

CAREER DEVELOPMENT OF FEMALE LIBRARIANS IN FEDERAL UNIVERSITIES IN SOUTH-WEST, NIGERIA

By

AMINAT OMOLOLA ADISA (CLN, MNLA)

And

DR PIUS OLATUNJI OLAOJO (FNLA)

Abstract

This study explores career development of female librarians in federal universities in South-west, Nigeria. And formulated two objects: level of career development and challenges facing career development of female librarians in federal universities in South-west, Nigeria, to guide the study. The research employed a descriptive survey design, with a population of 63 female librarians in seven universities in South-west, Nigeria. Total enumeration method was used to sample all female librarians and questionnaire was used for data collection with 100% response rate. Findings revealed that there is high career development among female librarians most especially due to professional networking activities and mentorship. Likewise, female librarians have challenges attaining work-life balance, but primarily because of high institutional demands. Therefore, the study recommend that university managements should provide opportunities for leadership roles, clear and transparent policies for promotion and compassionate institutional support to enhance female librarians' career in federal universities in South-west, Nigeria.

Keywords: Career development, Female librarians, Universities, South-West

Introduction

In order to produce information for patrons in an efficient and effective manner, it is now crucial for female librarians to develop their careers. However, due to professional demands from the parent institution, career development for female librarians at federal universities may be delayed. This issue is not unique to the librarians at South-West federal universities. This research aims to investigate the impact of career development of female librarians in federal universities in South-west, Nigeria. Federal universities was established by federal government of the country like Nigeria to make learning easier for the students in terms of fees and other amenities available without being stressful. When these are catered for, learning will not be hard

and learners will be focus on their studies and become better person for themselves and country where the institution is established. The first point of call of any federal universities is the library, where studies will be palatable and the resources in this library most being in line with the curriculum of the universities (Adisa, 2024).

According to Adisa (2024), libraries provide a wide range of resources, services and facilities to support the academic programs and research activities of the institution. Library is one of the crucial units in a university, the aim and objectives are to manage scientific information and support the implementation in the university. However, a functional library serves as the life support or nerve centre of any university system. It is known that, for a library to remain greater, efficient and effective, qualified and devoted librarians are needed to move the library's objectives forward. A good number of female librarians are not convenient and comfortable with the low position of libraries and librarians by parent institutions, coupled with this, lack of appreciation and lack of recognition of library services by the parent institution, especially in developing countries like Nigeria. This is a mistaken belief or ignorance of the duties of librarians.

A well-articulated and comprehensive career development for librarians is needed for sustainability and enduring in the profession. That means, career development of a librarians should not be stagnant for efficient and effective dissemination of information to the patron. Career development is seen as being taken, but as being constructed, through the series of choices about learning and work that people make throughout their lives. This connotes that, the career development of a librarian is an approach used to match goals with the needs of institutional support. The female librarian career development process in the library will benefit from improved performance, mobilize talent as needed, adjust to rapid changes in the library and thereby retain their most critical talents.

Ngozi (2017) opined that a female career is recognized only if she can successfully combine career with her family duties, something that men do not need to worry about because they can focus primarily on their careers. That means that, traditional gender roles are still solidly in place in Nigerian society and culture. That means the gender equality policies that

make females participate in their careers or workplace, have increased the pressure on them, such females should both be successful academics and mothers and they experience the stress, workload and strain of both academia and household duties. Libraries are organizations established for the provision of relevant information resources and quality services to meet their users' information needs. The achievement of a librarian is a must for improving every stage of life in the coexistent time.

However, career development is offering a new ladder and new steps to library and information science professionals in this modern age. Female librarians are willing to change themselves. So, career development activities are needed for their upgrades in life. Female librarian professionals act all around for their professional and personal life. Career development is not easily accessed in the case of female librarian professionals. Various factors influence their career developments that are, their hard-working, knowledge and capacity development, academic development political and social relationship, associations, research and publication activities, family support, Information technology handling skill, and social media usage, are empowering female librarians for their career development activities. Many obstacles are faced in their way of career development activities. A critical analysis is necessary about the growth of their career and the factors influencing it. Libraries play a most important role in teaching, learning, and research (Dhanyasree and Mini Devi, 2019).

One of the most indispensable assets of any universities library is a qualified librarian. The persistent change which has become crucial in a universities library today is librarians develop themselves. The evolving competition and changing environment of the university system have called for increasing demand for high performance. The performance of female librarians plays an important role in achieving the central key or pivotal goal of the university. University libraries should initiate and provide excellent leadership training and learning, build a conducive environment, and provide quality education and life-applicable courses that resolute theory into practice (Falola, 2018). The present level of institutional support in terms of research support, conference sponsorship, technical support, technological support and publication support among others is not encouraging in Nigeria (Al Enazi, 2016). Based on Al Enazi

observation, this study investigates the career development of female librarians in federal universities in south-west, Nigeria.

Statement of the Problem

Traditionally, it was believed that males are the primary breadwinners of the family and should have rapid career development to provide for the family. Female were often confined to non corporate career, but female empowerment has fueled their determination to pursue advanced degrees and establish themselves in their careers. However, the professional world has not always been welcoming to female, leading to rejection, criticism, and mistreatment. Those who manage to break free from traditional roles face challenges competing with male colleagues who may not readily share opportunities. This imbalance puts females at a disadvantage.

To reduce the stress of career development of female librarian, there is an important need for universities support, which is currently lacking in many institutions. The existing support available is not categorized as feminine or masculine, rather it is uniform, making it challenging for females to develop in their careers. Despite having career development in place, a significant number of them encounter barriers that impede their development. This research aims to examine the provision of support and the fulfilment of established career development. This study specifically focuses on career development of female librarians in federal universities in South-west, Nigeria.

Research questions

The research questions are built up from the objectives of the study and they are:

1. What is the level of career development of female librarians in federal universities in South-west, Nigeria?
2. What are the challenges facing career development of female librarians in federal universities in South-west, Nigeria?

LITERATURE REVIEW

Career development of female librarians

A career is a chosen field of employment or profession that may involve one or more jobs. It also describes the training, experience, and schooling needed to develop in your current role or go on to another. The concept of "career" encompasses a trade, vocation, profession, or

occupation as well as the accomplishments and activities of an individual during their working years, especially concerning a single occupation. The study conducted by Cullen (2013), a career is an activity or task one occupies oneself or an individual which generates some income. It is a process of getting to the top that involves building and creating an identity that determines the pertinent or relevance of a person in society. On the other hand, career development is the progression or moving up an ordered rank or hierarchy within an organization or profession.

According to Anekwe, Ndubisi-okolo&Nwannah (2020), A career consists of various jobs held, titles, and types of work completed over a lengthy period of time. When regarded in this light, a career comprises everything linked to your professional development, including your choice of profession and promotion. Career development is the process by which an individual's occupational position evolves. It is the process of making long-term learning decisions in order to link personal demands for physical or psychological fulfilment with prospects for job success. Career Development can also refer to an individual's entire work-related experience leading up to the vocational job they may take inside an organization. Career development can take place on an individual or organizational level.

According to Bian and Yang (2019), career development has received less scholarly attention overall. The process through which individuals identify their skill gaps and learn how to grow as individuals to thrive throughout periods of change in their job or organization is known as "career development" (Nitzche, 2014). The process of improving a person's life and working skills so they can accomplish their desired career goal is known as career development. Many cultures around the world have traditionally associated a successful female leader with a feminine character and characteristics, such as self-assurance and dominance (Ljunge, 2019). Society did not accept a female result leader, and the usual rules were breached in this circumstance.

Female librarians consequently have more obstacles on their path to achieving greater levels of authority (Tank, 2016). The majority of female librarians struggle to manage or strike a balance between their work and family, which impedes their ability to advance professionally and results in strained relationships, stress, and health issues. Female must conduct their lives in harmony with nature and acknowledge harmony in their families, in society, and in them as

individuals. In order to go beyond and understand the harmony, roles, responsibilities, and ideals covered in the majority of publications on female librarianship, she produced this declaration. Ibegbulam&Ejikeme (2022), performed a survey of married female librarians in university libraries in South-east Nigeria to assess their work-life balance.

The goal of this survey was to learn how respondents view work-life balance in terms of family and organizational concerns. The statistics show that married female librarians value the family and administrative components of work-life balance; nevertheless, the organizational factor has a higher mean score than the family part. The study identifies and suggests ways and policies that could help respondents achieve a better work-life balance. However, according to this survey, married female librarian's value work-life balance in their personal and professional lives there is little doubt that there is still opportunity for career development.

Additionally, an interview was conducted in China. They discover that the majority of the female librarians discussed the difficulty of balancing job and home commitments. The most challenging one is family responsibilities; they attempted to balance the obligations of their profession with those of motherhood and parenthood. Some married women believe that maintaining a balance is impossible in order to advance in their careers, and they have struggled with determining priorities, sacrificing personal time, postponing family plans, and worrying about the effects of having a family while working. Female librarian's leadership positions in Pakistani universities are investigated by (AshiqRehman, Rafiq&Tariq, 2021). It examines the enormous obstacles that female leaders face on their path to the top, which is a vital predictor of success, as well as their work and the community service and professional accomplishments they have made during their careers.

The findings show that organizational constraints, family obligations, and gender discrimination impede female librarians' professional development. Effective use of technology, professional devotion, academic contribution, community involvement, family support, foreign exposure, and lifelong learning are critical success factors for female librarians; the study's conclusions highlight various opportunities for growth for female librarians.

As stated by Nakhoda&Rahiman (2015), used interviews to analyze the encouraging and inhibiting factors on the career development of female librarians, this study focuses on the key

control components that aid in the empowerment of female librarians. Job skills, involvement and teamwork, role resolution, access to information, motivation, role modelling, recognition, and thankfulness were all essential components in the empowerment of female librarians, according to the findings of the interviews. According to female public library managers, among the difficulties impeding the assignment of female librarians are poor organisational structure, an unfavorable attitude toward library users, and a pedagogical management style. Adjah and Walt (2019) they investigated the current state of affairs and occupational characteristics of female librarians in Ghana. They also created opportunities for job development and identify the roadblocks to their development. The research sought information on the background, professional experience, status, and opportunities for promotion of female librarians in Ghana. The study's goal was to find out how their male colleagues regarded them. According to the data, they faced no discrimination from their male and female librarians.

In research on female librarians and their professional growth, Lorelei (2022) describes the difficulties female librarians face in managerial positions and the contributing factors contributing to their success. This study helped female librarians comprehend the barriers that lie in their way of developing to managerial positions. Additionally, it helped deans, supervisors, and human resources professionals create interventions to support women in leadership roles. Such studies provide an opportunity to explore how talent might mitigate the detrimental effects of gender behaviour and foster an atmosphere that values female leaders and those who do not identify as such. Roberts (2018) supported in a study on career development programs in universities are getting significant global attention. One of the contributing causes to the slow development of university policies and strategies for capacity building for female librarians is the lack of precise planning, monitoring, and evaluation models for continued capacity development of female librarians. Staff training, particularly for female librarians, gives a channel for new information, skills, and experience required to update libraries' aims and objectives.

Agbo (2015) conducted a study on female librarian in Nigeria and discovered that the administration of academic libraries can never be successful if the process of designing, training, and assisting career development programs for female librarians does not exist in library structures. These procedures are in place to ensure that the library provides proper and necessary

services. It is also vital to develop a clear personnel strategy regarding how female librarians should be trained in the library. Given the function of the library in a university, it is critical to mention that training and career development are important for the institution's development. The changing position of female librarians as information managers and administrators need agile and adaptive individuals capable of managing change successfully. These changes have compelled female librarians to update their knowledge and learn new abilities while preserving those they already have. A study conducted in Zimbabwe, universities are responsible for providing well-grounded institutional and informal support structures that boost the professional development of female librarians (Chabaya, 2015).

Johnston and Williams (2015) performed research in Qatar on the future training of female librarians. The training will help female librarians advance in their careers. Their research discovered that Qatari female librarians require cataloguing training, as well as RDA, electronic resource management, information literacy, and copyright issues. The findings suggested that the majority of female librarians that responded, had poor catalogue skills and that they required informal training programs to develop their careers in the event of promotion and to increase library objectives. However, financing was discovered to be the primary obstacle. The study suggested that informal training programs for female librarians be implemented in order for them to develop knowledge in many sections of the library.

Mamuno, Ahmed & Ishaya (2016) looked into career development of female at the Adamawa State Local Government Service Commission and came to the conclusion that the biggest obstacle to the professional development of female librarians was a lack of funding. The indiscriminate selection of female librarians for training is one of the issues related to the career development of female librarians in Benue State, according to research conducted by Otsonu, Asom, Zuwaira, and OIje (2016). However, these findings support with those of Ngetunyi (2020) who discovered that, female librarians faced significant challenges in their career development. These challenges includes issues related to education and training, a lack of mentors, limited access to informal networks, and gender-based discrimination, indicating that not all female librarians have the same experience in terms of career development and support.

Foday's study (2014) on the perceived relationship between career development and female librarians retention indicated that female librarians expressed satisfaction with various aspects, including career planning, training and development, coaching and mentoring, career counseling, succession planning, and talent management. These findings collectively underscore the importance of career development practices in enhancing librarian's commitment and retention. For libraries to provide creative and efficient services, professional development to female librarians is essential (Casali, Perano&Abbate, 2017). They emphasized that developing skills and capabilities will raise the library's standing within the institution, but this depends on putting suitable career development plans into place and making sure they follow university policies. Therefore, female librarians experience rapid career development in federal universities in south-west, Nigeria.

Methodology

The study employed a descriptive survey design, targeting a population of 63 female librarians all over seven federal universities in South-West Nigeria. A total enumeration technique was adopted. A self structured questionnaire was designed for demographic information, career development was administered to female librarians to gather data. Out of the 63 questionnaires distributed, 63 were returned, resulting in a 100% response rate, which was used for analysis. Research questions were analysed using descriptive statistics (frequency, percentage, mean, and standard deviation).

Results

Table 1: Demographic characteristics of the librarians in federal universities in South-west, Nigeria

Item		Frequency	Percent
Name of institution	University of Ibadan (UI)	15	23.8
	Federal University of Agriculture Abeokuta	12	19.0
	Federal University of Technology Akure	6	9.5
	University of Lagos	9	19.0
	Federal University, OyeEkiti	6	9.5
	Federal University of Health Sciences,	2	3.2
Age	25 – 35	23	36.5
	36– 40	5	7.9
	41 – 50	16	25.4
	50 and above	19	30.2
Working experience	Less than a year	10	15.9
	1 – 5	15	23.8
	6 – 15	9	14.3

Religion	11 – 15	5	7.9
	16 – 20	10	15.9
	Above 21years	14	22.2
	Christianity	53	84.1
Marital status	Islam	10	15.9
	Single	42	66.7
	Married	21	33.3

Table 1 showed that Federal University of Health Sciences had the lowest respondents (2, 3.2%), while the University of Ibadan (UI) had the highest number of respondents (15, 23.8%). The results pertaining to the female librarians' demographic data indicate that the respondents' distribution was uniform, as the patterns were the same throughout the sample. As a result, the participants were assessed appropriate for the research.

Research question one: What is the level of career development of female librarians in federal universities in South-west, Nigeria?

In order to ascertain the respondent's response on the level of career development of female librarians in federal universities in South-west, Nigeria, Female librarians were instructed to point out their agreement or disagreement with items that were developed as contained in the scale that was used to measure the construct. The results were presented in Table 2

Table 2: Level of career development of female librarians in federal universities in South-west, Nigeria

S/N	Item Description	SA(%)	A(%)	D(%)	SD (%)	$\bar{X}$	S. Dev.
1	I feel that my career align with my current position as a female librarian.	10 (15.9)	34 (54.0)	14 (22.2)	5\ (7.9)	2.78	.81
2	I am confident in my abilities and skills required for success in my role as a female librarian.	13 (20.6)	31 (49.2)	13 (20.6)	6 (9.5)	2.81	.87
3	As a female librarian I actively pursue opportunities for professional development within the field of librarianship.	17 (27.0)	31 (49.2)	13 (20.6)	2 (3.2)	3.00	.78
4	As a female librarian I actively engage in networking activities to expand my professional connections within the library community.	14 (22.2)	40 (63.5)	6 (9.5)	3 (4.8)	3.03	.71
5	I actively seek feedback from supervisors or colleagues to improve my performance as a female librarian.	10 (15.9)	29 (46.0)	16 (25.4)	8 (12.7)	2.63	.89
6	I regularly assess my progress towards my career goals and make necessary	10 (15.9)	34 (54.0)	15 (23.8)	4 (6.3)	2.59	.89

	adjustments as a female librarian.						
7	I am confident in my ability to navigate and overcome challenges in career as a female librarian.	13 (20.6)	30 (47.6)	14 (22.2)	6 (9.5)	2.79	.78
8	I am satisfied with the level of recognition and appreciation I receive for my contributions as a librarian.	16 (25.4)	30 (47.6)	10 (15.9)	7 (11.1)	2.87	.92
9	As a female librarian I have a clear understanding of the potential career paths available to me within the library profession.	7 (11.1)	33 (52.4)	13 (20.6)	10 (15.9)	2.79	.88
10	I actively seek out for mentorship or guidance to help develop my career as a female librarian.	13 (20.6)	37 (58.7)	8 (12.7)	5 (7.9)	2.92	.80
	TOTAL	12 (19.0)	33 (52.5)	12 (19.0)	6 (9.5)		
N=63, Average mean=2.82 Weighted mean=2.50						2.82	0.83

The findings in Table 2 showed the highest-ranking female librarians are those who participated in networking activities (mean = 3.03), while the lowest-ranking female librarians evaluate their progress and make the required corrections (mean = 2.59). In particular, with an average of 3.03 interactions each year, female librarians regularly participate in networking events to broaden their professional links within the library community. This suggests that, on average, every female librarian at federal universities in southwest Nigeria has helped the library to grow and provide users with accurate information.

Research question two: What are the challenges facing career development of female librarians in federal universities in South-west, Nigeria?

Table 3 the challenges facing career development of female librarians in federal universities in South-west, Nigeria

S/N	Item Description	SA(%)	A(%)	D(%)	SD (%)	$\bar{X}$	S. Dev.	Rank
1	Female librarians have limited access to leadership roles compared to their male counterparts.	11 (17.5)	26 (41.3)	18 (28.6)	8 (12.7)	2.61	.93	5
2	Gender-based discrimination is a significant challenge for female librarians in the workplace.	12 (19.0)	23 (36.5)	22 (34.9)	6 (9.5)	2.76	.90	3
3	Work-life balance is difficult for female librarians to achieve due to institutional demands.	13 (20.6)	22 (34.9)	22 (34.9)	5 (7.9)	2.89	.89	1
4	Female librarians feel undervalued and their contributions are not adequately recognized.	8 (12.7)	14 (22.2)	22 (34.9)	19 (30.2)	2.17	1.00	11

5	Female librarians face limited opportunities for professional development in the institution.	8 (12.7)	21 (33.3)	23 (36.5)	11 (17.5)	2.41	.92	8
6	The promotion criteria for career development are unclear or challenging for female librarians.	6 (9.5)	20 (31.7)	24 (38.1)	13 (20.6)	2.30	.90	9
7	Mentorship programs for female librarians are insufficient.	12 (19.0)	20 (31.7)	19 (30.2)	12 (19.0)	2.53	1.01	6
8	There is a lack of support for research and publication activities for female librarians.	7 (11.1)	19 (30.2)	21 (33.3)	16 (25.4)	2.27	.97	10
9	Family responsibilities negatively impact the career development of female librarians.	11 (17.5)	25 (39.7)	21 (33.3)	6 (9.5)	2.66	.88	2
10	The institution does not effectively address gender-based issues in the workplace.	8 (12.7)	26 (41.3)	18 (28.6)	11 (17.5)	2.50	.93	7
11	Family-friendly policies are not well-implemented, impacting the career development of female librarians.	13 (20.6)	22 (34.9)	17 (27.0)	11 (17.5)	2.58	1.02	4
TOTAL		10 (16.0)	22 (35.0)	20 (32.0)	11 (17.0)			
N=63, Average mean=2.51, Weighted mean=2.50						2.51	0.94	

Key: Strongly Agree(SA=4), Agree(A=3), Disagree(D=2), Strongly Disagree(SD=1)

The finding in Table 3 shows that female librarians have severe difficulties in attaining work-life balance (mean=2.89), primarily because of institutional demands.

In contrast, the data show that support for research and publication activities is particularly low among female librarians (mean= 2.27), which is likely a contributing factor to the lower research and publication output observed among this group.

Conclusion

Career development of female librarians in federal universities South-west, Nigeria, the study concluded that female librarians are opened to changes, career development and activities required for their career upgrade. It therefore appropriates that universities should design career development process that will enable both male and female librarians to flourish and excel on their job.

Recommendations

1. Females' librarians in South-west, Nigeria engage more in networking, pursuing professional development and seek mentorship as well to always yearn for satisfaction and recognition in their profession.
2. Universities library managements in South-west, Nigeria should identify favourable institutional support for female librarians. They should provide opportunities for leadership roles, clear and transparent promotion criteria for their career advancement and set out clear policies for promotion.
3. Among the challenges to career development of female librarians in federal universities in South-west, Nigeria are limited access to leadership roles, gender-based discrimination and institutional demand, therefore managements of university libraries should provide effective means of reducing the tension and conflicts that occur in workplace.

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