

THE KNOWLEDGE AND PRACTICE OF CONTINUING PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT AMONG PROFESSIONAL LIBRARIANS IN STATE-OWNED UNIVERSITY LIBRARIES IN GHANA

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ABSTRACT

The study looked into the level of awareness and involvement in Continuing Professional Development (CPD) by professional librarians in the five state-owned university libraries in Ghana. The study also considered factors hindering and motivating participation in CPD activities. The survey approach was used. Findings revealed that majority of the population was aware of CPD and was involved in it to some extent. Respondents were generally motivated to pursue CPD. Funding stood out as the biggest obstacle to pursuing CPD activities.

KEYWORDS: UNIVERSITY LIBRARIES, CONTINUING PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT (CPD), PROFESSIONAL LIBRARIANS, ACADEMIC LIBRARIES, GHANA

Introduction

Continuing professional development (CPD) has become a household name among professionals the world over. It is incumbent on the professional librarian to engage in CPD activities because of the changes that have been introduced into the profession in this Information and Communications Technology (ICT) era. ICT could be said to have redefined librarianship and with it the role of librarians. ICT has brought in its wake new

roles for librarians, thus changing the face of librarianship. Coupled with this, the economic drought in Africa and indeed Ghana, and its accompanying rising costs of books and journals, has had an indirect impact on the library, which is felt especially by the state-owned university libraries. Librarians in these institutions have had to learn new skills in order to survive this era of change. These skills include marketing, advocacy and income generation. Acquisition of these skills would help the librarians and libraries get the resources that would enable them support teaching, learning, research and knowledge dissemination within their institutions. As such, there is no end to the learning and acquisition of all the needed skills by members of the library profession, especially in the state-owned university libraries in Ghana. According to Churukian (IFLA publications 80/81, 1997),

the challenges that academic librarians will face in the Information Age should be viewed as a golden opportunity to advance.

It is in this vein that CPD is a must for the library profession on the whole and specifically the library profession in Ghana.

There is another slant to the need for librarians in state-owned university libraries in Ghana to take CPD seriously. A cursory look at the situation in the state-owned university libraries in Ghana would reveal that academic librarianship in Ghana is in a crisis. For example, the bulk of the professional librarians in the University of Ghana library system, are on the Assistant Librarian grade and some have been on that grade for the past ten (10) to thirteen (13) years. The writer dare say the case of the University of

Ghana library system mirrors what is happening in the other state-owned university libraries in Ghana. This no doubt has implications for academic librarianship in Ghana.

To be able to embark on any CPD activity, one has to know and understand what it entails and be convinced about its importance. This study is to find out the knowledge of and the extent to which CPD is practised among professional librarians in Ghana. The study will also seek to identify barriers to CPD and factors that facilitate CPD.

Theoretical framework

The theory, on which this study is based, is the Adult Learning Theory, Andragogy.

Knowles is the originator of this theory (Kearsley, 1994). Knowles' theory of Andragogy is an attempt to develop a theory specifically for adult learning. Andragogy assumes the following:

- The learner is self-directed and so decides how, when and what will be learned;
- The experience of the learner is valued as a rich resource, e.g. in group discussions;
- Learners will be motivated by a need to improve an area of their life. This may occur naturally through a life event such as unemployment or may be 'induced' by for example, encouraging career planning;
- Adults enter education to enable them to carry out a task, solve a problem, or for their own satisfaction;
- External motivators such as salary, promotion and maintenance of professional registration, may motivate learning but internal needs like increasing self-esteem

and quality of life are likely to be more potent (CPD research: educational theory and IBL); and

- Andragogy applies to any form of adult learning. It is relevant for this research, which has to do with a form of adult learning which is lifelong, continuing professional development (CPD), amongst professional librarians in the five state-owned university libraries in Ghana. This study therefore aims to take advantage of this theory.

Methodology

This study employs the survey method. The concept of population is fundamental to survey research. The population for the survey will be all professional librarians in the five state-owned university libraries in Ghana. Below is a list of the number of professional librarians in the five state-owned university libraries.

Name of university library	Number of professional librarians
University of Ghana Library System	27
University of Cape Coast (UCC) Library	8
Kwame Nkrumah University of Science and Technology (KNUST) Library	12
University of Education of Winneba (UEW) Library	9
University for Development Studies (UDS) Library	5
Total	61

For this study, the entire population is surveyed because it is “of a manageable size” (Saunders *et al*, 1997).

The study was conducted in the year 2003. Instruments for data collection were the questionnaire and interviews. Questionnaires were administered to all sixty-one

professional librarians. In addition, University Librarians were interviewed regarding factors that affect the CPD of senior members.

Literature review

Havener and Worrell (1994) admit that the importance of continuing professional development activities for academic librarians is generally acknowledged but observe that differences in activity levels according to type of academic institution have received little examination. Their study therefore compares academic librarians in a single state on the basis of type of employing institution: 2-year institution, predominantly 4-year college, or doctorate-granting institution. The results show that demographic profiles of librarians and institutional support for professional activities did not vary significantly across type of institution, but a number of notable differences emerged when the professional behaviour of the three groups was compared. Librarians at doctorate-granting institutions belonged to more professional associations, were more active in those organizations, and published more.

In other activity areas, however, different comparative patterns were discovered. White (2001) discusses the positive impacts that research and publication, conference attendance and presentations at professional association meetings and service activities have on the professional development and growth of reference librarians. He gives practical tips and strategies for becoming involved in these professional activities. One important strategy he suggests for librarians to embark on research is the reading of the professional literature in librarianship. According to him this would “prompt researchers

into thinking of a research project which builds on the study.” He also suggests that teaming up with an experienced researcher would make the research and publication process less intimidating. The practical tip he offers for conference attendance is to be willing to present a paper at the conference since “many institutions would fund the cost of conferences if a paper is presented.” He suggests that beginners should not hesitate to pair up with an experienced conference presenter in order to prepare a paper for presentation.

In her paper, Archer (2001) notes that library school provides librarians with a good background in Library Science, but indicates that to be a professional reference librarian, continuous improvement must be sought. According to her, professionalism can include developing basic employee skills, adhering to library standards, participating actively in university and library functions, presenting papers, and publishing, projecting a professional image and marketing the librarian’s skills outside of the library by being visible on campus, in the community, and on the Internet. In Archer’s own words, “professionalism is an exciting career-long journey that requires continuous improvement and growth on the part of the librarian.” Asiagodo (1989) describes the growth of staff development at the Balme Library, University of Ghana. He mentions that staff development activities include staff orientation, staff meetings, departmental seminars, subject responsibilities as well as professional activities outside the university.

Daniel (2001) considers the varied motivations for undertaking CPD. Some of these, he mentions, are career progression, role satisfaction, innovation and creativity, changing

culture and technology. Alemna (2001) looks at continuing education from the viewpoint of the library practitioner in Ghana. He compares this with the views of the library educator. He found that although there were a few variations in their priorities, both groups agreed that continuing education is important in professional development. He makes suggestions towards the improvement of continuing education in Ghana. Recommendations made are based on a summary of suggestions made by respondents of the survey. These include: a needs assessment survey to be carried out by planners of Continuing Education (CE) programmes to find out major areas of interest of librarians, adequate publicity of CE programme, which should be given well in advance of the actual date, location and timing be convenient to participants, and finally provision be made for lower or subsidized rates to be paid by those librarians with no form of institutional support. All these recommendations would aid participation in Continuing Education programmes.

Dalton et al (2001) look in detail at barriers to career development within the LIS profession. They focus particularly on difficulties experienced by LIS professionals in moving to different sectors of the profession. They discuss issues such as professional segregation, employer prejudice, poor employment strategies, lack of confidence among LIS professionals, training and lack of professional support. The paper also offers a number of recommendations for employers, professional bodies, and LIS professionals that may help to alleviate many of these barriers. A key recommendation is training. Friedman et al (2000) in their study, focus on four issues: who should pay for CPD; what should be included when measuring the true cost of CPD; whether financial assistance

can be provided for those who find it difficult to fund their own development; and virtual CPD. Money could therefore be a great deterrent to CPD.

Goulding and Kerslake (1997) address the issue of flexible workers' CPD needs and opportunities. Their paper focuses on the barriers that prevent the full participation of flexible workers in CPD activities. The barriers identified by the paper were both physical and attitudinal. The physical barriers consisted of financial, logistical and organizational barriers. The attitudinal barriers consisted of the managers' attitudes and the workers' attitudes. A similar study by Cameron (1994) also mentions some barriers to CPD such as lack of money and constraints on time.

Campbell et al (2000) undertook a study, which sought to investigate among others, barriers to successful completion of Associateship of the Library Association (LA) and continuing professional development (CPD). Some of the factors that impeded the successful completion of the Associateship were, conflicting pressures, lack of time, loss of interest, poor supervision, lack of support, change of career direction, career break, insufficient information and unclear guidelines. Some reasons given for professionals not using LA CPD framework were lack of interest and lack of time.

As indicated by the literature review, extensive research has been carried out on Continuing Professional Development (CPD) internationally. Also some research has been carried out in Ghana on training, continuing education and staff development of professionals within the libraries in Ghana. It is to expand on studies already undertaken

in this area of training, continuing education and development of library staff that the researcher seeks to look at the extent of knowledge and involvement of professional librarians in CPD and the factors that affect participation in CPD activities.

Data Analysis

Questionnaires were coded and processed on the computer using the Statistical Package for the Social Sciences (SPSS). Data was analyzed using simple frequencies and percentages for easy interpretation of data. Cross tabulations were made of some of the responses obtained. The chi squared test and the fisher's exact test were used to determine if there was any relationship between variables. A p value of less than 0.05 was considered significant. The data has been presented in the form of graphs and tables.

Findings and Discussion

Response rate

A total of sixty-one (61) copies of the designed questionnaires were distributed to all professional librarians, who are also referred to as senior members, in the five state-owned university libraries in Ghana. Fifty-five (55) questionnaires were returned, giving a response rate of 90 %. Figure I shows the respondents by institution. For a survey, a response rate of at least 50% is adequate for analysis and reporting (Babbie, 1989).

Fig. 1: Respondents by Institution

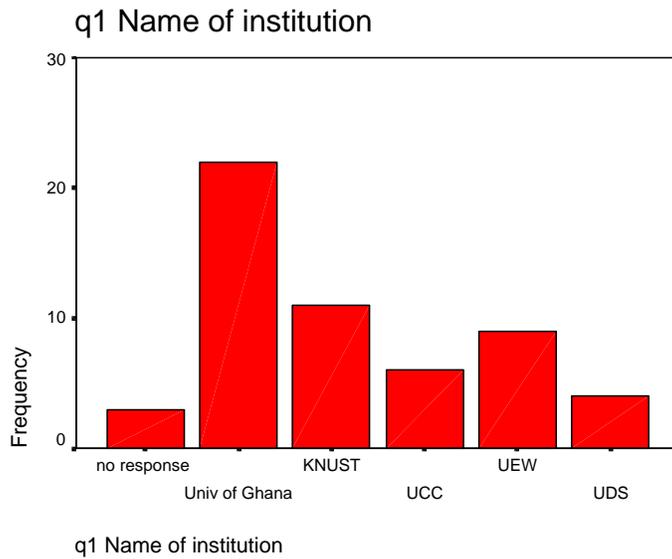
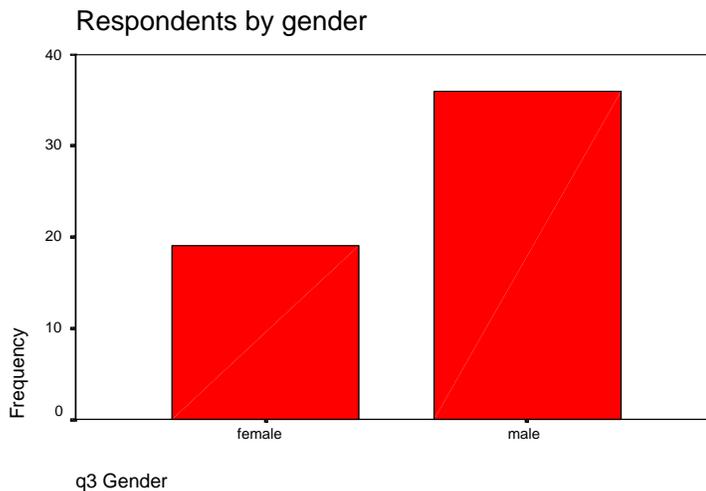


Figure II (see below) shows the respondents by gender. Nineteen (19) of the respondents were female and an overwhelming thirty-six (36) were male. These figures represent 34.5% and 65.5% respectively of respondents.

Fig. II: Respondents by Gender



The gender of respondents was required to find out what percentage of respondents were female and whether this factor had any influence on involvement in CPD. Table I displays involvement in CPD by gender.

TABLE 1: INVOLVEMENT IN CPD BY GENDER

Gender	Are you involved in any form of CPD?				Total
	No response	Yes	No	Don't Know	
Female	1	16	2	0	19
Male	8	25	1	1	35
Total	9	41	3	1	54

An observation made from Table 1 is that although the total number of females is fewer than the total numbers of males, a higher percentage (84%) of females is involved in CPD as compared to 71% of the males.

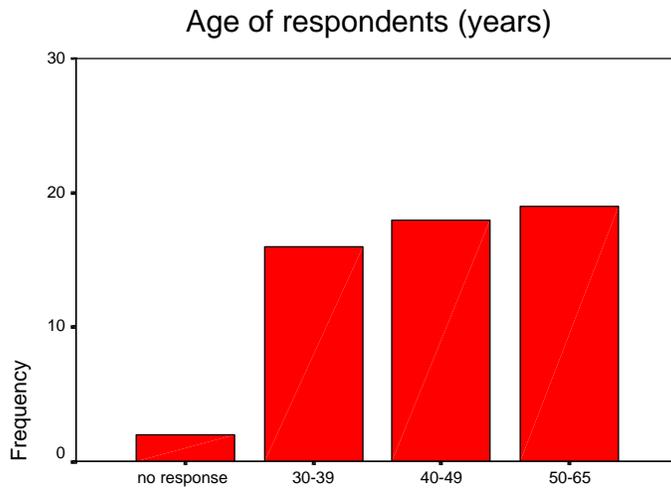
Background Information

The background characteristics were considered essential in relation to Continuing Professional Development (CPD). These variables give insight into the practice or not of CPD. Below is a summary of the findings.

Age of respondents

The age of respondents was sought to find out whether age in any way affected the practice of CPD. The age groupings as obtained from respondents are shown in Figure III

Fig. III: Age of respondents



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Certain valid observations were made from the age of respondents. First, all the respondents were 30 years of age and above. The implications are that they are all adults and therefore adult learners. The mean age of the respondents was 44 years. This implies that majority of respondents are well into their career and should be engaged in CPD.

Number of years worked as professional librarian

Another important characteristic of respondents, which was considered essential to their Continuing Professional Development, was the number of years they have been working as professional librarians. The number of years would help determine the extent of progression in the profession, which is an indication of how active respondents are in CPD. An essential mark of success in a professional's career is a steady progression from one position to another. This means that under normal circumstances, a professional is not expected to remain too long at a particular level or position. For one to remain at a particular position for six (6) years or more is not good enough. This, the researcher believes has implications for how much CPD is actually being done. Table 2 shows the number of years respondents have been working as professional librarians.

Table 2: Number of years working as a professional librarian

Years	Frequency	Percent
0-5	19	34.5
6-10	12	21.8
11-20	15	27.3
21-40	9	16.4
Total	55	100.0

One observation made was that about 65.5% of the respondents had been working for six years or more. This presupposes that a lot of CPD should be going on which should lead

to obvious progression in the profession. But unfortunately this appears not to be so. A cross tabulation done between number of years worked and position of respondents illustrates this (See Table 3).

Table 3: Number of years worked by position

Current position/rank	Number of years worked			Total
	0 - 5	6 – 10	More than 10	
Junior Asst. Librarian	4	2	0	6
Assistant Librarian	14	10	14	38
Senior Asst Librarian/Sub Librarian	1	0	6	7
Deputy Librarian	0	0	1	1
Librarian	0	0	3	3
Total	19	12	24	55

The table revealed that twenty-four respondents have remained on the Assistant Librarian grade for six years and more. It is important to point out here that the Assistant Librarian grade is either the beginning position for some professional librarians or professional librarians are promoted automatically to this position after two years' of being on the Junior Assistant Librarian grade. Hence, one's involvement in CPD is not relevant to this position. This implies therefore that little or no CPD has been going on among most of the respondents (65.5%) who have been on the Assistant Librarian grade for at least six (6) years. Other reasons could be responsible for this but the researcher is of the opinion that the absence of the requisite CPD plays a significant role.

Current position

The current position of respondents was sought to find out what level of professionals were dealt with in this study. This variable was important to help identify the extent of

knowledge, understanding and practice of CPD among specific positions (Figure IV illustrates findings from respondents).

Fig. IV: Current position of respondents

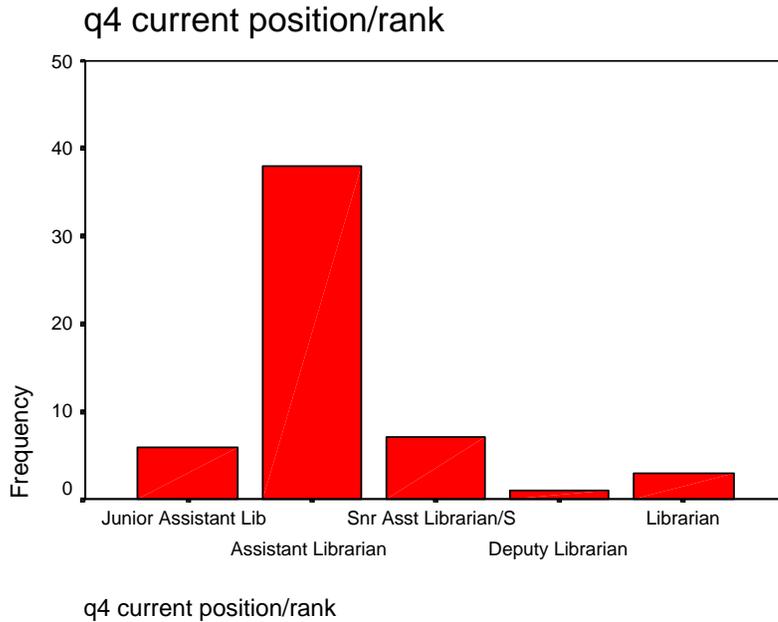


Figure IV indicates that the study is dealing with professionals who are mostly at the beginning of their professional career. This position is the Assistant Librarian position to which 69.1% of the respondents belong. The implication therefore is that CPD should be well understood and should be actively pursued. The Senior Assistant Librarian or Sub Librarian grade has 12.7%. A cross tabulation between current position/rank and involvement in CPD activities was done. The results are displayed in Table 4

Table 4: Involvement in CPD by position

Current position/rank	Are you involved in any form of CPD?				Total
	No response	Yes	No	Don't Know	
Junior Assistant Librarian	0	4	1	1	6
Assistant Librarian	2	29	2	0	38
Senior Asst. Librarian/Sub Librarian	7	5	0	0	7
Deputy Librarian	0	1	0	0	1
Librarian	0	3	0	0	3
Total	9	42	3	1	55

The findings show that 29 of the respondents at the Assistant Librarian grade indicated that they are involved in CPD activities. The researcher however wonders why they have remained on the same grade for more than six years in spite of being involved in CPD.

Knowledge of Continuing Professional Development (CPD)

Questions were asked to find out whether respondents had any knowledge of CPD. This was important because the researcher is of the opinion that the awareness of CPD would influence involvement in it. A cross tabulation of the responses to the two questions is displayed in Table 5. The chi square value showed that a significant proportion of those who were not involved in CPD activities had never heard of CPD (p value less than 0.001)

Table 5: Awareness of CPD by involvement in CPD

Ever heard of CPD?	Are you involved in any form of CPD?				Total
	No response	Yes	No	Don't Know	
No response	2	1	0	0	3
Yes	6	38	2	0	46
No	1	3	1	0	5
Don't know	0	0	0	1	1
Total	9	42	3	1	55

The results of the level of awareness of CPD showed that respondents do have some knowledge of CPD. Forty-six of the respondents, making 83.6% said they had heard of the term CPD. Five respondents (9.1%) reported not to have ever heard of the term 'CPD'. One respondent (1.8%) was not sure of having ever heard of the term 'CPD'. This is however no indication that they are not involved in CPD since they may be familiar with CPD activities although they may never have heard of the term. A cross-tabulation was done between positions and ever heard of CPD to find out which positions may or may not have heard of CPD. Table 6 displays the results.

Table 6: Awareness of CPD by position

Current position/rank	Ever heard of CPD?				Total
	No response	Yes	No	Don't know	
Junior Assistant Librarian	0	5	0	1	6
Assistant Librarian	3	31	4	0	38
Senior Assistant Librarian/Sub Librarian	0	6	1	0	7
Deputy Librarian	0	1	0	0	1
Librarian	0	3	0	0	3
Total	3	46	5	1	55

One observation made was that majority of the respondents had heard of the term CPD and knew about it. Out of a total number of forty-six (46), who were in the know, thirty-one (31) were on the Assistant Librarian grade, six (6) on the Senior Assistant Librarian grade, one (1) was a Deputy Librarian and the remaining three (3), Librarians.

Practice of CPD

A significant number of the respondents (92.7%) indicated they were involved in one form or other of CPD. In a similar study carried out by Campbell et al (2000), the finding

was that more than 90% of the respondents were interested in CPD and were involved in it.

To establish the types of CPD activities involved in by the respondents, they were provided with a list of CPD activities from which they were asked to select three. The CPD activities that respondents were asked to select from were:

- Reading professional literature
- Discussion groups
- Professional meetings
- Conferences
- Workshops
- Seminars
- Research and publishing
- Networking with colleagues
- Membership of a professional association

The findings showed that the three most practised CPD activities were reading professional literature, attending workshops, and membership of a Professional Association. Again, findings made by Campbell et al (2000), was that “majority of respondents were interested in reading professional literature as part of their CPD.” The least practised CPD activity was subscribing to a discussion group/ mailing list. Networking with colleagues followed with only 16 respondents (29.1%). Unfortunately research and publishing did not feature among the three most popular CPD activities. This finding is at variance with the findings of Havener and Worrel (1994) that

“Librarians at doctorate-granting institutions ... published more.” This explains why some form of CPD may be going on but if it does not eventually lead to research and publishing, respondents would remain on the same grade for many years. The view that CPD activities including the reading of professional literature should enable librarians embark on research is supported by White (2001). In the university setting, an important prerequisite to promotion for professional librarians is research and publishing. But unfortunately the findings indicate that the respondents do not appear to give it the importance or priority it deserves.

Factors that affect participation in CPD activities

One consideration of the study was to identify factors that motivate or deter CPD activities. Respondents were asked if they were motivated to pursue CPD activities. Eighty percent (80%) of the respondents said they were motivated to pursue CPD activities; 10.9% did not respond and 9.1% said they were not motivated. It would be interesting to find out which positions were motivated or not to pursue CPD activities. Table 7 shows a cross tabulation of position and whether motivated to pursue CPD.

Table 7: Motivation to pursue CPD by position

Current position/rank	Are you motivated to pursue CPD?			Total
	No response	Yes	No	
Junior Assistant Librarian	1	5	0	6
Assistant Librarian	4	29	5	38
Senior Assistant Librarian/Sub Librarian	1	6	0	7
Deputy Librarian	0	1	0	1
Librarian	0	3	0	3
Total	6	44	5	55

One observation made was that all the respondents above the Assistant Librarian grade except one said they were motivated to pursue CPD activities. One person did not respond. The researcher raised no questions about these responses because proof of their motivation is seen in the fact that they have advanced beyond the Assistant Librarian grade. The response that raises questions for the researcher is the twenty-nine (29) Assistant Librarians who indicated they were motivated to pursue CPD activities. The researcher expected that many more on this grade would have said they were not motivated instead of the five respondents and that would explain why many have been on this grade for more than six years.

Respondents were also asked why they would engage in CPD activities. To answer this question, respondents were given possible reasons from which they were to select three. The possible reasons were:

- For promotion
- To be abreast with the profession
- Self-fulfilment
- To carry out a task
- To solve a problem
- To be more competent
- Monetary gains

For 92.7% of the respondents, competence was a key factor; 87.3% pursued CPD activities in order to be abreast with the profession. Another 70.9% said promotion was a reason for pursuing CPD activities while 56.4% gave self-fulfillment as the reason. Although a few considered the other reasons, those reasons were obviously not important factors to ensure CPD. Whatever the reasons given by the respondents for their involvement in CPD, this supports the theory of Andragogy, which is the theoretical framework for this study. This theory states that “adults enter education to enable them to

carry out a task, solve a problem, or for their own satisfaction. Also external motivators such as salary, promotion and maintenance of professional registration, may motivate learning...” A cross tabulation was done between current position and promotion and competence to find out what the reasons might be for the different positions (See Table 8).

Table 8: Promotion and competence as reasons for CPD by position

Current position/rank	Promotion is reason for CPD	To be more competent is reason for CPD		Total
		No response	Yes	
Junior Assistant Librarian	No response	0	3	3
	Yes	2	1	3
	Total	2	4	6
Assistant Librarian	No response	1	7	8
	Yes	1	29	30
	Total	2	36	38
Senior Assistant Librarian/Sub Librarian	No response	0	1	1
	Yes	0	6	6
	Total	0	7	7
Deputy Librarian	No response	0	1	1
	Total	0	1	1
Librarian	No response	0	3	3
	Total	0	3	3

The table revealed that the grades above Senior Assistant or Sub Librarian did not cite promotion as reason for CPD although they still considered CPD important. The explanation for this could be that at that level one would have reached the apex of the profession within the university libraries. Findings revealed that competence was obviously rated higher by all as a reason for engaging in CPD.

With regard to deterrents or barriers to CPD, the respondents were again given a list from which they were required to make their selection of three. The list consisted of the following items:

- Lack of interest
- Lack of motivation
- Content irrelevant to work schedule
- Lack of personal finances
- Lack of financial assistance from library/institution
- High costs
- Lack of time
- Home situation
- Library management not favourably disposed
- Workload too much
- Absence of professional goals
- Limited space
- Not enough prior notice

The greatest barrier cited was the lack of financial assistance from the library or institution. Interestingly enough, lack of motivation was also cited as a deterrent to active CPD by about 49% of the respondents. Lack of personal finances was also thought to be a hindrance to CPD. The financial barrier corroborates findings made by others in earlier studies (Heynes, 1994; Friedman et al, 2000). Lack of interest, high costs, lack of time and workload were considered as well, as possible hindrances to CPD. The least significant barrier was limited space (1.8%). Respondents obviously did not consider this

an issue. The Head Librarians' views were also sought in an interview to find out what the possible barriers to CPD might be within the library. Two out of five said there were no hindrances to CPD. The remaining three Heads indicated there were hindrances. They all cited lack of funding. One of them went on to say that, "the institutional culture of no money where they look at the costs without the benefits was not in the least helpful." A second hindrance mentioned by two of the Heads was the lack of interest by senior members. The respondents themselves also cited these two hindrances.

A look at factors that encourage or motivate CPD revealed that the greatest motivation was the need to update skills. Majority of the respondents (81.1%) felt this way. Closely linked to this was the need for technical knowledge (70.9%). An associated factor was the changing role of libraries (70.9%). These factors show that respondents are aware of the rapid changes that have gone on in librarianship and feel like they are not up to date enough with developments. This finding supports the adult learning theory andragogy, a portion of which states that, "*learners will be motivated to improve an area of their life...*" These reasons are very much in keeping with what has been discovered in earlier studies (Freeman, 1994). It was observed that only 32.7% of the respondents cited reasonable costs as a factor that would encourage CPD. The researcher expected more people to have indicated this as a factor for motivation, especially since finances had been cited as a deterrent.

Library management's view was also sought on how senior members could be motivated to engage in CPD. Some suggestions given included identifying avenues for exposure to

other working practices and sponsoring senior members to visit these libraries, organising training programmes, the university offering research allowance to professional librarians where it was currently not being offered, implementing compulsory seminars perhaps on a quarterly basis, encouraging research and publishing by giving assistance as in drawing attention to suitable titles and reading through drafts, requesting that for sponsored courses reports are written and circulated among colleagues and discussed and making available library resources for research.

Recommendation

It is recommended that the professional librarians

- Recognise that there are CPD activities like research and publishing that count more towards promotion than others.
- Be able to strike a fine balance between embarking on CPD activities for competence and also for promotion.
- Network more among themselves and team up for joint research that would result in publications

Conclusion

An overwhelming majority of the respondents were aware of CPD activities. All of the respondents who were Senior Assistant or Sub Librarians and above were aware of CPD. A few of the Assistant Librarians (4) had no knowledge of CPD. A significant number of the respondents were actually involved in CPD. The three most practised CPD activities were reading professional literature, attending workshops, and membership of a professional association. The least practised CPD activity was subscribing to a discussion

group/ mailing list. It turned out also that research and publishing was not popular. Unfortunately in a university environment, the three most practised CPD activities do not count for promotion. Although obviously there is some CPD going on, it is important that the CPD activities that professional librarians are involved in help to push them up the career ladder. Hence, professional librarians in state-owned university libraries in Ghana need to “grow” in the area of research and publishing.

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