

## CAREER DEVELOPMENT OF PERSONNEL IN NIGERIAN ACADEMIC LIBRARIES IN CONTEMPORARY SOCIETY

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### Abstract

*Career development is an essential part of library personnel because it ensures and drives their growth, development and success in the profession. It is multifaceted in nature which involves continuous learning, skill enhancement, competence and professional growth. In the energetic setting of information management, library personnel have to adapt technological advancement, evolving information seeking behaviours and the changing needs of their users. In recent years, there has been a continuous recognition of the need for constant and uninterrupted professional development in the field of librarianship. The purpose of this paper was to examine the level of career development of library personnel in contemporary society in Nigeria and how it impacts their job performances. The study adopted a desk methodology where secondary data were basically collected from existing literature and looked into already published studies and reports. The resources were easily accessed through online journals and information materials from libraries. Therefore, this paper explored the key components of career development for library personnel, the role of mentorship and the institutional support focusing on the various strategies and programmes that have been implemented to support career development of library personnel. It also explored the key competences and skills required for a successful career development in librarianship. In addition, the paper discussed the challenges and opportunities that the library personnel encounter in the journey to their career development and offers recommendations for improvement.*

**Keywords:** Library personnel, career development, professional growth, continuous learning, mentorship, academic libraries, Nigeria

### Introduction

The secret to any institutional or organizational growth's success is career development. In any organisation, career development is crucial, and it's a necessary tactic for institutional growth. Managing education, employment, and leisure is a lifelong process that helps one to progress toward a chosen future that has been decided upon and refined. It includes developing

oneself and creating the circumstances necessary to realize one's full potential in addition to acquiring information and skills (Ismajli, Krasniqi, & Qosja, 2015). Career development, according to Perrotta (2015), is the continuous improvement of knowledge and abilities, including professional development and work mastery. According to the author, job mastery abilities are those required for effective job performance and emphasized that career development includes career planning, coaching, counseling, mentoring, training, and effectively placing people in positions where their needs and the needs of the organisations would be appropriately satisfied. Career development benefits the organizations or institutions as well as the individual employee. Employee development prepares the organization for future positions and ensures that it has a sufficient number of committed, capable workers to replace higher-level employees. Thus, the professional growth of library staff in Nigerian academic libraries, however, is an essential component that is critical to the overall performance of the involved institutions. The need for highly qualified library employees is growing along with the demand for high-quality research and education. This is due to the fact that career development is crucial for library staff members to gain new competencies, information, and skills that are required for their advancement in the field.

Additionally, career development makes library staff more knowledgeable about the newest developments in information science and libraries, which is crucial for providing efficient service delivery. Although, it can take many different forms; such as conferences, seminars, workshops, training programmes, and more. These chances give library staff members the opportunity to improve their abilities, pick up new talents, and connect with other experts in related fields. In addition to the previously mentioned, it could entail earning advanced degrees or certifications in library and information science. This expands their knowledge and experience and creates new avenues for professional development within the organization. Nevertheless, Sturges (2015) noted that being a librarian in Africa has never been a simple choice. The distinctive features of African civilization and the challenges of development have always required information workers to be creative and open to new ideas. The author claimed that despite the significant developments currently taking place in the global information economy, the difficulty has increased rather than decreased. Consequent upon that, Dodo, Ogunsakin & Ashiru (2023) stressed that librarianship has advanced over time, professional promotion and development are necessary as library staff members contribute to the success of the libraries and institutions they serve. Therefore, career development of library personnel in contemporary society involves a systematic effort which should be exerted both by the librarians and their employers toward achieving career success or satisfaction, which in turn leads to growth and development.

Apart from training, workshops, conferences and other forms, one of the essential components of career development is also mentoring. Through goal-setting and area identification, mentoring supports mentees in achieving their professional goals and providing advice on how to do so. Additionally, it guarantees the institutions' continuous prosperity and efficacy in delivering high-quality services to users and fostering education, research, and learning. Academic libraries in Nigeria can improve their ability to fulfill the changing needs of the digital era by placing a high priority on career development for library staff. Mentoring as stressed by David-West & Nmecha (2019) increases confidence and motivation of librarians and it helps to enhance their career development and advancement within the library. In a similar vein, Geraci & Thyphen (2017) stated that mentoring encompasses a variety of activities, which

includes advising, teaching, coaching, advocacy, sponsoring and role modeling as well as assistance with personal development and achieving a work life balance.

Hence, in the process of mentoring, it helps individuals to develop and promote self-awareness, and the ability to apply skills, knowledge and experience to new situations and processes. Previous study by Idoko, Ugwuanyi & Osadebe (2016) investigated mentoring strategies in use for professional development of librarians in Federal Universities in North-Central Nigeria. It was reported that informal mentoring strategy was the main strategy in use for professional development of librarians in these universities followed by mentoring. Ojei, Adebawale & Okwilagwe (2019) carried out a study on effective mentoring of female librarians' in libraries for career development and sustainable national development in some selected academic libraries in the South Western region of Nigeria. The result showed that both formal and informal mentoring had been practiced in the universities studied and that mentoring was effective in the career development of the female library professionals. Unegbu, Ezeudu, Babloa & Madukoma (2021) examined the imperatives of career development on librarians commitment among university libraries in Southern, Nigeria and affirmed that the extent of career development was high. It was reported that, training contributed highest in librarians' career development while counseling offered the least contribution. Findings also revealed that career development significantly influenced librarians' commitment. Oche, Odunlade & Ojo (2021) also investigated on professional development as a correlate of job performance of librarians in the State Polytechnics in North Central, Nigeria and reported that major professional development programmes provided to librarians in the study area were on-the job training, professional conferences, in-service training, professional workshops and continuing education; including induction, orientation, and off-the-job training. As a result, professional development had positive impact on the job performance of librarians which was rated high.

Furthermore, Maesaroh & Genoni (2010) investigated the continuing professional development practices in Indonesian academic libraries. It was aimed at examining the present and desired state of academic library staff education and professional development in Indonesia. It was revealed 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. Bhatti & Nadeem (2014) studied LIS professionals' perception related to their training needs in university libraries of Pakistan. The results obtained showed 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, and ad-hoc training sessions by staff members, and group briefings as effective training programmes for improving their professional skills. However, based on literature, it was indicated that majority of library personnel frequently engaged in career development activities through various virtual platforms and physical forum including trainings on zoom, webinars, Google meet among others (David-West & Nmecha, 2019). Thus, the end result of a successful career development practices is that library personnel would be better placed to adapt and survive in a competitive environment and would be better equipped to face the future. Institutions' management and libraries' management need a clearer view of the assumptions when taking decisions on employment and the intentions to support their career development. Therefore, career development of library personnel in contemporary society involves a systematic effort which should be exerted both by the librarians and their employers toward achieving career success or satisfaction, which in turn leads to growth and development.

### **Personal and professional evaluation of library personnel in academic libraries**

Librarians may eventually need to rethink and reassess their personal values, outlook, professional objectives, and advancement. Midcareer development is the term used to describe this stage as stressed by Tucker (2008). Library employees must engage in some type of professional and personal self-evaluation in order to prepare to make decisions during the midcareer phase. Through self-evaluation, people can track their growth, learning, and development to understand how they are doing both personally and professionally, hence, doing such evaluations will assist people in identifying chances for appropriate development, such as remaining in their existing roles, taking a risk, or accepting positions with greater responsibility. Self-assessment allows an individual to analyse the stages in his or her career and see how these stages have affected his or her development and goals. Apart from self-assessment, library personnel personal growth is very essential.

Apparently, it is important for library personnel to analyze their personal growth and development. As they move and go through their life cycles and career path, they might develop new interests or desire new personal and professional challenges. Thus, as an individual, self-evaluation becomes very pertinent including how the job fits with personal interests. It may be helpful for librarians to identify specific interests or skills that they cannot pursue in their current positions. Once these interests have been identified, a search for internal and external opportunities to achieve these goals begins. Such an evaluation may result in an internal move within the individual's current organization and a move to another organization, or a career change. Apart from self-assessment, professional growth assessment could also be conducted by a personnel. According to Tucker (2008), an analysis of a person's professional growth can be conducted by examining their past, present, and prospective career paths. Career decisions can be made at numerous stages, and librarians are typically in the re-evaluation stage. At this point, the individual may start to question more carefully if the work is living up to their expectations. The individual might choose to reconsider the objectives and options. Analyzing the job path from the past, present, and future is crucial during this re-evaluation phase. The first thing to take into account while examining one's job is a previous career as a librarian. For example, when you first entered the field of librarianship, you knew exactly what kind of work you wanted to do and set goals for the first five years of your career.

Consequently, the questions to be asked are: did you achieve every one of your set objectives? If not, do these objectives still have relevance to your career? What experiences did you have that might have changed the course of your career? What impact did these choices and occurrences have on your career path? Once the past is settled as a librarian, it is very imperative to look at yourself in your current position. What are you doing now? Are you happy with your job and workplace environment? What skills have you obtained in your current position? How will these skills help you in another job? How have your goals and aspirations changed? Are you still motivated to perform your job? Do the organization's goals and beliefs match your own? If these questions are answered with all sincerity, then the future career becomes indispensable. As a librarian, you need to find out if your values changed; whether you would want more responsibilities; and if you would want to be a leader. Charting the route of your career within your current firm is crucial for career path analysis. Your professional growth as a librarian is a crucial aspect of your career path and also one of the organization's concerns. It is pertinent to examine your current role and note any abilities or interests that you have not developed or used to your full potential. Institutions ought to offer chances for development, thus, it is appropriate to ask yourself: are my needs being met? In this self- and career assessment, it is vital to have a

clear picture of where you are personally and professionally, what you want to do with your personal and professional career, and how you can achieve these personal and professional aspirations

### **Career development in academic librarianship**

An individual's career is the culmination of their job experience, but development is the sum of all the knowledge picked up from courses and other training exercises in addition to work experience which also covers personal growth. In the context of library and information science, the process through which library and information professionals uphold their professional competences over the course of their careers is known as career development. It is thought of as a career-long process that involves continuing in-service education and training, supplemented by outside courses, to update and improve staff members' skills, talents, and competences. . It entails a systematic approach to staff development and continuing education, which typically consists of a series of learning opportunities made available over time with the goal of ensuring that information professionals continuously acquire and adapt their skills and knowledge to a rapidly changing professional environment without interruption.

Library's workforce has a direct impact on its success. Career development for library personnel in Nigeria is crucial for their growth and effectiveness in disseminating knowledge. It is a continuous process that requires librarians to stay updated with latest trends and technologies. Personnel training directly reflect library's efficiency, thus every type library is solely responsible for training people who have the capability to provide their full measure (Duarah, 2016). At almost every level, the librarianship profession appears to place a high value on the continuing professional development of its members, so they are expected to study and grow throughout their careers. It displays a comparable commitment to further professional education. Most often, the primary objective of library education is to prepare new professionals with an ample of understanding of professional issues and their context, as well as practical skills for effective service delivery. As previously indicated, notable library professional organizations have paid certified attention to the topic of professional development in various ways. For example, the Nigerian Library Association regularly organizes conferences, workshops, and seminars to promote professional growth of library personnel. In addition, the American Library Association has also frequently sponsored a Congress on Professional Development. This is the same in other countries around the world. A career as a librarian in Africa and around the world has never been simple. It is a common requirement for all librarians in order to stay up with the quick developments in the library sector while being professional. At the same time, it is a unique experience that varies depending on the needs of certain job activities as well as the resources accessible in one's professional, social, and academic environment.

Academic librarians' professional career development addresses a requirement for continuing knowledge and competency acquisition that neither formal schooling nor on-the-job training can meet. Kraimer, Seibert, Wayne, Liden & Bravo (2011) confirmed that organizational support for development has been linked to increased turnover intentions when perceived career opportunities in the organization are limited. By extension, if employees are given training and development opportunities and can see a route to promotion within their firm, they will naturally stay. Conversely, if they acquire new skills and abilities but see no opportunity to advance inside, they may leave and seek employment elsewhere. As a result, a great career development and advancement system acknowledges that professions are neither static nor produced in a vacuum.

Personnel make career decisions based on their current abilities and interests, as well as their previous job histories and long-term goals. Organizational changes affect how people's

careers progress, and changes in employee expectations may influence how firms create and manage career development programmes. As stated by Hedge & Rineer (2017), career development allows people to identify and negotiate acceptable career paths together. When organizations treat employees' career pathways as joint ventures with their employees, both parties benefit: people receive the assistance they need to advance in their careers, while organizations develop the qualities required for success.

Onifade, Okoro & Boakye (2018) carried out a study on career progression of librarians in Nigeria and Ghana universities. The study revealed that the career structure of librarians in Nigeria and Ghana universities was similar and they are highly educated. Posigha & Seimode (n.d) investigated on professional development of library professionals in Nigeria, the attitude of library management towards professional development activities and ways of improving professional development of library personnel. Findings revealed that librarians in Nigeria libraries are actively engaged in professional development activities, through self-sponsorships, institutions' sponsorship and TET-Fund with a positive attitude of library management towards professional development activities. Library profession is actually energetic, dynamic and also challenging, therefore, in order to meet up with the demands, librarians need to seek for professional development opportunities. The goal of effective career development practices is to provide institutions and organizations with a competitive edge in luring, keeping, and developing the greatest talent. Career paths model offers a framework for collaboration between the individual and the organisation. Using a career pathways framework can help organizations strategically grow talent, sustain engagement, and enhance retention by providing guidance for the development of an individual's competencies. When employers view the usage of employee career paths as a collaborative effort with their workforce, employees gain the experience they need to advance in their careers, and employers develop the skills necessary for achievement of goals.

Following both professional and personal evaluations, it is critical to establish clear objectives and investigate means of achieving them. In order to achieve stated goals, there is the need to take into account extra abilities or possibilities, regardless of the job route chosen. Depending on the career path chosen by the librarian, such person may need to take continuing education classes through universities or professional organizations. Continuing education may also be an option through self-training. If the path to administration and management is chosen, it is necessary to obtain higher degrees to boost career development.

### **Leadership and management training**

No matter what path a librarian takes, such a personnel would most likely be looked upon for direction and leadership within the organization or at his/her new organization. Some people are born naturally to be leaders, and while others are not. However, there are opportunities to learn how to be a leader and one of such option is to learn from existing leaders in the organization by asking questions and discussing various aspects of leadership in order to obtain a reasonable advice. Another strategy is to consult research articles and books available. There are also numerous leadership institutes that can be extremely beneficial. Another way to develop leadership skills is taking on specific roles and projects in the workplace. The major influence on leadership development is an individual's ability to cope with job varieties, responsibilities, new tasks, and unfamiliar situations.

However, a midcareer librarian taking on a management or administrative responsibilities is quite common. A person at this stage in his or her career may become a head of a department,

division head, or holding other type of managerial posts. This step in the career path can be huge, especially for those people who have not previously supervised others. Supervision and management responsibilities bring new challenges and require the incorporation of a new skill set. Just as some people are not natural leaders, some people are not natural managers. Like leadership, management skills can be learned in various ways, such as through workshops, continuing education, or through professional organizations (Tucker, 2008).

### **Mentoring as a tool for career development**

Mentoring is a big tool in career development and advancement of library staff. It may take place within an institution or within a professional association or organization. As a librarian, mentoring and being mentored is very essential in career development. The main goal of mentoring is to help someone with less expertise in academia advance his/her career (Chopra, Arora & Saint, 2018). As a result, it is defined by the interaction between an experienced person and a less experienced person. Although, in a person's career, such a person might become a mentor along the line, so, being a mentor can be rewarding. One can transfer one's knowledge, support and experiences to another librarian who is just starting his or her career for professional development. Geraci & Thyphen (2017) opined that mentoring includes a range of tasks like coaching, educating, advocating, advising, sponsoring, and role modeling in addition to helping with personal growth and striking a balance between work and life. It gives individuals the opportunity to be mentored in order to develop their career and it makes them feel like they are valued by the organization. This makes the mentees to be more involved in their job for effective and efficient performance. David-West & Nmecha (2019) are of the opinion that mentoring helps librarians grow professionally and thrive within the library by boosting their self-esteem and drive. Mentoring amongst professionals is undertaken to help young, future and new entrant to achieve success in their career. Generally, in librarianship, mentoring provides opportunities for less experienced professionals to benefit from the wealth of the more experienced librarians to accomplish a fulfilling career. There is always a synergy between mentoring and career development as both seems to invigorate each other. If administered appropriately, mentoring is likely to stimulate the mentees in the pursuit of their career to a successful end.

The mentor on the other hand, is likely to grow in the mentoring experience and derive lots of fulfillment in their career pursuit seeing the product of their mentoring effort succeeding and progressing. As affirmed by Tejup (2016), the profession of librarianship from the forgoing summation needs to integrate both formal and informal mentoring at the professional association level. This is to encourage career development and sustainability for the benefit of both young and upcoming librarians, as well help to establish the experienced ones (Achonna, Arowosola & Ogunleye, 2022). Therefore, mentoring has a tremendous deal of potential to improve career success, but it also has the capacity to make mistakes in one's career. Within academic libraries, career development and progress are facilitated by strong mentoring relationships.

### **Importance of career development in academic libraries**

Professional growth is an essential component of any line of work, and library staff in academic libraries in Nigeria are no exception. It is impossible to overestimate the significance of career development for library staff members because it contributes significantly to the improvement of their knowledge, abilities, and general job happiness. The dynamic nature of the library profession makes career development imperative for staff members working in academic libraries. To remain current and productive in their positions, library personnel must regularly

upgrade their knowledge and abilities in light of changes in information management procedures and technological breakthroughs. Opportunities for career development, such as conferences, workshops, and training programmes, give them the knowledge of current trends and best practices in the profession, improving their ability to assist users and enhancing the effectiveness of the library as a whole. Additionally, career development can boost personnel's enthusiasm and job satisfaction. This is because, employee's commitment to their work is likely to increase when they perceive prospects for promotion and feel encouraged in their professional development. Consequently, this may lead to increased output, enhanced job execution, and a favorable work atmosphere in the library. Academic libraries as a whole can also gain from career development. Libraries may create a team of highly qualified and informed professionals who are better able to meet the requirements of their users and promote the academic mission of the institutions they serve by investing in the professional development of their personnel. In the end, this may result in better service provision, more users' happiness, and an enhanced standing of the library among academics. It is crucial that academic libraries in Nigeria make their personnel's career development to be a top priority. This can be accomplished by putting in place official training programmes, workshops, seminars, providing mentorship opportunities, and assisting them in attending conferences both locally and internationally.

To improve their abilities and credentials, they should be encouraged to pursue additional training and professional certifications. That is why Adamu, Udoudoh, Babalola & Yusuf (2021) averred that gaining new knowledge and abilities enhances job competences for advancement and performance improvements. Professional development programmes and obtaining a higher degree in the field can provide knowledge that lowers stress associated to the job and increases interest, which in turn improves job performance. However, it also provides libraries with a corporate plan to manage change. To support the aforementioned, a study by Saidu, Saka & Kur (2020) examined librarians' perceptions of staff development as a means of improving work performance in State Public Library Boards in North-Central, Nigeria. The study came to the conclusion that having a first degree in librarianship would improve a librarian's level of job performance, but that a librarian's level of job performance could suffer if staff development opportunities were not provided. A study on staff development and job performance of library staff in public universities in South-South Nigeria was also carried out by Eyo & Afebende (2019). The outcome demonstrated that staff development was critical to library employees' ability to do their jobs well. Nonetheless, the study came to the conclusion that the caliber of staff development initiatives implemented by library administration to personnel at public institutions in South-South Nigeria could influence and improve their quality of work performance. However, the study concluded that the capacity of staff development initiatives used by library administration to train staff members at public universities in South-South Nigeria might influence and improve the level of work performance of library staff members. Obot, Bangbose & Okoro (2018) investigated the education and training of library and information professionals for national integration and development of tertiary institution in Akwa Ibom and Cross River, Nigeria. The findings indicated a strong positive association between national integration and development and information professional education. It was also reported that national integration and development were significantly influenced by information professional education. It is imperative to guarantee that development programmes fulfill their intended objectives by equipping academic librarians with the necessary knowledge and abilities. For career development to flourish there is the need for a staff development. Staff development is an effective method of increasing the knowledge, competences and skills of



employees in order for them to perform better and more effectively. Such performance, to a large extent, will depend on their knowledge and skills, as well confidence in originating ideas as to how best to carry out the tasks of the job.

Ifidon & Ifidon (2007) as cited by Ogar & Nkanu (2022) identified career development programmes to include: simple orientation programmes, organized visits, seminars and conferences, participatory management, internal training programmes, formal professional library education and short courses. They further noted that staff development can be undertaken through formal and non-formal education in order to make workers useful to themselves and the organization they are working for. All these training programmes can help both professional and paraprofessional staff to be at par with new knowledge and development in the field of library and information science. Therefore, professional growth is a crucial concern for every organization particularly in library profession. That is why libraries can create the resilience needed to survive in a more turbulent environment by drawing in, keeping, and developing the personnel. A library that implements effective career development practices will ultimately be better positioned to confront the future and be able to adapt and thrive in a competitive environment.

### **Strategies for enhancing career development of library personnel in academic libraries**

The main objective of staff development is to enhance professional competence, and strengthening the capacity of individuals in order to accomplish stated goals. One of the key strategies for career development of library personnel in academic libraries in Nigeria is continuous education and training. Continuing professional development (CPD) is an activity strongly promoted by library and information associations. It involves a systematic approach to staff development and continuing education, usually consisting of a programme of learning opportunities made available over a period of time. The intention is to ensure that library personnel continue to acquire and adapt their skills and knowledge to a swiftly changing professional environment. Low productivity is one of the factors that call for career growth. Even though workers in an organization have the right tools, productivity may not meet expectations. Most often, the issue stems from a lack of appropriate knowledge and skills that can be learned through personnel development. There has been emphasizes on the significance of staff training and development in academic libraries generally. Noe (2016) stated that with respect to the support, content and implementation of employee training and development activities, strategy impacts the following: the amount of training devoted to current or future job skills; the extent to which training is customized for the particular needs of an employee or is developed based on the needs of a team, unit, or division; whether training is restricted to specific groups of employees or open to all employees; whether training is planned and systematically administered, provided only when problems occur, or developed spontaneously as a reaction to what competitors are doing; and the importance placed on training compared to other HRM practices such as selection and compensation.

Other strategies that could enhance career development are mentoring, training and professional development opportunities, coaching programmes and collaboration with professional associations. Advice, guidance, networking and teamwork are also essential components of professional and career growth and career development strategies. By implication, developing connections with other librarians throughout the world can lead to insightful conversations and cooperative opportunities. Through networking, one can also find

mentorship opportunities, where seasoned professionals can offer advice and encouragement to those seeking development in their careers.

In light of the fact that, networking is very crucial for success in any field, networking enhances collaboration and partnership. Professional networking is a network of professional interactions and professional relationships where ideas are shared for career development. Many employees (professionals) including librarians tend to be more comfortable with the concept of a social network. Thus, mentoring, networking and collaborations with professional colleagues are the most effective strategies as standalone programmes for career development. The library personnel's training needs and activities should be impacted by, and should be aligned with, the institution's overall strategy and noting the anticipated implication for the training activities for each of the strategies.

### **Current status of career development in Nigerian academic libraries**

In recent years, the landscape of academic libraries in Nigeria has undergone significant transformations, driven by technological advancement, changing educational paradigms, and evolving needs of users. Consequent upon this, career development within these institutions has become a focal point for library personnel and management. Several academic libraries in Nigeria have implemented innovative initiatives to foster career development among their staff. For instance, some institutions have established mentorship programmes that pair experienced librarians with new personnel, providing guidance and support as they navigate their careers.

The current status of career development in Nigerian academic libraries is a growing concern, with a focus on improving the career structure and development of librarians. Some of the key current status includes career progression- Academic librarians are entitled to promotion every three years; education and training and career services.

### **Challenges in career development of library personnel in academic libraries**

Despite the critical role that academic libraries play in supporting education and research, several challenges hinder effective career development of librarians in Nigeria. One of the primary issues is lack of structured professional development programmes. Many academic libraries do not have formal training or mentorship initiatives, which can lead to stagnation in skills and knowledge. In addition, another major challenge facing library personnel in academic libraries in Nigeria is lack of adequate funding and resources. Budget constraints often limit access to workshops, conferences, and continuing education opportunities, thereby impeding professional growth. Many libraries in Nigeria operate on limited budgets, which restrict their ability to invest in staff training and development programmes. This lack of funding also affects the acquisition of new technologies and resources that could enhance the skills and knowledge of library personnel.

To buttress the above, a study by Osadebe, Ewa & Njoku (2018) looked at academic librarians and continuous professional development programmes in Enugu State, Nigeria. The findings showed that inadequate government support, lack of support from donor agencies, inadequate facilities to train with and personal financial constraint were among the challenges facing academic libraries in Enugu State. Prior study by Igbokwe (2011) examined on job satisfaction and performance of librarians in federal university libraries in South East, Nigeria. Findings revealed that lack of opportunity for training affected their job performance, factors like salary increment; concrete job description to a very great extent enhanced the job performance of librarians. It was also observed that the greatest challenges inhibiting library personnel from

actively participating in career development activities are insufficient funds, low budgetary allocation for libraries and for training programmes, poor responsive attitude on the part of the managements, library personnel's resistance to change, library personnel's lack of interest, high cost of Internet subscription for online participation. More importantly, lack of specification of objectives of formal and informal mentoring, hence, there is no sincere zeal and desire to share information and knowledge that would be of benefits to mentees' career development. This could be discouraging rather than improve career development.

The idea that librarianship is a less distinguished job than other academic fields presents another big obstacle. This misconception may deter young professionals from pursuing jobs in librarianship, which would result in a labor shortage. Additionally, the hierarchical structure of Nigerian academic libraries may hinder library personnel's ability to advance in their careers. Younger and more qualified employees may believe that the inflexible organizational hierarchy is impeding their ability to advance in their careers, which can be demoralizing.

### **Opportunities for career growth**

Despite these challenges, there are numerous opportunities for career development in academic libraries in Nigeria. The increasing integration of technology in library services has created a demand for library personnel with digital skills. This shift presents an opportunity for librarians to enhance their competencies in areas such as information technology, data management, and digital literacy. Many academic libraries are now investing in training programmes to equip their staff with necessary skills to navigate the digital landscape effectively. Moreover, professional associations such as the Nigerian Library Association (NLA) play a crucial role in promoting career development. These organizations offer workshops, seminars and networking opportunities that enable library personnel to connect with peers, share best practices, and stay updated on industry trends.

Development opportunities may be designed to increase employees' career expertise and performance in their current jobs, and to increase awareness and prepare employees for new career opportunities. This may include: Career planning and development programmes sponsored by the institutions; institutions' training, external occupational and vocational training, professional education courses, or degree programmes; on-the-job opportunities such as cross-training, job rotations, special projects, or other experiential career programmes; participation in professional conferences, workshops, seminars, discussion groups, etc.; independent learning through reading technical manuals, professional journals, books, web-based materials, etc.; on-line offerings that support development goals. Therefore, every supervisor/head of unit is expected to encourage and support learning opportunities for their employees that are aligned with career goals and plans. Other opportunities for career growth include: education and training with a particular reference on practical skills and web-based teaching; entrepreneurship especially on innovation and self-efficacy; leadership; networking and digitization and career advancement.

### **Conclusion**

Career development is very essential for library personnel in academic libraries in Nigeria to stay relevant and competitive in the field librarianship. By pursuing continuous education and training, networking, obtaining advanced degrees or certifications, seeking out leadership roles, and prioritizing self-assessment and goal setting, library personnel could enhance their skills, advance their careers, and provide better services to their users. Ultimately,

investing in career development benefits not only the individual library personnel but also the academic institutions and communities they serve.

## Recommendations

Based on the foregoing, the following are recommended:

1. Academic librarians should consider career development as important motivational factor that could enhance their job performance which should be taken more seriously.
2. It is also necessary for institutions' management to ensure they offer an attractive career development policies and other monetary incentives to their academic librarians by providing them with career growth prospects that would enhance their performance and increase their job satisfaction and development.
3. Library personnel should be encouraged to continuously participate in programmes such as workshops, seminars and conferences both locally and internationally. Hence, it would expose them to foster networking opportunities with peers in the field as well updates their skills and capabilities.
4. Government, institutions' management and libraries' management need a clearer view of the assumptions when taking decisions on employment and the intentions to support career development. Hence, provision of funds for career development opportunities should be made available.

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