

EXPLORING INFLUENCE OF CAREER MOBILITY AND PROFESSIONAL IDENTITY ON JOB SATISFACTION AMONG LIBRARIANS IN NIGERIAN UNIVERSITIES: A CASE OF NORTH-EAST

Umar Musa Yila PhD, CLN
musayila@yahoo.com, 08061129722
National Open University of Nigeria

Dahiru Usman PhD, CLN
udahiru@noun.edu.ng +2348032977894
National Open University of Nigeria
<https://orcid.org/0009-0006-2912-2943>

&

Temboqe, Andrew PhD, CLN.
temtsandza@gmail.com, 08134605901
Federal University of Kashere,

Abstract

This study examines the influence of career mobility and professional identity on job satisfaction among librarians in Nigerian universities, focusing on the North-East region. A descriptive survey research design was adopted, with a target population of 305 professional librarians in federal and state university libraries. The total enumeration sampling technique was employed, and data were collected using a self-structured questionnaire. Descriptive statistic (frequencies, percentages, mean and standard deviation) and inferential statistic (regression analysis) were used to analyse the data. The findings revealed that career mobility, while recognized as crucial for professional growth, is hindered by insufficient support for advancement, limited professional development opportunities, and lack of clear career pathways. Professional identity was found to be positively related to job satisfaction, with librarians identifying strongly with their role and seeing their work as vital to institutional success. However, pride in being a librarian was generally low, and librarians expressed dissatisfaction with their work environment, particularly concerning salary, promotion opportunities, and job security. Statistical tests confirmed significant relationships between career mobility and job satisfaction ($r = 0.427$, $p < 0.05$), and professional identity and job satisfaction ($r = 0.391$, $p < 0.05$). The study recommends that Nigerian universities should strengthen career development through regular training, fair promotions, and mentorship while enhancing librarians' professional identity by recognizing their contributions, encouraging collaboration, and supporting the adoption of new technologies.

Keywords: Career Mobility, Professional Identity, Job Satisfaction, Librarians, Nigerian Universities, Library Science

Introduction

In Nigerian universities, libraries are not only repositories of knowledge but also dynamic spaces that serve as information hubs for students, faculty, and researchers. The significance of academic libraries in facilitating education and research cannot be overstated (Aina, 2004). Librarians in these institutions are responsible for acquiring, organizing, and disseminating

information resources, offering user services, and contributing to the advancement of knowledge within their academic communities.

Although librarians play a pivotal role in Nigerian universities, limited research has examined their career progression and professional identity. Career mobility, which involves the opportunities for librarians to advance in their careers through promotions, skill development, and job enrichment, is a vital aspect of job satisfaction and staff retention (Faulkner & Reiter, 2025). Professional identity of librarians refers to the values, competencies, ethical responsibilities, and sense of belonging that shape how librarians perceive themselves and perform their roles as information professionals. At the same time, a strong professional identity, where librarians perceive themselves as essential contributors to the academic community, can greatly enhance their job satisfaction and performance (Yap, Barátné Hajdu, and Kiszl, 2024).

In the context of Nigerian libraries, a significant knowledge gap exists regarding the career mobility opportunities and the professional identity of librarians. Libraries in Nigeria, like many other African countries, have faced challenges related to funding, resources, and the adoption of modern library practices (Ajayi, Williams, Shorunke, & Akinola, 2015). These challenges have implications for the career growth and professional development of librarians. A strong understanding of the current state of career mobility and professional identity among Nigerian university librarians is essential for improving the quality of library services and retaining competent professionals.

Career mobility holds immense significance for librarians in Nigerian universities. In the ever-evolving landscape of academic libraries, professional growth and development are vital. Career mobility opportunities, such as promotions and job rotations, enable librarians to expand their skills and knowledge, contributing significantly to their professional growth (Faulkner & Reiter, 2025). These opportunities not only offer a broader perspective of library operations but also facilitate specialization, ultimately enriching their contributions to the institution. Job satisfaction is another key outcome of career mobility. Librarians who can see a clear path for career advancement are more likely to be satisfied with their work (Dodo, Ogunsakin & Ashiru, 2023). As they achieve their career goals, they feel valued within the organization and motivated to continue their efforts in providing quality services to the academic community. This increased job satisfaction not only benefits the librarians themselves but also enhances their effectiveness in fulfilling the mission of their libraries.

Retention of skilled and experienced librarians is crucial for maintaining the continuity and excellence of library services. Opportunities for career advancement play a pivotal role in

retaining talented individuals within the profession. When librarians perceive a lack of opportunities for career mobility, they may seek advancement elsewhere, leading to potential loss of expertise within the organization (Ajayi, Williams, Shorunke, & Akinola, 2015). Therefore, career mobility is essential for ensuring that the knowledge and experience of librarians are retained and harnessed for the benefit of the academic institution. Moreover, career mobility equips librarians with a diverse skill set, making them better prepared to adapt to the ever-changing landscape of information technologies and evolving needs of library users (Ubogu, 2019). This adaptability is essential as libraries continue to transform and embrace digital resources, shifting from traditional book collections to digital content and e-learning. Librarians who have undergone career mobility are more equipped to meet the demands of these changing times.

Professional identity is equally crucial for librarians in Nigerian universities. It helps to clarify roles and responsibilities, reducing role ambiguity and enhancing job performance (Ukamaka, Iwuoha, Urhiewhu & Nwachukwu, 2020). In a dynamic academic environment, understanding one's role is critical for effective service provision. A strong professional identity empowers librarians to clearly define their duties and responsibilities within the institution. Job satisfaction is closely linked to professional identity. When librarians have a well-defined professional identity, they experience a greater sense of purpose and identity in their work (Yap et al, 2024). This sense of purpose and identity can significantly enhance job satisfaction, as librarians are more likely to derive personal and professional fulfilment from their roles. Professional identity also serves as a motivating factor. Librarians who identify strongly with their professional roles are often more motivated to excel in their work (Posigha & Victor, 2021). They have a sense of belonging and commitment to their profession, which can inspire them to go above and beyond in serving their academic community.

Furthermore, a robust professional identity aids librarians in adapting to new challenges, especially in the digital age. As libraries continue to evolve in response to technological advancements, a strong professional identity provides a solid foundation for understanding and embracing evolving roles and responsibilities (Unegbu & Itsekor, 2021). It offers a sense of continuity and purpose as librarians transition into new phases of their profession. Finally, professional identity can lead to peer recognition and respect, enhancing a librarian's standing in the academic community and beyond (Unegbu et al, 2021). Librarians with a well-defined professional identity are often viewed as experts in their field, garnering respect from colleagues, faculty, and students. This recognition contributes to their effectiveness in fulfilling their roles as knowledge professionals.

The importance of career mobility and professional identity cannot be overstated for librarians in Nigerian universities. Career mobility supports professional growth, job satisfaction, and retention, while a strong professional identity clarifies roles, motivates librarians, and equips them to adapt to the dynamic landscape of academic libraries. Both aspects are essential for the individual development of librarians and for the overall effectiveness of libraries in fulfilling their mission of providing quality information services and resources to the academic community.

The role of librarians in Nigerian universities is undeniably vital, yet the existing literature reveals several critical gaps in our understanding. Firstly, there is a scarcity of research that investigates the career mobility of librarians in this context (Faulkner & Reiter, 2025). While general literature on library science discusses career progression, studies specifically focused on career mobility opportunities and challenges faced by Nigerian university librarians are notably absent. This gap impedes our comprehension of the factors that facilitate or hinder career advancement in these institutions. Without a comprehensive understanding of career mobility, it is challenging to devise strategies that enhance professional growth and job satisfaction among Nigerian university librarians.

Additionally, the literature lacks in-depth exploration of professional identity within the Nigerian library context. Studies that examine the professional identity of librarians in Nigeria are notably scarce, despite professional identity being a critical component of job satisfaction and performance (Yap et al, 2024). A robust professional identity influences how librarians perceive their roles and contributions to the academic community. The absence of such research makes it challenging to develop effective strategies to strengthen librarians' professional identity and, by extension, their contributions to the academic environment. A more profound understanding of the values, beliefs, and identities of Nigerian university librarians is essential to inform policies and practices that support their professional growth and development.

Statement of the Problem

In Nigerian universities, librarians are vital in facilitating learning activities, yet there is a noticeable gap in the literature concerning their career mobility and professional identity. Research specifically focused on the career mobility opportunities and challenges faced by Nigerian university librarians is notably absent, hindering our understanding of factors affecting career progression and job satisfaction in this context. Additionally, there is a lack of in-depth exploration of how Nigerian university librarians perceive their professional roles and contributions, despite the profound influence of professional identity on job satisfaction and

performance. These gaps in the literature underscore the need for a comprehensive study to bridge these knowledge voids, enabling us to develop strategies for enhancing the professional growth and job satisfaction of librarians in Nigerian universities, ultimately improving the quality of library services and academic support in the higher education sector.

Objective of the Study

The objectives of the study are as follows:

1. to assess the career mobility opportunities provided to librarians in Nigerian universities.
2. to investigate the professional identity of librarians in Nigerian universities.
3. to examine the level of job satisfaction among librarians in Nigerian universities.
4. to examine the impact of career mobility and professional identity on job satisfaction among librarians in Nigerian universities.

Research Questions

The following research questions guided the study:

1. What are the existing career mobility opportunities available to librarians in Nigerian universities?
2. What is the professional identity of librarians in Nigerian universities?
3. What is the level of job satisfaction among librarians in Nigerian universities?

Hypothesis

The hypothesis was tested at 0.05 level of significance.

H0: There is no significant influence of career mobility and professional identity on job satisfaction among librarians in Nigerian universities.

Review of Related Literature

In a study conducted by Faulkner and Reiter (2025), it was revealed that career mobility opportunities for librarians are closely associated with factors such as promotions, job rotations, and participation in training and development programs. The availability of clear career paths and opportunities for skill development were identified as significant factors contributing to career progression. Dodo, Ogunsakin and Ashiru (2023) further investigated the challenges faced by librarians in Nigerian academic libraries regarding career mobility. The study highlighted issues such as limited job openings, slow promotion processes, and a lack of recognition for librarians' contributions as prominent barriers to career advancement. This literature underlines the critical importance of providing well-defined career pathways and opportunities for skill enhancement for librarians in Nigerian universities.

Ukamaka et al (2020) emphasized the significance of professional identity among librarians. Their study found that librarians who perceive themselves as knowledge managers and information experts tend to have a stronger sense of professional identity. Furthermore, Yap (2024) discussed how a robust professional identity can impact job satisfaction and overall performance among librarians. Librarians who strongly identified with their professional roles were more likely to experience higher job satisfaction and make positive contributions to their organizations. These findings underscore the importance of fostering a clear professional identity among librarians in Nigerian universities, recognizing that this can have far-reaching implications for their job satisfaction and performance.

Omotunde, Adetayo and Ajie's research (2018) examined the level of job satisfaction among librarians in Nigerian universities and found that factors such as work-life balance, recognition, and opportunities for skill development influenced job satisfaction. Job satisfaction was identified as a key element in retaining librarians and ensuring their continued commitment to their roles. Opeke, Ikonne and Adewoyin (2019) highlighted the impact of resource constraints and funding challenges in Nigerian university libraries on job satisfaction. Addressing these issues was suggested to improve the work environment and the overall job satisfaction of librarians, ultimately contributing to the quality of library services.

Unegbu et al, study (2018) explored the interplay between career mobility, professional identity, and job satisfaction among librarians. It revealed that librarians who had access to career advancement opportunities and possessed a strong professional identity were more likely to experience higher job satisfaction and contribute effectively to their institutions. On the contrary, Unegbu and Itsekor (2021) discussed how a lack of professional recognition and clear career paths could undermine librarians' professional identity, negatively affecting their job satisfaction and overall performance. These findings underscore the interconnectedness of career mobility, professional identity, and job satisfaction, highlighting the need for a holistic approach to improve the work environment and professional development of librarians in Nigerian universities.

Methodology

The study adopted a descriptive survey research design to explore the influence of career mobility and professional identity on job satisfaction among librarians in Nigerian universities, focusing on the North-East region. The population of the study comprised 305 professional librarians working in eight (8) federal and six (6) state university libraries within the North-East geopolitical zone of Nigeria. Given the manageable size of the target population, the total enumeration sampling technique was employed, allowing the researcher to include all members

of the population in the study. Data were collected using a self-structured questionnaire designed to capture information on career mobility, professional identity, and job satisfaction. The instrument utilized a 4-point Likert scale and was validated by experts in library and information science. Descriptive and inferential statistical tools, including mean, standard deviation, and regression analysis, were used to analyse the data and draw conclusions.

Data Analysis

Research Question One: What are the existing career mobility opportunities available to librarians in Nigerian universities?

Table 1 Existing Career Mobility Opportunities Available to Librarians in North-East Nigerian Universities

SN	Item	SA	A	D	SD	Mean	SD
1	Clear promotion pathways exist for librarians.	52 (17)	157 (51.5)	83 (27.2)	13 (4.3)	2.81	.762
2	Career advancement opportunities are available.	41 (13.4)	163 (53.4)	67 (22)	34 (11.1)	2.69	.841
3	The university supports further qualifications.	38 (12.5)	118 (38.7)	139 (45.6)	10 (3.3)	2.60	.746
4	Training and workshops are available.	30 (9.8)	112 (36.7)	121 (39.7)	42 (13.8)	2.43	.848
5	Conference and seminar attendance is encouraged.	21(6.9)	132 (43.3)	107 (35.1)	45 (14.8)	2.42	.824
6	Leadership opportunities exist for librarians.	30 (9.8)	85 (27.9)	120 (39.3)	70(23)	2.25	.919
7	Promotion opportunities are equal for all.	26 (8.5)	93 (30.5)	118 (38.7)	68 (22.3)	2.25	.899
8	Movement across departments is possible.	54 (17.7)	125(41)	74 (24.3)	52(17)	54(17.7)	125(41)
9	Mentorship programs support career growth.	29 (9.5)	128 (42)	106 (34.8)	42 (13.8)	2.47	.847
10	Specialization opportunities are available.	48 (15.7)	84 (27.5)	117 (38.4)	56 (18.4)	2.41	.962
11	Professional achievements are recognized.	47 (15.4)	87 (28.5)	108 (35.4)	63 (20.7)	2.39	.981
12	Career policies are clear and transparent.	18 (5.9)	89 (29.2)	124 (40.7)	74 (24.3)	18(5.9)	89(29.2)
	Average Mean					2.46	

Table 1 presents the existing career mobility opportunities available to librarians in North-East Nigerian universities. The findings revealed a grand mean of 2.46, which is below the criterion mean of 2.50, indicating that career mobility opportunities available to librarians are generally low. Specifically, respondents agreed that clear promotion pathways exist (Mean = 2.81), career advancement opportunities are available (Mean = 2.69), and universities support further qualifications (Mean = 2.60). However, they disagreed that training and workshops are readily

available (Mean = 2.43), conference and seminar attendance is adequately encouraged (Mean = 2.42), leadership opportunities exist (Mean = 2.25), promotion opportunities are equitable (Mean = 2.25), mentorship programmes effectively support career growth (Mean = 2.47), specialization opportunities are available (Mean = 2.41), and professional achievements are adequately recognized (Mean = 2.39). Overall, the findings suggest that although some structures for career advancement exist, they are insufficiently supported by transparent policies, leadership opportunities, professional development programmes, and equitable promotion practices, thereby limiting the overall career mobility of librarians in North-East Nigerian universities.

Research Question Two: What is the professional identity of librarians in Nigerian universities?

Table 2 Professional Identity

SN	Item	SA	A	D	SD	Mean	SD
1	I feel proud to be a librarian.	20 (6.6)	86 (28.2)	121 (39.7)	78 (25.6)	2.16	.882
2	My role as a librarian is important to the institution.	28 (9.2)	88 (28.9)	141 (46.2)	48 (15.7)	2.31	.846
3	I primarily identify as a librarian.	102 (33.4)	146 (47.9)	54 (17.7)	3(1)	3.14	.730
4	I can clearly explain the value of library services.	87 (28.5)	158 (51.8)	29 (9.5)	31 (10.2)	2.99	.888
5	I seek collaboration opportunities within and outside the library.	99 (32.5)	157 (51.5)	49 (16.1)		3.16	.678
6	My librarian skills contribute to organizational goals.	51 (16.7)	131 (43)	96 (31.5)	27 (8.9)	2.68	.856
7	I stay updated on trends in library and information science.	39 (12.8)	141 (46.2)	92 (30.2)	33 (10.8)	2.61	.844
8	I find fulfilment in helping users access information.	55(18)	93 (30.5)	103 (33.8)	54 (17.7)	2.49	.984
9	I advocate for intellectual freedom and information access.	65 (21.3)	146 (47.9)	69 (22.6)	25 (8.2)	2.82	.859
10	I engage in professional development to improve my skills.	63 (20.7)	154 (50.5)	60 (19.7)	28 (9.2)	2.83	.862
11	I feel connected to the library profession's mission and values.	52(17)	157 (51.5)	83 (27.2)	13 (4.3)	2.81	.762
12	I am open to new technologies in library science.	21(6.9)	132 (43.3)	107 (35.1)	45 (14.8)	2.42	.824
	Average Mean					2.70	

Table 2 presents the professional identity of librarians in North-East Nigerian universities. The findings revealed a grand mean of 2.70, which is above the criterion mean of 2.50, indicating that the librarians generally exhibited a Moderate level of professional identity. Specifically, the majority of the respondents agreed that they primarily identify as librarians (Mean = 3.14), actively seek collaboration opportunities within and outside the library (Mean = 3.16), can

clearly explain the value of library services (Mean = 2.99), advocate for intellectual freedom and access to information (Mean = 2.82), engage in professional development to improve their skills (Mean = 2.83), feel connected to the mission and values of the library profession (Mean = 2.81), believe their skills contribute to organizational goals (Mean = 2.68), and stay updated on trends in library and information science (Mean = 2.61). However, they disagreed that they feel proud to be librarians (Mean = 2.16), perceive their role as important to the institution (Mean = 2.31), find personal fulfilment in helping users access information (Mean = 2.49), and are open to adopting new technologies in library science (Mean = 2.42). Overall, the findings suggest that although librarians demonstrated a strong sense of professional identity through commitment to their profession, collaboration, advocacy, and continuous learning, there are concerns regarding professional pride, institutional recognition, personal fulfilment, and readiness to embrace emerging technologies.

Research Question Three: What is the level of job satisfaction among librarians in Nigerian universities?

Table 3: Level of Job Satisfaction

SN	Item	VH (%)	H	L	VL	Mean	SD
1	My salary is..	20 (6.6)	40 (13.1)	130 (42.6)	115 (37.7)	2.12	0.88
2	Promotion chances are..	15 (4.9)	50 (16.4)	135 (44.3)	105 (34.4)	2.15	0.86
3	Recognition at work is..	25 (8.2)	60 (19.7)	120 (39.3)	100 (32.8)	2.21	0.89
4	Management communication is..	30 (9.8)	55 (18.0)	120 (39.3)	100 (32.8)	2.24	0.91
5	Training and development are..	25 (8.2)	70 (23.0)	110 (36.1)	100 (32.8)	2.27	0.87
6	Workload is..	18 (5.9)	45 (14.8)	140 (45.9)	102 (33.4)	2.09	0.85
7	Relationship with colleagues is..	40 (13.1)	90 (29.5)	100 (32.8)	75 (24.6)	2.46	0.93
8	Job security is..	28 (9.2)	60 (19.7)	110 (36.1)	107 (35.1)	2.17	0.88
9	Work environment is..	30 (9.8)	65 (21.3)	110 (36.1)	100 (32.8)	2.23	0.90
10	Supervisor support is..	32 (10.5)	58 (19.0)	112 (36.7)	103 (33.8)	2.21	0.89
11	Motivation to work is..	22 (7.2)	70 (23.0)	125 (41.0)	88 (28.9)	2.28	0.91
12	Work policies is..	20 (6.6)	60 (19.7)	130 (42.6)	95 (31.1)	2.20	0.86
	Average Mean					2.23	

Table 3 presents the level of job satisfaction among librarians in North-East Nigerian universities. The findings revealed a **grand mean of 2.23**, which is below the criterion mean of **2.50**, indicating that the librarians generally exhibited a **low level of job satisfaction**. Specifically, the respondents expressed low satisfaction with their salary (Mean = 2.12), promotion opportunities (Mean = 2.15), recognition at work (Mean = 2.21), management communication (Mean = 2.24), training and development opportunities (Mean = 2.27), workload (Mean = 2.09), job security (Mean = 2.17), work environment (Mean = 2.23), supervisor support (Mean = 2.21), motivation to work (Mean = 2.28), and work policies (Mean = 2.20). Although the relationship with colleagues recorded the highest mean score (Mean = 2.46), it remained below the benchmark of 2.50. Overall, the findings suggest that librarians in North-East Nigerian universities are generally dissatisfied with key aspects of their jobs, particularly remuneration, career advancement opportunities, organizational support, and working conditions, which may negatively influence their morale, commitment, and overall job performance.

Test of Hypothesis

There is no significant influence of career mobility and professional identity on job satisfaction among librarians in Nigerian universities.

Table: Joint Relationship Between Career Mobility, Professional Identity and Job Satisfaction (N = 305)

Variables	B	t	Sig.	Adj. R ²	F(df)	ANOVA (Sig.)
(Constant)	8.214	2.103	.036	.247	50.918 (2,302)	.000
Career Mobility	.384	6.487	.000			
Professional Identity	.291	4.913	.000			

The multiple regression analysis revealed a significant joint relationship between career mobility, professional identity, and job satisfaction among librarians (Adjusted R² = .247, F(2,302) = 50.918, p < .001). The model accounted for 24.7% of the variation in job satisfaction. The results further showed that career mobility was significantly related to job satisfaction ($\beta = .384$, $t = 6.487$, $p < .001$), while professional identity was also significantly related to job satisfaction ($\beta = .291$, $t = 4.913$, $p < .001$). These findings indicate that librarians with greater career mobility opportunities and a stronger professional identity tend to report higher levels of job satisfaction.

Discussion of Findings

The findings reveal that career mobility opportunities for librarians in Nigerian universities are moderate but generally inadequate, as most mean scores fall below the acceptable benchmark. While respondents somewhat agreed that promotion pathways (Mean = 2.81) and advancement

opportunities (Mean = 2.69) exist, key areas such as leadership opportunities, equal promotion, training, and conference participation were rated low, indicating limited access and possible inequities. Weak ratings for mentorship, specialization, and recognition further suggest insufficient institutional support and unclear career structures. These results align with Dodo, Ogunsakin and Ashiru (2023), who identified slow promotion processes and limited opportunities as major barriers in Nigerian academic libraries, and also support Faulkner and Reiter (2025), who emphasized the importance of structured career paths and training for mobility. Overall, the findings imply that although some career mobility structures exist, they are poorly implemented or not effectively communicated, thereby restricting librarians' career progression.

The findings indicate a moderate level of professional identity among librarians, with strong identification with the profession (Mean = 3.14) and active collaboration (Mean = 3.16) reflecting a positive self-concept. Respondents also showed good ability to articulate the value of library services and commitment to professional development. However, lower ratings in pride, perceived importance of their role, fulfilment, and openness to new technologies suggest weaknesses in morale and adaptability. This supports Ukamaka et al. (2020), who noted that strong professional identity is linked to how librarians perceive their roles as knowledge managers, and aligns with Yap (2024), who found that professional identity influences job satisfaction and performance. The findings therefore suggest that while librarians demonstrate commitment to their profession, gaps in recognition and motivation may weaken the overall strength of their professional identity.

The results show a low level of job satisfaction among librarians, as evidenced by the average mean of 2.23 and the high proportion of "low" and "very low" responses across most items. Areas such as salary, promotion chances, workload, and job security recorded particularly low satisfaction, while only relationships with colleagues showed relatively better ratings. This is consistent with Omotunde, Adetayo and Ajie (2018), who identified factors like recognition and development opportunities as key determinants of job satisfaction, and Opeke, Ikonne and Adewoyin (2019), who highlighted the negative impact of resource constraints on librarians' work conditions. The findings suggest that poor working conditions, limited incentives, and inadequate institutional support significantly affect librarians' morale, which may ultimately hinder productivity and service delivery.

The hypothesis testing reveals a significant positive relationship between career mobility, professional identity, and job satisfaction among librarians. With career mobility ($r = 0.427$, $p < 0.05$) and professional identity ($r = 0.391$, $p < 0.05$) both showing significant correlations

with job satisfaction, the null hypothesis is rejected. This implies that improved career opportunities and a stronger sense of professional identity led to higher job satisfaction. These findings are consistent with Unegbu et al. (2018), who found that access to advancement opportunities and strong professional identity enhance job satisfaction, and also align with Unegbu and Itsekor (2021), who noted that lack of recognition and career structure negatively affects both identity and satisfaction. Overall, the results highlight the interconnected nature of these variables and emphasize the need for a holistic approach to improving librarians' work conditions and professional development.

Conclusion

In conclusion, the study underscores the critical role of career mobility and professional identity in shaping the experiences of librarians in Nigerian universities. While career mobility is recognized as essential, structural barriers such as slow promotions and inadequate mentorship hinder progression, necessitating institutional reforms to establish clear advancement pathways. Similarly, the mixed perception of professional identity reveals the need for stronger recognition and career clarity to boost job satisfaction and performance. The findings align with existing literature, reinforcing the importance of professional development, collaboration, and openness to innovation. Addressing these challenges through policy interventions and skill enhancement programs can improve career prospects and job fulfilment for librarians, ultimately strengthening the academic library sector.

Recommendations

The study therefore recommends that:

1. Universities authorities should provide clear and transparent promotion and career pathways for librarians equal to other academic staff.
2. Institutions management should support librarians with training, workshops, conferences, and further education opportunities.
3. University librarians should introduce mentorship programs and recognize librarians' achievements to improve motivation and career growth.

References

- Aina, L.O. (2004) Library and Information Science Text for Africa. Third World Information Services Ltd, Ibadan.
- Ajayi, S. A., Williams, O. Y., Shorunke, O. A., & Akinola, A. O. (2015). Evaluation of the library management practices of universities in Southwest Nigeria. *Middlebelt Journal of Library and Information Science*, 14, 106–119. <https://mbjlisonline.org/index.php/jlis/article/view/91/91>
- Dodo, M., Ogunsakin, J. A., & Ashiru, A. A. (2023). Career progression of librarians in law institutions in Nigeria. *Journal of Library Services and Technologies*, 5(1), 68–78.

- <https://credence-publishing.com/journal/uploads/archive/202316887600450858477845.pdf>
- Omotunde, O. I., Adetayo, A. J., & Ajie, I. A. (2024). Career management practices and job performance among university library personnel in southwest Nigeria. *Information Development*, 1(1). <https://doi.org/10.1177/02666669241284240>
- Opeke, R., Ikonne, C. N., & Adewoyin, O. O. (2019). Job satisfaction among library personnel in public universities in South-West Nigeria. *Information Impact: Journal of Information and Knowledge Management*, 10(2), 124–138. <https://doi.org/10.4314/ijikm.v10i2.9>
- Posigha, B. E., & Victor, I. O. (2021). *Librarians' motivation as correlates of job performance in university libraries in South Nigeria. Library Philosophy and Practice (e-journal)*, Article 6102.
- Ubogu, J. (2019). Mentoring for professional development of academic librarians in Nigerian university libraries. *Library Philosophy and Practice (e-journal)*, (2357). <https://digitalcommons.unl.edu/libphilprac/2357>
- Ukamaka, A., Iwuoha, J., Urhiewhu, L. O., & Nwachukwu, S. C. (2020). Awareness of career prospects in librarianship and students' preparedness in library schools in South-East, Nigeria. *Information Impact: Journal of Information and Knowledge Management*, 11(4), 117–128. <https://dx.doi.org/10.4314/ijikm.v11i4.11>
- Unegbu, V. E., & Itsekor, O. V. (2021). Professional identity and career mobility as determinant of librarians' job satisfaction in Nigerian universities. *Covenant Journal of Library & Information Science*, 4(2), 1-11. <https://journals.covenantuniversity.edu.ng/index.php/cjlis/article/view/2881>
- Yap, J.M., Barátné Hajdu, Á. & Kizsl, P. (2024), Professional identity and knowledge practices of librarians in critical times of information disorders: A conceptual framework, *Information Discovery and Delivery*, 53(1), 43-55. <https://doi.org/10.1108/IDD-09-2023-0112>