

*Librarians' Attitudes Towards Pursuing Continuing Professional Development in
Two Jamaican Universities*

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ABSTRACT

Purpose – This paper seeks to investigate librarians' perception towards pursuing continuing professional development (CPD) at two premier academic libraries in Jamaica, namely The University of the West Indies (UWI), Mona and The University of Technology (UTECH), with specific focus on their motivation levels. It also seeks to discover whether the existence of a CPD policy has any influence on librarians who choose to pursue continuing professional development.

Method – An online survey consisting of ten questions was administered to forty-five (45) librarians employed at the UWI, Mona and UTECH libraries.

Findings – Results of the survey illustrate high motivation levels among the librarians to pursue CPD. The survey results also show that these high motivation levels exist, even though neither institution has a mandatory CPD policy that has been implemented. The survey results also show that most librarians do not believe that policy has any influence on them choosing to pursue CPD and other workplace learning activities. However, they do believe that CPD has a very important role to play in the way in which they advance professionally as librarians. Lastly, the results of the survey show that CPD-related policies could have the potential to increase what are already high motivation levels among librarians towards pursuing CPD.

Research limitations/implications – The data reported in this paper are quantitative; and some findings raise questions that require further qualitative research in order to be addressed comprehensively in a follow-up phase to this report.

Keywords – Continuing Professional Development (CPD), Librarians; Workplace Learning; Motivation; The University of the West Indies (UWI), Mona; The University of Technology (UTECH); Karen Tyrell.

INTRODUCTION

The concept of Continuing Professional Development (CPD) was first developed in the United Kingdom (UK) in the 1970s at the Center for Continuing Education in York (Clegg 1988). However, the popularity of the concept escalated in 1992 when the Library Association of the United Kingdom produced a Framework for Continuing Professional Development (Clegg 1988). Since then it has become increasingly popular and has been utilized by many professions including the information and library sector (Doney 1998). The rapid developments of information technology have impacted librarians by expanding their roles. As a result, their job has become increasingly challenging and demand professionals who are multi-faceted and can operate in a multi-disciplinary arena. To respond to this climate, librarians must continue to update their skills and knowledge.

This article presents the findings of a survey that examined the state of librarians' perception towards participation in CPD practices at the libraries of The University of the West Indies (UWI) Mona and The University of Technology (UTECH), both located within Kingston, Jamaica. The objective of this paper is to determine whether there is any correlation between CPD-related policies and librarians' attitudes towards CPD activities.

Background

The UWI, Mona Library was established in 1948 and has since developed into the intellectual hub of the University's campus. It consists of four branches: the Medical, Science, Law and the Western Jamaica Campus. The library has a staff complement of approximately eighty-seven paraprofessionals and other service staff. Twenty-seven librarians are employed throughout the four branches. The staff complement is committed to providing effective and efficient services in an environment conducive to teaching, learning and research endeavours.

At the inception of the University of Technology (UTECH) in 1958, the University's Calvin McKain Library was also established and has been an integral part of the institution. The library has grown from what has been described as a "modest accommodation" to a relatively medium-sized, self-contained building (University of Technology 2009). The library is staffed by eleven librarians and is complemented by a number of support staff. The library's core aim is to provide current and accurate information in different forms to support the programmes being offered at the University, thereby helping to stimulate intellectual thoughts and academic scholarship of its users (University of Technology 2009).

LITERATURE REVIEW

Continuing Professional Development and Workplace Learning

Various definitions of CPD have been put forward. For the purpose of this research, the definition of CPD was derived from Majid (2004) who states that it is:

“[a] systematic method of learning that leads to growth and improvement in professional abilities, enabling individuals to function successfully in a changing work environment [...]”

Majid (2004) further states that the objective of CPD is to fill in the knowledge gaps that exist between acquiring educational qualifications and functioning on the job. It consists of activities and practices that equipped professionals with the relevant competencies to continually upgrade their knowledge and skills to meet their professional needs. Examples of CPD activities include training courses, professional reading, work exchanges, mentoring and publishing (Bury 2010). CPD may take many forms and can be in the form of face-to-face programmes or distance-learning programmes. It can be conducted informally in the form of lectures, workshops, seminars and conferences; as well as through formal options, such as certified training programmes or other qualifying courses (Bury 2010).

Workplace learning is considered an emerging style of CPD, where the workplace is supportive of learning (Adanu 2007). According to Sacchanand (2000), workplace learning is:

“[t]he means, processes and activities by which employees learn in the work place, from basic skills to high technology and management practices that are immediately applicable to workers’ jobs, duties and roles; the learning can be formal, non-formal, incidental or experimental with an emphasis on self-directed learning.”

Adanu (2007) opines that CPD and workplace learning may be considered synonymous, as both provide the same result. They both offer various avenues for professional improvement by enhancing professional skills, meeting organizational targets and maximizing efficiency on the job.

One writer Wood (1999) theorises that the responsibility for CPD lies with the professional association. Other writers have stated that it is the employee in his individual capacity who has the responsibility of pursuing CPD and not the professional association (Adanu 2007; Blair 2000; Farrugia 1996; Noon 1994). Adanu (2007) found that librarians believed that participation in CPD was a shared responsibility of both the library and the librarian. On the other hand, Campbell et al. (2000) was of the view that CPD is the responsibility of both the employer and the employee.

On examining the individual’s responsibility in embarking on CPD, it was noted that although it is the individual who has the primary responsibility for his professional development, the kind

of work environment that must exist for the professional is one that is conducive to a healthy CPD curriculum (Ofei-Aboagye 1995). Ofei-Aboagye (1995) also states that CPD becomes much more effective when different strategies and techniques are combined in the quest for ongoing professional development.

Library associations locally and globally have undertaken some responsibility for CPD. The International Federation of Library Associations and Institutions (IFLA) embraces all aspects of professional development and learning in the workplace and has a Continuing Professional Development and Workplace Learning (CPDWL) section that brings together library professionals who are interested in and responsible for the quality improvement of systems for delivering CPDWL programmes. IFLA implores library professionals to join their local library association and therefore benefit from its collective resources.

In the United Kingdom Professional Standard Framework, supports the initial and continuing professional development of staff engaged in teaching and learning (Higher Education Academy 2011). A national strategic CPD policy exists for librarianship; and it includes certification, chartership, fellowship and revalidation, all granted by the Chartered Institute of Library and Information Professionals (CILIP 2014). CILIP is the overarching professional association for the library information profession, which provides a structured route to formal and broad-based recognition of CPD activities and accomplishments (Bury 2010). Recently in 2012 CILIP launched their new Professional Knowledge and Skills Base (PKSB), which bring the areas of professional knowledge and skills in the library together and can be used to identify development needs (CILIP 2014).

At the level of the Caribbean, the Association of Caribbean University, Research and Institutional Libraries (ACURIL) has been providing professionals with continuing educational opportunities and creating conducive environment for collaboration with other professionals (ACURIL 2015). The extent of ACURIL's commitment to CPD is reflected in the theme of the 2015 conference which was "Collaborative Continuing Education: Professional and Personal Development Opportunities for Lifelong Learning in Libraries, Archives, and Museums in the Caribbean. During this ACURIL conference, President, Jane Smith reiterated the value of keeping track of new trends and developments especially in the area of information communication and technology based on rapid changes in the information age. She also mentioned that without professional and personal development of oneself it is impossible to help develop others (ACURIL 2015). Within Jamaica, the Library and Information Association of Jamaica (LIAJA) works to ensure that librarians are kept informed of new developments within the profession.

CPD and Its Associated Issues

While the literature provides substantial information on the benefits of CPD there are issues which arise with this area. Bury (2010) in her study on CPD trends in Irish libraries revealed that 82% of respondents had encountered problems such as distance to training venue, content to be covered in courses not relevant to their job, cost and scheduled time of some course/s been offered in pursuance of CPD. Inadequate and lack of training facilities to host these events are also issues that librarians have to deal with in pursuit of CPD. Bury (2010) also found that 37% of respondents stated that a particular venue for training was not convenient. CPD also requires some commitment to being involved in scholarly activities and a major deterrent to CPD participation is the time constraint faced by many librarians. According to Hardesty and Sugerman (2007, 201) "Some librarians favoured the use of blogs because they do not take up too much of their time".

Maesorah and Genoni (2009) also highlighted cost as an impeding factor to librarians seeking CPD. This can be examined from two perspectives, the cost of the courses as well as expected remuneration for participation. In some cases there are expectations that CPD would lead to career advancement and possibly increased remuneration. Librarians also have to deal with delayed remuneration after completing or participating in CPD activities. The response rate of employers increasing the pay-grade of professionals who have undergone formal continuing professional development training is very slow and as a consequence, persons become reluctant to pursue CPD activities. As a result of these issues many librarians in the Caribbean region find themselves in institutions that do not place much emphasis on staff professional development. This might result in an institution having no CPD policy.

The United Kingdom Library Association's Framework outlined several basic elements of CPD as follows (Library Association 1992):

- The promotion of individual competence
- The acquisition of new professional skills, and
- The update of professional skills in the light of new development.

In the library information profession, the implementation of CPD policies could be seen as a way to respond to major technological advances being experienced in the field. Burton and Rezaee (1994) believes that CPD policy is considered a requirement for CPD to be effective. Globally some associations have been utilizing their national policy to provide certification for their members. Cameron (1994) is of the view that "if an organisation does not have a formal CPD structure in place, it is challenging for individuals to receive sponsorship for training courses, as part of the pursuit of CPD activities. Sponsorship from an organisation shows their commitment to CPD and the benefits to be derived internally.

Caribbean librarians are motivated to pursue CPD activities. While limited studies have been done in this area, a study done by Gosine-Boodoo and McNish (2009), confirms that Caribbean librarians are motivated to pursue CPD activities. The fact that an organisation does not have a formal CPD policy does not automatically result in librarians being deterred from holding positive attitudes towards pursuing CPD activities. Other factors can and do influence librarians' attitudes towards pursuing CPD. These include self-motivation, job motivation (Parry 2004), professional advancement (Gosine-Boodoo and McNish 2009) and personal development (Murphy, Cross, and McGuire 2006).

In the case of UWI, Mona and UTECH, neither institution has implemented a mandatory CPD policy to govern its librarians. Ezeani (2008, 61) confirms that "most academic libraries do not have staff development policies and those who do are not critically dedicated to it." Despite not having a CPD policy The UWI Librarians can access several types of institutional support that facilitate as well as defray cost and related expenses associated with continuing professional development.

These institutional support include study and travel grant that is available to all Librarians in receipt of contract in excess of one year or have been offered a three year contract. The study and travel grant can be used for travel to attend conferences, seminars and workshops and also aid in purchasing of materials relating to academic and professional work. They are also eligible for Sabbatical leave and are offered book grant to assist with purchasing information technology equipment, devices and scholarly text in pursuance of knowledge development.

SURVEY FINDINGS AND DISCUSSION

The survey instrument consisted of ten questions, with a response rate of forty-two (42) out of forty-five librarians from the UWI, Mona and UTECH libraries. The survey was conducted in two parts; it was conducted at the UWI, Mona campus in June 2013 and at the UTECH campus in March 2014.

Respondents' gender profile

Table 1 shows that at The University of the West Indies, the gender distribution among the respondents consisted of ninety-four percent females and six percent males. The table also shows that at the University of Technology, the gender distribution consisted of ninety percent females and ten percent male. The number of male librarians employed at both institutions is very low; and female librarians outnumber their counterparts by an approximate ratio of 3:1. Internationally there is a trend of female dominance within the library information systems profession and this also exists within Caribbean libraries.

Table 1. Gender Distribution among Respondents

Gender	UWI		UTECH	
	No. of Respondents	Respondents (%)	No. of Respondents	Respondents (%)
Female	30	94.00	9	90.00
Male	2	6.00	1	10.00
Total	32	100.00	10	100.00

Note:- Total respondents: (i) UWI – 32 (ii) UTECH (10)

Respondents were asked to state what position/level they occupied. More than fifty percent of the respondents from the University of the West Indies indicated that they occupy level II position which is a professional with at least three years post-qualification experience. The other fifty percent consists of respondents who occupied levels I (limited post qualification experience) to III which is a professional who has excelled academically and is found to be of impeccable value to the institution (See Table 2a).

It is to be noted that UTECH uses a different scale from the UWI. The librarians are classified and remunerated based on the Senior Administrative Scale. Level II is associated with Library assistants. Whereas levels VIII and IX are assigned to heads of division (UTECH 2009). Two respondents from the University of Technology indicated that they currently occupied level II positions. Two other respondents indicated that they occupied level VIII positions and another two respondents indicated that they occupied level IX positions. One respondent indicated that the position occupied was head of a particular division, while another respondent indicated that the position occupied was a librarian’s assistant (See Table 2b).

Table 2a. Position/Level of Respondents

Position/level	UWI	
	No. of Respondents	Respondents (%)
Level I	6	19
Level II	16	50
Level III	5	16
Total	27	85.00

Table 2b. Position/Level of Respondents

Position/level	UTECH	
	No. of Respondents	Respondents (%)
Level II	2	20.00
Level VIII	2	20.00
Level IX	2	20.00
Total	6	60.00

Question 3 is related to the number of years the respondents have been employed at their respective libraries. At the University of the West Indies, sixteen of the thirty-two respondents had been employed at the University for less than ten years. The number of respondents who had been employed for more than ten years but less than twenty years was six, while another six respondents had been employed by the University for over twenty years but less than twenty-five years. Only one respondent had been employed by the University for over thirty years. At the University of Technology, five of the nine respondents indicated that they had been employed by the University for less than ten years (See Table 3).

From the data in Tables 2 and 3 it can be deduced that there is a low correlation rate between the number of years of employment as a librarian and the level/position that librarians occupy. Based on data, even though half of the respondents from the UWI have been employed between eleven and thirty-one years, only five respondents occupy level III, the highest position for librarians at the University of the West Indies.

Table 3. Number of Years Employed

Years of service	UWI		UTECH	
	No. of Respondents	Respondents (%)	No. of Respondents	Responses %
1-5	8	25	2	20
6-10	8	25	3	30
11-15	3	9	1	10
16-20	3	9	1	10
21-25	6	18	1	10
26-30	2	6	1	10
31 and over	1	4	-	-
Total	31	96.00	9	90.00

Question 4 asked whether librarians had attended formal training programmes within the previous five years. As seen in Table 4, sixty-three percent of the respondents from The University of the West Indies had received some form of formal (“on-the-job”) training within the last five years. The remaining thirty-four percent had received no formal (“on-the-job”) training within the last five years. Ninety percent of the respondents from the University of Technology indicated that they had received formal “on-the-job”) training within the last five years. The data in Table 4 shows that at both institutions, emphasis is placed on training at the organizational level.

Table 4. Formal Training Within the Last 2-5 Years

Formal training	UWI		UTECH	
	No. of Respondents	Respondents (%)	No. of Respondents	Respondents (%)
Yes	20	63.00	9	90.00
No	11	34.00	-	-
Total	31	97.00	9	90.00

In Question 6 the respondents were asked the very important question of whether they were interested in pursuing continuing professional development. As shown in Table 5, at The University of the West Indies, ninety-seven percent of the respondents indicated that they were interested in pursuing CPD activities. At the University of Technology, the results were that one hundred percent of the respondents indicated that they were interested in pursuing CPD activities. These results indicate that even though a librarian has received formal training within the past five years, that person would still be interested in pursuing continuing professional development. Based on respondents’ feedback it could be inferred that they are interested in on-the-job training, which is attaining competencies on the job informally.

Table 5. Do You Have an Interest in Pursuing CPD?

Interest in pursuing CPD	UWI		UTECH	
	No. of Respondents	Respondents (%)	No. of Respondents	Respondents (%)
Yes	31	97.00	10	100.00
No	1	3.00	-	-
Total	32	100.00	10	100.00

Respondents were also asked whether they believe that CPD was essential for professional advancement. At both The University of the West Indies and the University of Technology, the responses were a ‘yes’ from all participants (See Table 6). The respondents were also asked how important is CPD to professional advancement (Question 7) and the responses from those at The University of the West Indies indicated that eighty-eight percent thought CPD was “very important” for professional advancement, while the other twelve percent thought CPD was “important” to professional advancement. The responses from the participants at the University of Technology indicated that one hundred percent of them thought that CPD was “very important” for professional development (See Table 7). All of the respondents believe that CPD has some importance for professional advancement, but as for the respondents from The UWI, they attach varying levels of importance to CPD in relation to professional advancement.

Table 6. Do You Believe CPD is Essential for Professional Advancement?

Professional Advancement	UWI		UTECH	
	No. of Respondents	Respondents (%)	No. of Respondents	Respondents (%)
Yes	32	100.00	9	90.00
No	-	-		
Total	32	100.00	9	90.00

Table 7. How Important is CPD to Professional Advancement?

Importance of CPD	UWI		UTECH	
	No. of Respondents	Respondents (%)	No. of Respondents	Respondents (%)
Very important	28	88.00	10	100.00
Important	4	12.00	-	-
Not important	-	-	-	-
Total	32	100.00	10	100.00

Question 8 inquired into whether the absence of a professional development policy influenced librarians’ quest for CPD and workplace learning activities. The responses from the participants at The University of the West Indies indicated that twenty-five percent were of the view that its absence does influence librarians’ quest for CPD activities. The other seventy-five percent of the respondents were of the view that the absence of a professional development policy does not influence librarians’ quest for CPD activities.

The responses from the University of Technology were that ten percent of the participants indicated that its absence does influence librarians’ quest for CPD activities, while eighty percent indicated that the absence of a professional development policy does not influence librarians’ quest for CPD activities (See Table 8).

Table 8. Does the Absence of a Professional Development Policy Influence Your Quest for CPD and Workplace Activities?

Policy influence on CPDWL	UWI		UTECH	
	No. of Respondents	Respondents (%)	No. of Respondents	Respondents (%)
Yes	8	25.00	1	10.00
No	24	75.00	8	80.00
Total	32	100.00	9	90.00

At question 9, the respondents were asked how motivated they are to pursue CPD. Responses from the participants at The University of the West Indies show that fifty percent of them are “highly motivated” to pursue CPD, forty percent are “motivated” and three percent are “not motivated” to pursue CPD. The responses received from the participants at the University of Technology illustrate that seventy percent of the respondents are “highly motivated” to pursue CPD and the remaining thirty percent are “motivated” to pursue CPD (See Table 9).

The data in Tables 8 and 9 illustrate that varying motivation levels exist among librarians at the UWI and the UTECH; and that there is no direct correlation between the existence of a CPD policy at the workplace and motivation levels among librarians. Whether there is a CPD policy in place at work or not, over seventy percent of librarians are still motivated to pursue CPD, while maintaining the view that a CPD policy does not influence CPD participation. The fact that one respondent from the UWI was not motivated to pursue CPD raises the issue of what could be the cause of this lack of motivation. Accordingly, Jones and Lloyd (2005) analysis of Herzberg’s motivational theory, indicated that a person can lack motivation to pursue CPD activities if there is no possibility for promotion or salary advancement; or the job has become less challenging to the individual.

Table 9. Motivation Levels of Respondents

Motivation level	UWI		UTECH	
	No. of Respondents	Respondents (%)	No. of Respondents	Respondents (%)
Highly motivated	16	50.00	7	70.00
Motivated	15	47.00	3	30.00
Not motivated	1	3.00	-	-
Total	32	100.00	10	100.00

In relation to mandatory policies, the participants were asked whether they believe the introduction of a mandatory CPD system would motivate librarians to pursue CPD and workplace learning activities. The responses from The University of the West Indies indicated that eighty-four percent of the respondents believe that the introduction of a mandatory CPD system would motivate librarians to pursue CPD and workplace learning activities, while sixteen percent did not believe that a CPD policy would motivate librarians.

The responses from the University of Technology similarly indicated that eighty-nine percent of the respondents believe that a mandatory CPD policy would motivate librarians, while eleven percent did not believe that such a policy would motivate librarians to pursue CPD and workplace learning activities (See Table 10).

Table 10. If Librarians Believe the Introduction of a Mandatory CPD Policy Would Motivate Librarians to Pursue CPD and Workplace Learning Activities?

Introduction of CPD policy	UWI		UTECH	
	No. of Respondents	Respondents (%)	No. of Respondents	Respondents (%)
Yes	27	84.00	8	89.00
No	5	16.00	1	11.00
Total	32	100.00	9	90.00

CONCLUSION

The general view at both The University of the West Indies and the University of Technology is that a lack of CPD policy has not had a negative impact on librarians’ attitudes towards fulfilling a CPD agenda. Motivation levels of the librarians to pursue CPD activities are still high. Without

a CPD policy operating as a determining factor, librarians believe that CPD is very important within the profession because it is a means of attaining professional advancement. Although neither of the two Universities in this study has implemented a formal CPD policy to guide their library professionals, librarians still maintain a positive attitude towards CPD. However, policy still plays an important role because it may increase already high motivation levels to pursue CPD. The majority of librarians at both institutions agree that the introduction of a mandatory CPD policy could motivate librarians to pursue CPD and workplace learning activities.

Notwithstanding positive attitudes towards CPD even without CPD policies being in place, it is suggested that to increase participation in CPD activities, libraries should implement formal CPD policies and programmes to assist in the professional growth and development of the employee. Educational qualifications alone have become inadequate, and must be accompanied by on-the-job training. Ultimately, CPD policy will aid in increased levels of CPD participation.

The constantly changing technological environment will continue to have an impact on librarians and they will have to be proactive and innovative in their pursuit of new knowledge and skills while reinventing themselves to remain relevant in the digital environment. Users of information are able to access information through various media. They will have to be trained in areas related to digitized material to make them more proficient in provision of said information (Mackey and Jacobson 2014). The provision of library services has also been affected and must be reengineered to reflect these technological changes. Therefore while librarians continue to upgrade skills in traditional areas, it is also important to scan the environment and train to meet the need of the clientele.

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