

Full Length Research

Research Competence, Interpersonal Skills, Demographic Factor as Correlates of Career Development of Librarians in University Libraries in South-South, Nigeria

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This study surveyed the Research Competence, Interpersonal Skills, Demographic Factor as Correlates of Career Development of Librarians in University Libraries in South-South, Nigeria. This study adopts the descriptive survey research design of the correlational. The population of this study consists of 301 academic librarians. The entire population was used for the study that is total enumeration sampling technique was adopted because the researcher can manage the population. The data was collected through a self-developed structured questionnaire. The data collected for the study was analyzed using descriptive and inferential statistics. The study revealed that there is a very high positive relationship of 0.94 between librarians' research competencies and librarians' career development in university libraries. There is a very high positive relationship of 0.89 between librarians' interpersonal skills and librarians career development in university libraries. A very low negative relationship of -0.03 exists between gender and librarians career development in university libraries. There is a low positive relationship of 0.07 exists between age and librarians career development in university libraries. The study concludes that work experience influence career development of librarians positively or negatively, also demographic factors significantly predicted career commitment. While gender influences a wide range of career-related attitude, behaviors and outcome. The study recommends among others that the university management should revise and intensify inclusion of courses in the Nigeria library school curriculum that will bring in competencies and skills in scholarly communication that will enhance carrier development, also. This at the end might enhance productivity.

Key Words: Research Competence, Interpersonal Skills, Demographic Factor, Career Development, University Libraries

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INTRODUCTION

Career development is a highly deliberated subject area in the fields of human resource management, social science, education, psychology and librarianship. According to Sunandini (2020), Career development is a series of initiatives aimed at aligning with the desires, skills and career aspirations of a person with present and prospective organizational opportunities. A career development path provides the mechanism for employees of all ages irrespective of gender, educational qualification and job experience to enhance their skills and knowledge that can help to boost their capabilities, increase efficiency, mastery in their routines, and a better understanding of their career. Master of Business

Association (MBA) Skool Team (2020) posited out that career development includes the skills, objectives, insight, appraisal and success structure that helps a person move in the right direction and achieve the goals that one has in his or her career. Career development is a continuous process because both male and female employees would require a wide range of skills to be effective in their chosen career path. This is coupled with the frequent changes in technology, changes in market demands and newly emerging areas in every field which prompt the need for the frequent career development of employees to enhance their efficiency.

Career development is inextricably linked to a person's goals and priorities, which begin with self-actualization and self-assessment of one's interests and skills, after which the interests are matched with available choices. Professional development of librarians which is an angle of career development however enables information access and use through systematic and user center description, categorization, digitization, storage, preservation and retrieval. It provides and promotes free and suitable access to information and client services. It enhances facilitation, acquisition, licensing or creation of information in a range of media formats and accurate standard driven meta-data for enhanced and persistent access to information resources in an online environment.

It is essential to note that while on the job, employees skills need to be updated through training and developments program and orientation/induction, inventory, conferences, workshops, seminars, higher degree programme and exchange programmes (Aslam, 2011) observed that career development is attainable if librarians are given the needed and necessary support it deserves. Supporting librarians through training conferences academically among others in this new electronic environment confirms their competence in other service delivery in the library as this will help in capacity enhancement. Once librarians are equipped especially in electronic resources and management, they function practically in all spheres of their career. Librarians need to be developed to keep abreast with all the changes in this 21st century.

The scenario is not different with librarians in South-South Nigeria as there have been increasing calls and emphasis for the career development of Librarians in this area to match with the needs of the 21st century as well as enhance their capabilities in line with current realities. A Librarians' career development can be achieved by engaging in diverse career prospect such as getting promotion, doing assessment, engaging in scientific research, and enhancing available resources (Trisliatanto, et-al, 2017).

According to Corporate Finance Institute (2021) interpersonal skills are the abilities needed to communicate, interact and collaborate effectively with individuals and organizations. Persons with high interpersonal skills are excellent communicators, both verbally and nonverbally and are frequently referred to as "good with people." Nevertheless, librarians especially those working in University library engage in a lot of communication, interaction and knowledge/information sharing activities as they strive to serve users, gain new knowledge from colleagues, lead teams and market the library to mention only but a few. Tanawade (2011) posited that librarians should have the ability to establish working relations with others, defining, sharing, and delegating responsibilities within a group and encourage people to work effectively in groups. However, one skill set required for librarians to excel and grow in their chosen career path is good Interpersonal Skills. Interpersonal skills have several definitions in the literature.

Interpersonal skills are the skills used daily to communicate and chat with other people, either individually or in groups (Skills You Need, 2021). This skill is mainly communication skills such as good listening and speaking skill that is comprehensible. Lombardo (2020) posited that interpersonal skills are the tools people use to interact and communicate with individuals in organizational settings.

Another factor that could predict the career development of Librarians is demographic factors such as age, work experience, educational qualifications and gender. Demographic factors are essential in the study of career development because they can predict the success and growth rate of professionals in diverse field of life. Studies have revealed that most times, career development of Librarians which might lead to the success in an organization may be through some factors (demographic factors like Work experience, gender, educational qualification and age). (Arogundade, Arogundade & Oladipo, 2014). Konya, Matic and Pavlovic (2016) define demographic factors as the statistical measurement for a specific population and identifying with the quantifiable section in a given population. According to Konya, et al.(2016), demographic factors (age, gender, educational qualification and work experience) may have impact on the career development of employees. Awoyemi and Odefadehan (2017) further stated that demographic variables such as age, gender, educational level, marital status, job tenure may foster the career development of librarians.

Statement of the Problem

Career development is the gateway that supports Librarians to enhance their skills and knowledge which in turn boosts their capabilities, increases efficiency, mastery in their routines, and a better understanding of their career. From the literature, the two skills that are a must-have for librarians irrespective of gender, age, educational qualification and experience to succeed in their career are research competence and interpersonal skills. It has been observed from

literatures that librarians' contributions to the library and information science literature are decreasing rapidly (Blecic, et al, 2017).

Preliminary investigation by the researchers shows that a lot of Librarians irrespective of gender, age, educational qualification and experience have been stagnant for years because they fail to meet up with the publication requirement for them to be promoted. Librarians whether aged or young need time, support, mentoring, experience, and monetary and infrastructural support to build their research competencies to the peak.

The researchers had also observed that most Librarians in university libraries in Nigeria seemed not to be concerned about advancement in their career. Could this lack of concern for career advancement be due to defective research competence, low demographic characteristics and poor interpersonal skills? It is against this backdrop that this study seeks to examine the research competence, interpersonal skills and demographic factor as correlates of career development of Librarians in university libraries in South-South, Nigeria with a view to proffering solutions to identifiable challenges.

Objectives s of the Study

The objectives of the study are to determine:

- 1.The relationship between research competence of librarians and their career development in university libraries in South-South, Nigeria.
- 2.The relationship between interpersonal skills of librarians and their career development in university libraries in South-South, Nigeria.
- 3.The relationship between gender of Librarians and their career development in university libraries in South-South, Nigeria
- 4.The relationship between age of Librarians and their career development in University libraries in South-South, Nigeria

Research Questions

The following research questions were formulated to guide the study:

- 1.What is the relationship between research competence of librarians and their career development in university libraries in South-South, Nigeria?
- 2.What is the relationship between interpersonal skills of librarians and their career development in university libraries in South-South, Nigeria?
- 3.What nature of relationship exists between gender of librarians and their career development in university libraries in South-South, Nigeria?
- 4.What nature of relationship exists between age of librarians and their career development in university libraries in South-South, Nigeria?

Hypotheses

The following hypothesis was tested:

- 1.There is no significant relationship between gender of librarians and their career development in university libraries in South-South, Nigeria.
- 2.There is no significant relationship between the age of librarians and their career development in university libraries in South-South, Nigeria.

Literature review

Career development is a set of individual improvement capabilities process that they undergo to achieve a desirable career which is aimed at adjusting between the needs and goals of employees with career opportunities that are available in companies currently and in the future (Prajapati, 2020). However, SHRM (2021) affirmed that employees who follow a career development path can improve their abilities and expertise over time, which can lead to mastery of

their current roles, promotions and transitions to new or different positions. McKay (2020) further asserted that even after the career path is decided, it is necessary to continue education and get the required training, apply for and obtain jobs, and eventually advance in the career. Most people would change jobs and professions at least once (and perhaps more than once) during their working lives. Australian Centre for Career Education (2021) posited that career development is a vital element of the lifecycle as it assists people to navigate their way through education and training into employment and fulfilling working lives. According to Trisliatanto, et-al (2018) librarian's career development in the university's Library is the process of recruitment which places more emphasis on bureaucratic aspects rather than the suitability of their educational background and ability.

According to the University of Hohenheim (2021), career researchers must successfully build their research competence, which is typically their primary reason for pursuing a research career. In the postdoctoral phase, deepening and extending their subject knowledge, writing, obtaining third-party funding, putting their research into practice, and building scientific networks are all critical, following the doctorate, the emphasis shifts to independent study and the ability to manage the increased flexibility and obligations that come with it. However, Böttcher-Oschmann, Ophoff, and Thiel (2021) posited that research competence is a necessary skill in higher education because it aids students in developing critical thinking and a better understanding of facts. Critical thinking and science fundamentals, epistemic comprehension, research skills, evidence-based reasoning, and qualitative understanding all contribute to research competency. Interpersonal skills are those essential skills involved in dealing with and relating to other people, largely on a one-to-one basis. According to Kerr (2019) interpersonal skills are the qualities and behaviors we exhibit while interacting with other people. These behaviors include emotional intelligence, communication, reliability, leadership, and positivity, and negotiation, openness to feedback, empathy and teamwork. According to this approach, interpersonal competence is assessed in terms of one's ability to achieve personal goals in social interaction while maintaining positive relationships with others (Shek, Siu & Yu, 2015). Doyle (2020) described interpersonal skills as employability skills because they are very essential, as a result most human resource managers don't want to hire people without these vital skills. Doyle further classified the types of interpersonal skills to include: Communication Skills, Conflict Management: Empathy Leadership, Listening, Negotiation, Positive Attitude and Teamwork:

According to Oyewole and Popola (2015), demographic variables are personal factors that include age, gender, educational level, working experience, job level and monthly salary. Age: Some literatures have it that the young are more developed or committed to their career while some stated that the old are more committed to their career. Konya, Maltic and Palvovic, (2016) stated that the older employees are more committed compared to younger employees.

Research Design

This study adopts the descriptive survey design of the correlational type. However, Cheprasov (2019) posited that "a correlational design is a type of research design where a researcher seeks to understand what kind of relationship naturally occurring variables have with one another". The population of this study consists of 301 (Three Hundred and one) academic librarians working in different sections of the library in Federal, State and Private University libraries in South-South, Nigeria. The entire population was used for the study which is 301 (three hundred and one) librarians in University libraries in South-South, Nigeria. The total enumeration sampling technique was adopted for the study because the population is not too large and the researcher has enough time and fund to conduct the study. The data required for this study will be collected through a structured questionnaire. The data collected for the study was analyzed using descriptive and inferential statistics. The Pearson Product Moment Correlation Coefficient r and point-biserial correlation was used respectively. However, the analysis of variance (ANOVA) and multiple regression analysis were used to test hypotheses

Presentation of Results

Research Question 1

What is the relationship between research competence of Librarians and their career development in university libraries in South-South, Nigeria?

Table 1. Pearson r on the research competences of librarians and their career development in university libraries

Sources of variation	N	Librarians Research competences r	Librarians Career development r	Remark
Librarians competences	Research 301	1	0.94	Very high positive relationship
Librarians development	Career 301	0.94	1	

In Table 1, it was observed that a very high positive relationship of 0.94 exists between librarians' research competencies and librarian's career development in university libraries in South-South, Nigeria.

Research Question 2

What is the relationship between interpersonal skills of Librarians and their career development in university libraries in South-South, Nigeria?

Table 2. Pearson r on the interpersonal skills of librarians and their career development in university libraries

Sources of variation	N	Librarians Research competences r	Librarians Career development r	Remark
Librarians competences	Research 301	1	0.89	High positive relationship
Librarians development	Career 301	0.89	1	

In Table 2, it was reported that a very high positive relationship of 0.89 exists between librarians' interpersonal skills and librarians career development in university libraries in South-South, Nigeria.

Research Question 3

What nature of relationship exists between gender of Librarians and their career development in university libraries in South-South, Nigeria?

Table 3. Point-Biserial correlation (r_{pb}) on gender of librarians and their career development in university libraries

Sources of variation	N	Gender r_{pb}	Librarians Career development r_{pb}	Remark
Gender	301	1	-0.03	Very low negative relationship
Librarians development	Career 301	-0.03	1	

In Table 3, it was observed that a very low negative relationship of -0.03 exists between gender and librarians career development in university libraries in South-South, Nigeria.

Research question 4

What nature of relationship exists between age of Librarians and their career development in university libraries in South-South, Nigeria?

Table 4. Point-Biserial correlation (r_{pb}) on age of librarians and their career development in university libraries

Sources of variation	N	Age r_{pb}	Librarians Career development r_{pb}	Remark
Age	301	1	0.07	Low positive relationship
Librarians Career development	301	0.07	1	

In Table 4, it was recorded that a low positive relationship of 0.07 exists between age and librarians career development in university libraries in South-South, Nigeria.

Hypothesis 1

Table 5. t-test on the relationship between gender of librarians and their career development in university libraries

N	Df	Cal. t	Pvalue	Remark
301	299	0.23	0.82	Not significant

Table 5 shows that at 0.05 level of significance and 299df, the calculated t 0.23 with Pvalue 0.82 which is greater than 0.05, the null hypothesis is not rejected. Hence, there is no significant relationship existing between gender and librarians career development in university libraries in South-South, Nigeria.

Hypothesis 2

There is no significant relationship between the age of Librarians and their career development in university libraries in South-South, Nigeria.

Table 6. t-test on the relationship between age of librarians and their career development in university libraries

N	Df	Cal. t	Pvalue	Remark
301	299	0.95	0.34	Not significant

Table 6 reveals that at 0.05 level of significance and 299df, the calculated t 0.95 with Pvalue 0.34 which is greater than 0.05, the null hypothesis is not rejected. Hence, there is no significant relationship existing between age of librarians and their career development in university libraries in South-South, Nigeria

Summary of Findings

Based on the analysis conducted, the following findings emerged;

1. There is a very high positive relationship of 0.94 between librarians' research competencies and librarians' career development in university libraries in South-South, Nigeria. There is a significant relationship existing between research competence of librarians and their career development in university libraries in South-South, Nigeria.
2. There is a very high positive relationship of 0.89 between librarians' interpersonal skills and librarians career development in university libraries in South-South, Nigeria.
3. A very low negative relationship of -0.03 exists between gender and librarians career development in university libraries in South-South, Nigeria.
4. There is a low positive relationship of 0.07 exists between age and librarians career development in university libraries in South-South, Nigeria.
5. There is no significant relationship existing between gender and librarians career development in university libraries in South-South, Nigeria.
6. There is no significant relationship existing between age of librarians and their career development in university libraries in South-South, Nigeria.

Discussion of Findings

The findings of the study were discussed under the following sub-headings:

The findings of this study showed that there is a very high positive relationship of 0.94 between librarians' research competencies and librarians' career development in university libraries in South-South, Nigeria. This implies that librarians have research competencies in relation to their career development. This study is related to a study conducted by Exner, (2019). The research study revealed that academic Librarians develop competencies necessary for success in their initial efforts to do research.

The findings of this study showed that there is a very high positive relationship of 0.89 between librarians' interpersonal skills and librarians' career development in university libraries in South-South, Nigeria. The study agrees to the study conducted by Jeyshankar (2018) which revealed that there is a positive relationship between interpersonal skills and library and information science professionals.

The findings of this study showed that a very low negative relationship of -0.03 exists between gender and librarians career development in university libraries in South-South, Nigeria. This study is related to study conducted by Arodovwe (2020). The study revealed that age, educational qualification and work experience contributed positively to career

commitment and significantly predict career commitment of librarians. In line with the hypothesis tested it revealed there is no significant relationship existing between gender and librarians career development in university libraries in South-South, Nigeria. Adio and Popoola (2010) found that employees between the ages of 40-49 years were highly committed to their career while employees between ages 20-29 years had the lowest level of commitment

The findings of this study revealed that there is a low positive relationship of 0.07 exists between age and librarians career development in university libraries in South-South, Nigeria. This study is related to study conducted by Terosky, Omeara and Campbell, (2014). The study revealed low relationship exists between aged women sense of agency and their advancement (career development). On the other hand, the hypothesis tested revealed there is no significant relationship existing between age of librarians and their career development in university libraries in South-South, Nigeria. A study by Pingleton, et al (2016) revealed that aged female professors at medical school described gender-based discrimination (example, being ignored) as a significant challenge to their career development.

CONCLUSION

The present study concludes that work experience influence career development of librarians positively or negatively, also demographic factors significantly predicted career commitment. While gender influences a wide range of career-related attitude, behaviors and outcome. Finally high positive of interpersonal skills increase librarians career development significantly in university libraries in South-South, Nigeria.

RECOMMENDATIONS

Based on the findings of this study, the following recommendations were made:

1. The university management should revise and intensify inclusion of courses in the Nigeria library school curriculum that will bring in competencies and skills in scholarly communication that will enhance carrier development
2. The library management should engage librarians in a lot of interpersonal skills and communication in the course of their job, during user registration, promotion/marketing of library services and resources, during reference/information services. This will bring drastic changes and positive impacts both in the library landscape and library services
3. The professional bodies and learned societies in the field of library and information science should design policies and practices aimed at enhancing sense of perspectives irrespective of gender and actions in career development including workload, interaction with colleagues, fits between personal values, and institutional promotion criteria. In contrast, perceived abilities, self-selected professional networks, and institutional support
4. The university authorities should recruit employees either young or old that may decide to be more committed, focused and stable in their career or occupation. This at the end might enhance productivity.

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