abban (2018) stressed that training and continuing education are necessary because every library looks at the performance of its library staff to see if it comes up to the desired expectation and whether the organizational goals are being met. This is why continuing education is ever more relevant today than in the past. It is in recognition of this observation that Nkebem (2009) in a study recommended that in order to promote continuing education of staff, university librarians should take certain actions such as: arranging to have regular professional meetings or training

sessions within their libraries; sponsoring their staff for relevant courses whenever they are available; granting periodic study leaves; rewarding those who undertake further studies with promotion or an increment in salary, especially if they display superior or improved skills as a result of some further education.

Conference Attendance and Job Performance

Conference is a technique of developing librarians professionally. This means has been observed to improve knowledge directed towards performance efficiency. Eze (2012) citing Gutek (2007) posit that librarians as well as other professionals do acquire professional growth through conferences, seminars and workshops and therefore, defined conferences, seminars and workshops as a meeting on specialized subject area and often held in a day or more to discuss a topic of interest relevant to the organization. Through these strategies, new and current methods are made known or unwrapped, and ideas are exchanged and taught. Effective and successful planned conferences have the tendency to expose librarians to wealth of information which ordinarily may not have been achieved if not exposed to.

Conference, workshop activities, etc., has been observed by Njoku (2018) in Bryant as development opportunities for people to learn and to share experiences by encouraging powerful interactions between participants in developing job-based knowledge and competencies. According to Academia Publishing House(2013), workshop in academia, is adopted to describe meetings reserved for small groups of specialists who come together for concerted activities or discussion.

Conferences from the library perspective, is a formal gathering where librarians come together to acquire knowledge, share research ideas that will benefit them and the profession in the bid to identifying professional issues and come up with policies that will help in addressing them in a sustainable manner. The effect of such acquired knowledge when applied in the work place can assist to improve librarians' performance and the productivity of academic library. According to Terrill (2014), conferences bring professionals of like minds together to share and discuss ideas. For this reason, Idiegbeyan-Ose, Ohaegbulam and Osayande (2015) comment that conferences are relevant because librarians attend library conferences to acquire new skills in order to remain relevant, well positioned for effective and efficient services to users and to build networks.

In a similar dimension, Lipczynska and Crowley (2015) looking at the gains of conference states that within the library and information profession, conferences provide an arena for experts and learners to share knowledge and experiences on a variety of areas and specialisms. For Thull (2014), it is an exposure to new perspectives. For academic librarians, the exposure to colleagues the world over can serve to invigorate and provide perspective on their own services, libraries and resources. In addition, participation in international conferences reflects well on the librarian's home university and on their personal resume. He further explained that the exposure, learning and networking that can occur can be life changing and help put our career choice into perspective in terms of its value not only to the patrons we serve directly but to patrons the world over while Adomi, Alakpodi and Akporhonor (2006) pointed that conference helps to maintain one's skills base.

In recognition of the fact that professional development in university libraries is an on-going learning opportunity, Osei in Njoku (2018) observes, that it undoubtedly, enhances job performance, effectiveness and encourages climate of interpersonal relationships in an organization. In consonance to the above authors, Terrill (2014) gave the following reasons; that librarians attend library conferences to learn about current events, trends, and technology, to participate in continuing education, and to build networks. The knowledge acquired at conferences is necessary for professional development. Conference attendance helps to cultivate research ideas through conference papers, presentations, and question and answer sessions and that conference attendance is part of professional capacity building. Nevertheless, the author raised a concern by identifying a significant weakness of conferences as, lack of systematic archiving of content for future reference.

In a similar view on conference attendance setbacks, Dowell (2019) identified that lack of funding can be a barrier to conference attendance. He remarked that academic libraries are not in control of the overall funds allocated to them by their parent institutions, however, they have responsibility for their budget, and it is important to consider professional development and conferences specifically, within those resources, the author maintained.

The result of a study conducted by Dowell (2019) on the impact of conference attendance on Australian academic librarians and libraries revealed that that conference attendance has a substantial positive impact on delegates and their organizations. He argues that the important contribution conference attendance makes, is vital for Australian academic libraries, as they need to remain innovative and collaborative, as well as attract and retain motivated staff.

In the light of the above facts, it has been noted by this study that for librarians' performance to be effectively and efficiently enhanced in academic library, the authorities or management at all levels should make sustainable efforts by provide sponsoring opportunities for librarians and encourage them to take up further suitable professional development

studies that will help them develop their professional knowledge in order to remain relevant for the present-day job. The realization of this goal by implication would benefit both the individual and the academic library. The tendency is that the knowledge gained would no doubt enhance and reflect positively on their job performance thereby promoting the image and productivity level of the institution.

METHODOLOGY

Correlational design was adopted and the population was 125 librarians from ten (10) State-owned university libraries in the South-South Geo-political Zone of Nigeria of which 98 of the instruments were found valid. The entire population was used, hence, there was no sample. The instrument was well validated by appropriate experts in the required fields. The instrument used for data collection was a structured questionnaire designed to elicit information. 'A' contained 13 items of the instrument that generated responses on Librarians' Professional Development such that continuous professional education and conference attendance (independent variables) Section 'B' contained 12 items of the instrument that generated responses on Librarians' Job Performance (dependent variable). Section 'A' instrument was designed using a Four-Point Rating Scale of: Strongly Agree (SA) = 4 points; Agree (A) = 3 points; Disagree (D) = 2 points; Strongly Disagree (SD) = 1 point. Section 'B' instrument was designed using a Four-Point Rating Scale of: Very Good (VG) = 4 points; Good (G) = 3 points; Poor (P) = 2 points; Very Poor (VP) = 1 point. Cronbach Alpha formula was used to determine the reliability co-efficient (r). Descriptive statistics of Mean and Standard Deviation were utilized to analyze the data collected. Pearson Product Moment Correlation (PPMC) was used to determine the relationship between continuous professional education, conference attendance and librarians' job performance while hypotheses were tested at 0.05 alpha level of significance. 125 copies of the questionnaire were distributed by the researcher, however, a total of 98 copies of the questionnaire was retrieved (78.4%) for the analysis.

RESULT

Research question 1: What is the relationship between librarians' continuous professional education and job performance in State university libraries in South-South, Nigeria?

Table 1. Summary of descriptive statistics on the mean rating of the respondents over continuous professional education by librarians as a dimension of librarians' job performance in State university libraries in South-South, Nigeria

SN	Continuing Professional Education	Mean	SD	95% CI		Remarks
				LB	UB	
1	University management approves only short courses programmes for librarians	2.27	0.90	2.08	2.45	Disagreed
2	I participate in long courses or long distance learning both locally and internationally	2.27	0.84	2.10	2.43	Disagreed
3	The library management seldom grants periodic study leave for educational programmes	2.48	0.88	2.30	2.66	Agreed
4	The university library allows full participation of extension and refresher courses for librarians	2.65	0.83	2.49	2.82	Agreed
5	The university library approves sponsorship for continuing education for librarians	2.57	0.91	2.39	2.75	Agreed
6	The university library encourages educational advancement for higher professional qualifications for librarians	3.00	0.75	2.85	3.15	Agreed
7	Work overload and pressure in the library do not allow for personal educational engagement for long and short courses.	2.29	0.81	2.12	2.45	Disagreed
Grand mean		2.50	0.48	2.41	2.60	Agreed

The result from Table 1 the summary of descriptive statistics on the mean rating of the respondents over continuing professional education programmes by librarians as a dimension of librarians' job performance in State university libraries in South-South, Nigeria. It shows that the grand mean rating of the respondents over continuing professional education programmes as a dimension of librarians' job performance was 2.50, SD=0.48. The 95% CI moved from 2.41 to 2.60. The result further shows that the respondents strongly indicated that the university library encourages educational advancement for higher professional qualifications for librarians (M=3.00, SD=0.75), the university library allows full participation of extension and refresher courses for librarians (M=2.65, SD=0.83) and the least as agreed was that the university library approves sponsorship for continuing education for librarians (M=2.57, SD=0.91).

H₀₂: There is no significant relationship between continuous professional education and librarians' job performance in State university libraries in South-South, Nigeria.

Table 2. Summary of Pearson Product Moment Correlation on the relationship between continuous professional education and librarians' job performance in State university libraries in South-South, Nigeria

Variable	N	Mean	SD	R	R ²	Interpretation
Continuing professional education programmes	98	2.5029	.48423			
				0.077	0.005929	Positive/Weak
Job performance	98	3.3878	.36375			

The result from Table 2 shows the summary of Pearson Product Moment Correlation on the relationship between continuous professional education and librarians' job performance in state university libraries in South-South, Nigeria. It shows that the relationship between continuous professional education and librarians' job performance in state university libraries in South-South, Nigeria was very weak and positive (R=0.077). The R-squared value of 0.059 shows roughly a contribution of .6% of continuous professional education to librarians' job performance in state university libraries in South-South, Nigeria.

Research Question 2: What is the relationship between conference attendance by librarians and their job performance in State university libraries in South-South, Nigeria?

Table 3. summary of descriptive statistics on the mean rating of the respondents over conference attendance by librarians as a dimension of librarians' job performance in State university libraries in South-South, Nigeria

SN	Conference Attendance by Librarians	Mean	SD	95% CI		Remark
				LB	UB	
1	University authority take full sponsorship of all the professional conference I have attended	2.05	1.03	1.84	2.26	Disagreed
2	University management shows less concern to sponsorship of librarians to attend conferences.	2.45	0.95	2.26	2.64	Agreed
3	Library management allows only annual local conferences to be attended	2.22	0.81	2.06	2.39	Disagreed
4	Adequate time is approved for me to attend international conferences	2.23	0.87	2.06	2.41	Disagreed
5	Conference is mostly made available for top management to attend	2.49	0.97	2.30	2.68	Agreed
6	I have occasionally been sponsored by the management to attend international conference	2.02	1.04	1.81	2.23	Disagreed
	Grand mean	2.24	0.54	2.14	2.35	Disagreed

The result from Table 3 the summary of descriptive statistics on the mean rating of the respondents over conference attendance by librarians as a dimension of librarians' capacity development programmes in state university libraries in South-South, Nigeria. It shows that the grand mean rating of the respondents over conference attendance by librarians as a dimension of librarians' capacity development programmes was 2.24, SD=0.54. The 95% CI moved from 2.14 to 2.35. The result further shows that none of the items of the instrument was rated above the criterion mean rating of 2.50.

H_{01} : There is no significant relationship between librarians' conference attendance and job performance in State university libraries in South-South, Nigeria.

Table 4. Summary of Pearson Product Moment Correlation on the relationship between conference attendance by librarians and their job performance in State university libraries in South-South, Nigeria

Variable	N	Mean	SD	R	R ²	Interpretation
Conference attendance by librarians	98	2.2449	.53738	-0.166	0.027556	Negative/Weak
Job performance	98	3.3878	.36375			

The result from Table 4 shows the summary of Pearson Product Moment Correlation on the relationship between conferences attendance by librarians and librarians' job performance in state university libraries in South-South, Nigeria. It shows that the relationship between conferences attendance by librarians and librarians' job performance in state university libraries in South-South, Nigeria was weak and negative ($R=-0.166$). The R-squared value of 0.0276 shows roughly a contribution of 2.8% of conferences attendance by librarians to their job performance in state university libraries in South-South, Nigeria.

Table 5. Summary of descriptive statistics on the mean rating of the respondents over librarians' job performance in State university libraries in South-South, Nigeria

SN	Job Performance	Mean	SD	95% CI		Remark
				LB	UB	
1	Skillfully and professionally operate working tools	3.33	0.55	3.22	3.44	Agreed
2	Adequately complete assigned work at stipulated time	3.35	0.52	3.24	3.45	Agreed
3	Make quality input to the university library's growth	3.47	0.52	3.36	3.57	Agreed
4	Work under minimal supervision	3.40	0.57	3.28	3.51	Agreed
5	Maintain cordial relationship with colleagues and respect others feelings	3.57	0.54	3.46	3.68	Agreed
6	Punctual and regular at work	3.50	0.52	3.40	3.60	Agreed
7	Ability to perform task competently under pressure	3.43	0.61	3.31	3.55	Agreed
8	Use technological tools and gadgets effectively	3.26	0.61	3.13	3.38	Agreed
9	Anticipate and creatively proffer solution to information related challenges professionally	3.24	0.58	3.13	3.36	Agreed
10	Deliver effective services to patrons/others	3.44	0.56	3.33	3.55	Agreed
11	Effective communication and interpersonal skill	3.39	0.62	3.26	3.51	Agreed
12	Adapt adequately with constant changes on the job	3.29	0.54	3.18	3.39	Agreed
	Grand mean	3.39	0.36	3.31	3.46	Agreed

The result from Table 5 the descriptive statistics on the mean rating of the respondents over librarians' job performance in state university libraries in South-South, Nigeria. It shows that the grand mean rating of the respondents over job performance in state university libraries in South-South, Nigeria was 3.39, $SD=0.36$. The 95% CI moved from 3.31 to 3.46. The result further shows that the respondents strongly indicated that they maintain cordial relationship with colleagues and respect others feelings ($M=3.57$, $SD=0.54$), they are punctual and regular at work ($M=3.50$, $SD=0.52$), they make quality input to the university library's growth ($M=3.47$, $SD=0.52$), they deliver effective services to patrons/others ($M=3.44$, $SD=0.56$) and the least among others was that they anticipate and creatively proffer solution to information related challenges professionally ($M=3.24$, $SD=0.58$).

Table 2: Relationship between continuous professional education and librarian's job performance in State university libraries in South-South, Nigeria.

The result from Table 1.2 revealed that the relationship between continuous professional education and librarians' job performance in State university libraries in South-South, Nigeria was very weak, positive and not statistically significant at .05 alpha level ($R=0.077$, $p>05$). The R-squared value of 0.059 shows roughly a contribution of .6% of continuous professional education to librarians' job performance in state university libraries in South-South, Nigeria

The finding of a later study by Saka, Oyedum and Song (2016) on influence of continuing professional development and skills acquisition on librarians' performance further revealed that there was no positive influence on effective and efficient job performance on the part of the respondents (librarians). The non-positive impact on librarians' job performance concurs with the finding of the present study which shows a very weak positive relationship among the variables.

Table 4: Relationship between conference attendance and librarian's job performance in State university library in South-South, Nigeria

The result from Table 4 revealed that there is no significant relationship between conference attendance and librarians' job performance in State university libraries in South-South, Nigeria. The relationship between conference attendance by librarians and librarians' job performance in state university libraries in South-South, Nigeria was weak, negative and not statistically significant at .05 alpha level ($R=-0.166$, $p>.05$). The R-squared value of 0.0276 shows roughly a contribution of 2.8% of conferences attendance by librarians to their job performance in State university libraries in South-South, Nigeria. The findings on the study of Ozurumba and Amasuomo (2015) revealed that in-service training and attendance of conferences and workshops influence the output of academic staff. This finding is not in agreement with the present study which showed a negative relationship between conference attendance and job performance of librarians.

The result on research conducted by Njoku (2018) on professional development and performance evaluation for cataloguers in Nigeria shows that professional development such as conference is a universal requirement of all librarians in order to keep up with the rapid changes in the library field so as to maintain professionalism. This is in line with the assertion of Idiegbeyan-Ose, Ohaegbulam and Osayande (2015) which shows that conference or workshop attendance by librarians is not a matter of choice but a must if they want to remain relevant and up-to-date in the information age. If this is true, it means that the conference attendance for librarians in the present study is ineffective as it did not influence their performance positively for the overall goal of the libraries as supposed in the assertion of both authors above, hence, conference attendance is not a viable capacity development strategy for the library to invest much resources on. Reason could be that the librarians were not committed to the purpose of the conference in relation to their organizational goal/productivity or lack of commitment to sponsorship on the part of management of such libraries. This reason has some link with the findings of Moreillon, Cahill and McKee (2012) which showed unbalanced conference-sponsored professional development in terms of the productivity of the employee as against The American Association of School Librarians (AASL) also known as EL-defined roles for school librarians.

However, the findings of this study does not agree with that of Otibine (2016) study which revealed that capacity development strategies have the capacity of generally influencing positive effects on both staff performance and organizational performance, hence have contributed positively to the successful achievement of outcomes of the Department For International Development (DFID) programmes in Kenya.

CONCLUSION

The place of professional development as an enabler for librarians to enhance their efficiency in order to remain relevant at work for organizational productivity in any institution's libraries cannot be underestimated. While the librarians have some level of exposure to professional education and conferences, their level of job productivity is minimally significant to organizational goal.

RECOMMENDATIONS

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

1. Professional development as an investment in human development is a life-long benefit for the individual, the university and the society at large. Therefore, it is highly recommended that those librarians should continuously upgrade themselves professionally as this will lead to optimal performance as a result of the knowledge and skills acquired both locally and international.
2. Librarians in State university libraries are encouraged to regularly attend conferences and consciously convert the benefits inherent in the programme into organizational productivity.

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