

Knowledge Dissemination: A Way of Continuous Professional Development (CPD) for Law Librarians in Nigeria

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Abstract

The types of knowledge largely disseminated and barriers to knowledge dissemination for Continuous Professional Development (CPD) among law librarians in Nigeria are examined. A quantitative cross-sectional study was adopted. The population of the study was 145 Law librarians who were members of the Nigerian Association of Law Librarians and the Association of Academic Law Librarians. An online survey was the instrument used to collect data. Fifty-seven (57) participants responded to the online survey within one month. Descriptive statistics were used for data analysis, and Pearson Product Moment Correlation was used to test the hypotheses. The research revealed physical interaction was used to disseminate new trends/ technologies to build professional networks and improve work productivity among law librarians. Years of work experience and desire to Knowledge dissemination correlate positively with CPD. Limited access to learning resources hampered knowledge dissemination for CPD, recommending open access to more learning resources.

Keywords: Knowledge, Knowledge Dissemination, Continuous Professional Development (CPD), Law Librarians.

Introduction

Knowledge is essential for the growth and successful competitiveness of people as well as organisations. Organisations are starting to recognise the value of employees' knowledge dissemination as a component of productivity (Ogunmodede and Popoola, 2019). Professionals who are empowered to disseminate their knowledge and experiences can provide services for their clientele quickly, effectively, and successfully (Onifade, 2015). Information and data are not knowledge; rather, knowledge comprises unique understandings, feelings, and creativity resulting from continual study and learning acquired by practice and have a greater value than information (Obinyan et al., 2021). Knowledge can be defined as a collection of perceptions, interactions, ideals, and abilities instilled in a person. Nonetheless, knowledge can only be helpful if it is skillfully harnessed and disseminated among individuals, associates, organisations, or cooperating partners.

Knowledge dissemination, Knowledge sharing, knowledge collaboration, knowledge exchange or knowledge transfer is a component of knowledge management that is described as the process of sharing or disseminating knowledge, including skills, incidents, and understanding, among people, groups, and organisations. Knowledge dissemination practices include a variety of personal collaborative events like meetings, discussions, and debates where one is impacted by the knowledge and expertise of other people (Latupapua, 2016). Further, Akparobore (2015) stated that knowledge dissemination is the process of coordinating learning activities. Individuals exchange

knowledge with one another in these processes, and they also collaborate to produce new knowledge. Sharing knowledge is a process that involves both imparting and receiving knowledge. Knowledge dissemination is a relatively new idea; libraries have not yet fully embraced it. Libraries nowadays are becoming more aware of the advantages of knowledge collaboration practices and developing ways to promote knowledge transfer within the library (Mosha et al., 2015). The librarianship profession has made efforts to determine how library professionals can utilise online platforms and physical interactions for knowledge exchange among themselves to foster continuing professional development.

Most professions today strongly emphasise continuing professional development (CPD), and the library profession is not excluded. According to various definitions of continuing professional development (CPD) offered by different authors, continuing professional development (CPD) is a continuous and ongoing process of enhancing an individual's professional abilities and skill set to keep up with new trends and developments in the work environment (Ebong et al., 2022). Continuing professional development (CPD) includes all formal and informal activities and initiatives used by an individual to improve his or her knowledge, skills, and competences to perform professional obligations more effectively throughout their working lives (Bernadine, 2019; Rafiq et al., 2017; Richard, 2017). The library must create a healthy work environment that allows individuals and employee groups to function to their potential in addition to catering to the demands of users (Onwubiko, 2019). Thus, collaboration is a key factor in every organisation's progress, knowledge dissemination strategies bring out the best in librarians thus enhancing productivity and professional growth (Abubakar and Sahabi, 2022). CPD is a must for legal information specialists, law librarians are expected to keep abreast with current trends in both Law and Librarianship, Knowledge dissemination can be one of the medium which it can be achieved.

A law librarian is a legal information specialist who works in government libraries, private law firms, and law schools, among other legal settings (Urhibo, 2017). Olorunfemi (2016) stated that the term "law librarian" is typically used to refer to or identify the librarians who work with a law library to manage and offer access to the legal sources housed in law libraries. Anyaegbu et al. (2013) asserted that law librarians are responsible for providing

information about legal research, writing, bibliography, guiding, and counseling. They must stay current on natural legal dynamics as they change and evolve in international contexts. In essence, CPD is a vital tool in enhancing individual knowledge as regards to professional practice and knowledge dissemination is a one of the medium that be used to achieve CPD for law librarians.

Problem Statement

Due to technology advancements and the environment in which librarians operate is continually changing, to satisfy the demands of their clients calls for active and skilled librarians. An individual can't acquire all the knowledge it is impertinent that Librarians share knowledge. It has been noticed that librarians are frequently unwilling to share their expertise, and when they leave an organisation, they commonly take their knowledge with them (Onifade, 2015).

Knowledge sharing is essential for advancing CPD because it enables law librarians to remain up to date on evolving legal procedures, information technology breakthroughs, and novel research techniques. In Nigeria, law librarians face challenges in accessing and disseminating up-to-date information because there are few possibilities for CPD. These could be due to limited funding, a lack of digital tools, restricted access to professional networks, and inadequate training possibilities.

Further, despite the widespread studies conducted on knowledge transfer, knowledge sharing, and knowledge dissemination among various professions, there are no studies on knowledge dissemination especially with regard to continuous professional development (CPD) for law librarians chiefly in Nigeria. It is against this backdrop that this study examined knowledge dissemination as a tool for continuous professional development (CPD) for law librarians in Nigeria.

Research Objectives

The specific research objectives of this study are to ascertain:

1. The type of knowledge largely disseminated for CPD among law librarians in Nigeria
2. The motive of knowledge dissemination among law librarians in Nigeria
3. The medium used to disseminate knowledge for CPD among law librarians in Nigeria

4. The benefits of knowledge dissemination to the continuous professional development of Law Librarian in Nigeria
5. The barriers to knowledge dissemination for continuous professional development among law librarians in Nigeria

Hypotheses

The null hypotheses were test at 0.05 significant level thus:

1. There is no significant correlation between knowledge dissemination and continuous professional development (CPD) among law librarians in Nigeria.
2. There is no significant correlation between work experience and the desire to disseminate knowledge among law Librarians in Nigeria.

Methodology

The research adopted a cross-sectional design using quantitative research. The research was a descriptive survey to ascertain knowledge dissemination as a tool for continuous professional development (CPD) for law librarians in Nigeria. The population of the study is 145 law librarians who were members of the Nigerian Association of Law Librarians (NALL) (105 members). The Nigerian Association of Law Libraries (NALL) was founded in 1975. It is a section of the Nigerian Library Association and a member of the International Association of Law Libraries (IALL). Members of NALL include librarians and para-librarians working in courts, law societies, law schools, private firms, federal and state ministries of justice, law libraries, and librarians in charge of law collections at universities, public institutions, and all other legal institutions. Association of Academic Law Librarians (ALL) (40 Members). ALL association membership comprises law librarians with a dual degree in Law and Librarianship as required by the Council of Legal Education (CLE) and National Universities Commission (NUC), working in accredited faculty of law libraries in private, state, or federal government-owned universities.

The research instrument used was a closed-ended and validated questionnaire. The questionnaire included respondents' demographic information, knowledge disseminated for CPD among law librarians in Nigeria, the motive of knowledge dissemination among law librarians in Nigeria, the medium used to

disseminate knowledge for CDP among law librarians in Nigeria, the benefits of knowledge dissemination to continuing professional development of law librarian in Nigeria and barriers to knowledge dissemination for continuing professional development among law librarians in Nigeria. The questionnaire was designed based on previous studies by Fari and Ocholla (2015) and Olayemi and Olayemi (2021) and fine-tuned to get the needed data. A 4-1 Likert scale (Strongly agreed, Agreed, Disagreed, and strongly disagreed) and (Very high Use, High use, Low use, and Very Low use).

One experienced law librarian at Ajayi Crowther University and a sociology lecturer at Edo State College of Nursing reviewed and approved the questionnaire to determine its validity. The responses were collected through online survey using Google form. The link was shared on NALL and Academic Law librarian WhatsApp platforms; a limit of one response was set on the Google form to restrict multiple responses. A time frame of one month from August to September 2023 was given to complete the form after which the online survey was closed from accepting responses. Only Fifty-seven (57) participants were willing to respond to the questionnaire within a space of one month.

The data were analysed at the first stage using Excel to determine the frequency, mean score, and standard deviation. Product Pearson Moment Correlation (PPMC) was used to test null hypotheses. The decision was based on a mean score of 2.5. This implied that any statement with a mean score of 2.5 and above was agreed/high, while any statement with a mean score below 2.5 was disagreed/low.

Result

Participants Profile

The data collected from 57 participants using Google Forms was analyzed. From the 57 responses, 33 participants worked in special libraries while 24 participants worked in the academic library setting. The majority of the respondents, 38, were female law librarians while 19 were male law librarians. Most of the participants were master's degree holders (30), and 22 participants had B.A/B.Sc. degree, 3 participants were PhD holders and 2 participants had Post Graduate Diploma. Finally, 32 participants had 10-19 years of experience, 18 participants had 1-9 years, and 7 participants had above 20 years of professional work experience respectively.

Type of Knowledge Largely Disseminated for CPD among Law Librarians in Nigeria

It was deduced that most of the participants disseminated knowledge of new trends and technologies in librarianship (\bar{x} =3.14), emerging trends

in law (\bar{x} =3.05), Scholarship availability (\bar{x} =2.89) and seminars, conferences, workshops, and webinars in Law (\bar{x} =2.82) for CPD. The result as regards to knowledge disseminated among law librarians for CPD was further analysed and summarised in Table 1

Table 1: The Type of Knowledge Disseminated for CPD Among Law Librarians in Nigeria.

S/N	Type of Knowledge Largely Disseminated	SA	A	D	SD	Mean	STD	Decision
1	New trends and Technologies in Librarianship	17	31	9	0	3.14	2.68	Agreed
2	Emerging trends in Law	11	38	8	0	3.05	2.57	Agreed
3	Seminars, Conferences, Workshop and webinars in librarianship	12	29	9	7	2.81	2.43	Agreed
4	Seminars, Conferences, Workshop and webinars in Law	14	27	8	8	2.82	2.46	Agreed
5	Scholarship availability	13	27	15	2	2.89	2.47	Agreed
6	Fellowship Programs	0	36	21	0	2.63	2.13	Agreed
7	Information on current/On-going research	6	21	17	13	2.35	2.02	Disagreed
8	Newly Acquired Knowledge	4	37	6	10	2.61	2.22	Agreed
9	Research Partnership	2	34	16	5	2.58	2.14	Agreed
Grand Mean						2.77		

The Motive for Knowledge Dissemination among Law Librarians in Nigeria

Participants agreed that the major motives for

disseminating knowledge were to build a professional network (3.70), ensure easy flow of information (3.67), and improve collaboration (3.35). Responses are represented in Table 2.

Table 2: The Motive for Knowledge Dissemination among Law Librarians in Nigeria.

S/N	Motives	SA	A	D	SD	Mean	STD	Decision
1	To build professional network	40	17	0	0	3.70	3.20	Agreed
2	To ensure easy flow of Information	38	19	0	0	3.67	3.16	Agreed
3	To improve collaboration	20	37	0	0	3.35	2.85	Agreed
4	Foster Unity	13	28	16	0	2.95	2.50	Agreed
5	To Increase popularity among professional colleague	10	32	6	9	2.75	2.38	Agreed
6	To improve Knowledge dissemination practices among colleagues	12	30	9	6	2.84	2.45	Agreed
Grand Mean						3.21		

The Medium Used to Disseminate Knowledge of CPD among Law Librarians in Nigeria

Table 3 indicated that physical interaction such as

conferences, seminars, workshops, meetings, etc. (3.16) was the major medium used to disseminate knowledge for CPD others were Social media platforms (3.11), Internet/ Intranet/Extranet (2.74) and Telephone/E-mails (2.58).

Table 3: The medium used to disseminate knowledge for CPD among law librarians in Nigeria.

S/N	Medium	VHU	HU	LU	VLU	Mean	STD	Decision
1	Physical Interaction (conferences, seminar, workshop, meetings etc.)	24	18	15	0	3.16	2.73	High
2	Social Media Platform (Facebook, Twitter, WhatsApp, YouTube etc.)	18	27	12	0	3.11	2.66	High
3	Internet/Intranet/Extranet	12	21	21	3	2.74	2.34	High
4	Webinars/Online Discussion Forum (Quora, reddit etc.)	6	21	21	9	2.42	2.05	Low
5	Online meeting platforms (zoom, google meeting, webex, skype etc.)	3	30	12	12	2.42	2.05	Low
6	Telephone and E-mails	15	12	21	9	2.58	2.27	High
Grand Mean						2.74		

The Benefits of Knowledge Dissemination to Continuous Professional Development of Law Librarians in Nigeria

Table 4 revealed that the major benefits of knowledge dissemination to the continuous

professional development of law librarians were improved work productivity/ Job performance (3.44), keeping abreast with current professional methods and techniques in law and Librarianship (3.12), and also influencing self-confidence as a professional (3.02).

Table 4: Benefits of Knowledge Dissemination to Continuous Professional Development of Law Librarians in Nigeria.

S/N	Benefits	SA	A	D	SD	Mean	STD	Decision
1	It enhances my Professional skills (Leadership, Communication, Managerial, service delivery etc.)	33	7	8	9	3.12	2.82	Agreed
2	It keep me abreast with current professional method and techniques In Law and Librarianship	36	7	10	4	3.32	2.94	Agreed
3	Influence my self Confidence as a professional	27	7	20	3	3.02	2.67	Agreed
4	Improve my capacity building	30	4	17	6	3.02	2.71	Agreed
5	Improve my work productivity/ Job performance	39	10	2	6	3.44	3.06	Agreed
6	Improve Research abilities	24	10	14	9	2.86	2.57	Agreed
7	Enhance inter-personal skills	14	20	21	2	2.81	2.41	Agreed
8	Improve my Adaptation to Technological Changes	18	9	24	6	2.68	2.36	Agreed
Grand Mean							3.03	

The Barriers to Knowledge Dissemination for Continuous Professional Development among Law Librarians in Nigeria

Knowledge dissemination were limited access to information, inadequate skills, and Technology Barriers. (Table 5).

The most prominent reported barriers to

Table 5: The Barriers to Knowledge Dissemination for Continuous Professional Development among Law Librarians in Nigeria.

S/N	Barriers	SA	A	D	SD	Mean	STD	Decision
1	Limited access to Learning Resources	12	36	9	0	3.05	2.58	Agreed
2	Unwillingness to disseminate knowledge due to fear of competition	9	24	24	0	2.74	2.29	Agreed
3	Negative attitude toward knowledge dissemination among Law librarians	6	39	12	0	2.89	2.41	Agreed
4	Low attendance of workshops, conference and seminars by Law Librarians	12	32	6	7	2.86	2.47	Agreed
5	Inadequate skills	12	33	9	3	2.95	2.51	Agreed
6	Time consumption(sort and update)	3	39	15	0	2.79	2.29	Agreed
7	Generational Differences	1	8	39	9	2.02	1.56	Disagreed
8	Technology Barriers	24	12	13	24	2.91	2.60	Agreed
Grand Mean							2.78	

Test of Hypotheses

Two null hypotheses were tested at 0.05 significant level: there is no significant correlation between knowledge dissemination and continuous professional development (CPD) among law librarians in Nigeria and there is no significant correlation between years of work of experience and motive to disseminate

knowledge among law Librarians in Nigeria.

The result represented in Table 6 indicated that ($r = 0.73$) there is a positive correlation between knowledge dissemination and CPD, and there is also ($r = 0.78$) a positive correlation between work experience and motive to disseminate knowledge. Thus the null hypotheses were rejected.

Table 6: Correlation Between Knowledge Dissemination and CPD, Years of Work Experience Desire to Disseminate Knowledge.

Variables	n	r	p-value	Remark
Knowledge dissemination CPD	57	0.73	0.02	Sig.
Years of Work experience Motive to disseminate Knowledge	57	0.78	0.06	Sig.
* Significant at the 0.05 level.				

Discussion

The study discovered most law librarians largely disseminated knowledge on new trends/ technologies in librarianship and emerging trends in Law for

CPD, the motive for knowledge dissemination is to build a professional network. Physical Interaction (conferences, seminars, workshops, meetings, etc.) was the most used medium to disseminate knowledge for CPD, knowledge dissemination is beneficial to CPD

as it improves work productivity/job performance, and limited access to learning resources was the major barrier to knowledge dissemination.

The study discovered that knowledge is disseminated for CPD among law librarians but knowledge on new trends/technologies in librarianship and also emerging trends in law was mostly disseminated. This implied that law librarians would have to keep abreast with current trends/technologies in both librarianship and Law for CPD and effective job delivery. This outcome is in line with the study of Ogba and Ikeazota (2021), who found out that law librarians visit other libraries to learn and share new knowledge. Idiedo (2021) categorically stated that law librarians are expected to be knowledgeable in law and librarianship to perform specialised tasks.

Most law librarians disseminate knowledge to build a professional network. It signifies that knowledge dissemination practice exists among law librarians and the motive for knowledge dissemination was to build a professional network and partner with professional colleagues seeking to acquire new knowledge to keep abreast with current trends in librarianship and law. This contradicts the findings of Fari and Ocholla (2015) that the main purpose for knowledge sharing among academics in South Africa and Nigeria was to improve research output. The medium mostly used to disseminate knowledge for CPD among Librarian is physical interaction (conferences, seminars, workshops, meetings, etc.) this implies that online meeting platforms (zoom, Google meetings, etc) and Webinar/ Online discussions can enhance frequent knowledge dissemination for CPD among Law Librarian is under-utilised as conferences, seminars are mostly organised occasionally. This supports the findings of Ogunmodede and Popoola (2019) and Obinyan et al. (2021) as the majority of the respondents utilized face-to-face interaction as the medium for knowledge sharing.

We found out that knowledge dissemination is beneficial to CPD of law librarians in Nigeria by improving work productivity/job performance and keeping law librarians abreast with current professional methods and techniques in Law and Librarianship. Generally, knowledge dissemination is beneficial to the CPD of the law librarian. This corroborates Olayemi and Olayemi's (2021) findings that knowledge dissemination enhances the performances of African health sciences librarians in their organisations. However despite the enormous benefits of knowledge dissemination to CPD, there are barriers to knowledge dissemination for CPD

as discovered in the study that limited access to learning resources, inadequate skills, and technology barriers were the major barriers to knowledge dissemination for CPD among law librarians in Nigeria, this could explain why online platforms are under-utilised for knowledge dissemination despite its benefits to enhance frequent knowledge dissemination among law librarians for CPD. Notwithstanding these challenges, it is of the utmost importance for law librarians to find ways to disseminate knowledge for CPD. This supports the findings of Olayemi and Olayemi (2021), Awodoyin et al. (2016), and Fari and Ocholla (2015) who found that many of the same barriers to knowledge dissemination were present among their study participants.

The result from the Hypotheses indicated a high positive correlation ($R=0.73$) between Knowledge dissemination and CPD. It can be deduced that knowledge dissemination is a medium for CPD for law librarians and it is imperative and beneficial to CPD. This agrees with the finding of Akparobore (2015) that knowledge dissemination is beneficial to the professional development. The result further revealed that years of work experience have a high correlation ($R= 0.78$) with a desire to disseminate knowledge among law librarians. This indicates that the desire for knowledge dissemination among law librarians can be influenced as a result of work experience meaning the more work experience gathered the higher the chances of disseminating this knowledge among law librarians for CPD. This corroborates Obinyan et al. (2021) discovered that Years of Work Experience have a significant influence on intrinsic motivation to share knowledge among LIS professionals in Nigeria.

This study is limited due to the small population size as a result of law librarians' unwillingness to respond to the online survey within the stipulated time of one month. The strength of the study is in its ability to relate knowledge dissemination to CPD which has not previously investigated specifically for law librarians in Nigeria. The findings of this study will be helpful to university professional law librarians to understand the relationship between knowledge dissemination and CPD. The findings of this study also show the importance of knowledge sharing among Law librarians and how Knowledge sharing is an effective way to improve work productivity and professional growth.

Conclusion

The research investigated knowledge dissemination as a way of continuous professional

development of law librarians in Nigeria. The study discovered most law librarians disseminated knowledge on new trends/ technologies in librarianship and emerging trends in law for CPD, the motive for knowledge dissemination is to build a professional network. Physical interaction (conferences, seminars, workshops, meetings, etc.) was the most used medium to disseminate knowledge for CPD, knowledge dissemination is beneficial to CPD as it improves work productivity/job performance and limited access to learning resources, inadequate skills, and technology barriers were the major barrier to knowledge dissemination for CPD among law librarians in Nigeria. The study further revealed a positive correlation between knowledge dissemination and CPD and years of work experience have a positive correlation with the desire to disseminate knowledge among law librarians in Nigeria. The findings of this study also show the importance of knowledge dissemination to law librarians, especially as regards CPD as it will improve work productivity and build confidence as a professional.

Recommendations

Based on the findings of this study it is recommended that:

1. Utilisation of online platforms as a medium for knowledge dissemination as it can make knowledge dissemination more frequent among law librarians for CPD
2. Open access to more learning resources to enhance knowledge dissemination.

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